

CHAPTER ONE

FOUNDATIONS OF PRIESTLY FORMATION

ARTICLE ONE

DOCTRINAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD

TRINITARIAN SOURCE

26. "The priest's identity . . . like every Christian identity, has its source in the Blessed Trinity."⁹ "The communion of Christians with Jesus has the communion of God as Trinity, namely, the unity of the Son to the Father in the gift of the Holy Spirit, as its model and source, and is itself the means to achieve this communion: United to the Son in the Spirit's bond of love, Christians are united to the Father."¹⁰

JESUS CHRIST, THE PERFECT HIGH PRIEST

27. In the fullness of time, God sent the Eternal Word into the world and into the midst of human history. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."¹¹ Jesus Christ, "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world,"¹² proclaimed the good news of God's reconciliation with the human family. Confirmed by word and deed, his preaching reached its summit in the paschal mystery, the supreme manifestation of the Father's love.

28. "On the cross, Jesus showed himself to the greatest possible extent to be the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep." Surpassing "all the ritual priesthood and holocausts of the Old Testament," Christ exercised a supreme and unique priesthood.¹³ As perfect victim and ideal priest, he bore the sins of all and entered the heavenly sanctuary.¹⁴ "Rising from the dead and being made Lord (cf. Phil 2: 9-11), he reconciled us to God; and he laid the foundation of the people of the new covenant, which is the Church."¹⁵

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

29. The Second Vatican Council has described the Church as "the people of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the family of God."¹⁶ In different ways, these images "bring to light the

reality of the Church as a communion with its inseparable dimensions: the communion of each Christian with Christ and the communion of all Christians with one another."¹⁷ By communicating his Spirit, Christ continually forms and reforms those who become his brothers and sisters in baptism. "As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the faithful in Christ."¹⁸ Christ the eternal high priest shares with his body, the Church, the anointing that he himself received.¹⁹ Through the waters of baptism and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are formed into a royal priesthood and joined to Christ, becoming sharers in a common vocation to holiness and a mission to evangelize the world.²⁰

PRIESTHOOD IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST, HEAD AND SHEPHERD OF THE CHURCH

30. "For the sake of this universal priesthood of the New Covenant Jesus gathered disciples during his earthly mission" (cf. Lk 10:1-12)²¹ "to carry out publicly in the church a priestly ministry."²² They were to minister in a special way to those with whom they were united in the body of Christ, a body in which "all members have not the same function."²³ Thus while all the baptized participate in the priesthood of Christ, some are called and ordained to minister to all of the faithful. In the sacrament of orders, priests are especially configured to Christ to act in his person as head and pastor of the Church and in the name of the whole people of God.²⁴ Priests are ministers who receive their sacred authority from Christ through the Church.

31. Conferred in the sacrament of orders, "the priesthood, along with the word of God and the sacramental signs which it serves, belong to the constitutive elements of the Church."²⁵ Although the reality of priestly ministry emanated from Christ, its differentiation and precise naming occurred in successive generations of the Christian community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The figure of the good shepherd who calls each by name and lays down his life for his flock stands as a sign of that special configuration to Christ that belongs to priests by virtue of the sacrament of orders.

32. "Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power

that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ, he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity."²⁶ "The ministry of the priest is entirely on behalf of the Church; it aims at promoting the exercise of the common priesthood of the entire people of God."²⁷

TO TEACH, TO SANCTIFY, AND TO LEAD

33. Configured to Christ, head of the Church, and intimately united as co-workers of the bishops, priests are commissioned in a unique way to continue Christ's mission as prophet, priest, and king.²⁸ Their primary duty is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world by word and deed. This mission extends to all people, even those for whom the Gospel has ceased to be a message of hope or a challenge to right action.²⁹ The preaching of the Gospel finds its source and culmination in the Eucharist.³⁰ Priests exercise the office of sanctifying the Christian people in the celebration of the sacraments of the Church. As members of the one presbyterate gathered around the bishop, priests serve to unite the local church in one great act of worship of the Father. Finally, priests exercise the office of shepherd, because of the "specific ontological bond which unites the priesthood to Christ the high priest and good shepherd."³¹ Called to gather together the family of Christ, priests act with a spiritual authority that enables them to lead the people of God along right paths.³² In these and similar ways, priests are servants of Christ present in the Church as mystery, actuating Christ's presence in the sacraments; as communion, building up the body of Christ; and as mission, heralding the Gospel.³³

34. The anointing of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of orders is conferred through the hands of a bishop, thereby constituting priests into the presbyterate of a local church either as diocesan priests or as members of a religious community. They also become part of a worldwide sacramental order of priests.³⁴ "Because it is joined with the episcopal order the office of priests shares in the authority by which Christ himself builds up and sanctifies and rules his body. Hence the priesthood of priests, while presupposing the sacraments of initiation, is nevertheless conferred by its own particular sacrament. Through that sacrament priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and so are

configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."³⁵ Ordained priests remain sacramentally related to Christ and to his Church for life with a character that perdures into eternity.

35. Sharing in the one priesthood of Christ, priests are called to an enduring sacramental relation to their bishop.³⁶ This union is expressed not only in the action by which priests are ordained but also in daily Eucharist and other liturgical actions. Although committed to a great diversity of individual ministries, priests are united in the common goal of building up the body of Christ through ordained priestly service.

MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD IN A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

36. Not all priests are ordained directly to the service of a local church.³⁷ God has blessed the Church with religious communities that take their inspiration from the example of Christ as the source of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. From the God-given seed of the counsels, a variety of forms of religious life has sprung up for the growth of the body of Christ and for the progress in holiness of its members.³⁸

37. The ministerial priesthood experienced and exercised in religious life, although not different in essence from diocesan priesthood, finds its expression in a setting that reflects the charism of the religious community. The reality of the priesthood is the same for all who are ordained, yet the lived expression of sacred orders will reflect the diocesan or religious context of priesthood.

38. At the same time, the exercise of the priesthood relates religious priests to the bishop who is head of the local church where they exercise priestly ministry. Although religious priests, canonically and spiritually, enjoy a primary relationship with their religious ordinary, they also have an ecclesiological and pastoral relationship to the bishop and the presbyterate of the diocese in which they serve.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

39. Priests provide pastoral leadership in the community of faith. From the waters of baptism and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, priests and laity share a sacramental origin and a common purpose as disciples of

Christ. These bonds imply a continuing relationship of collaboration and mutual respect. The competence, love, and gifts of the laity complement and support the ministry of priests.

40. There is today an increased emphasis on the role of the laity, their gifts and the various ministries to which they are called.³⁹ As leaders of the faith community, priests exercise a significant dimension of their shepherding role through the support they offer the laity. As they encourage others to perform the tasks which are theirs by virtue of baptism, priests are called to provide vision, direction, and leadership. In doing so, they support the exercise of the gifts of the laity and encourage them to participate actively in building up the body of Christ.

41. The pastoral office of priests in its task of teaching, sanctifying, and leading is exercised not only on behalf of those explicitly committed to their priests' pastoral care but also on behalf of all men and women.⁴⁰ After the example of the Master, this shepherd's care must be performed with a missionary zeal toward all those who search for the truth.

42. As Jesus sent his followers to make disciples of all nations at the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew, he promised to remain with them until the end of time.⁴¹ And so Christ the high priest remains the living lord of the Church, sanctifying its life and mission by his presence. Christ dwells among us when the Word is proclaimed and the sacraments are celebrated, above all, in the eucharistic celebration. When Christians gather in his name, he is in their midst.⁴² Christ the high priest is present in a special way in priests themselves as well as in their ministry. For this reason, ministry will have a profound effect on personal priestly life, becoming the path that priests follow as they seek to become holy themselves.⁴³ The next article of Chapter One, "The Spiritual Life of Diocesan Priests," focuses on this reality.

ARTICLE TWO

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF DIOCESAN PRIESTS

43. The Church's teaching on the priesthood and the experience of diocesan priests provide the themes of this section on the spiritual life of diocesan priests.⁴⁴

INTRODUCTION

44. Jesus gathered a community of followers and proclaimed to them the coming of God's kingdom by word and deed, and ultimately by his death and resurrection. As he ascended into glory, he sent his followers to carry on the preaching of the kingdom by the witness of their lives. The spiritual life of diocesan priests is rooted in and continues this lived witness of Jesus Christ to the presence of God's kingdom.

45. Jesus lived a celibate life in single-minded dedication to the kingdom which he preached. The simplicity of his life is reflected on every page of the Gospel. His suffering and death were the final acts of obedience to the Father, who stood at the heart of his preaching and his prayer. After the example of Jesus, simplicity of life, celibacy, obedience, and prayer have stood as beacons for many forms of spirituality. This is true for the spiritual life of diocesan priests as well.

46. Diocesan priests continue the proclamation of the kingdom by preaching, sanctifying, and leading God's people, fulfilling the roles to which they were especially commissioned at ordination. They do it as well by the witness of their own lives as chaste, celibate men; prayerful and obedient to God's will; simple in the way they live. Like all Christians, priests are called to holiness by virtue of their baptism. "But priests are bound by a special reason to acquire this perfection. They are consecrated to God in a new way in their ordination and are made the living instruments of Christ the eternal high priest, and so are enabled to accomplish throughout all time that wonderful work of his which with supernatural efficacy restored the whole human race. Since every priest in his own way assumes the person of Christ he is endowed with a special grace. By this grace the priest, through his service of the people committed to his care and all the people of God, is better able to pursue the perfection of Christ, whose place he takes."⁴⁵

47. Building on the foundation of the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of orders establishes a specific call to priestly holiness, which sets the basis and starting point for the spiritual life of diocesan priests. "The relation of the priest to Jesus Christ, and in him to his church, is found in the very **being** of the priest, by virtue of his sacramental/anointing, and in his **activity**, that is in his mission or ministry."⁴⁶ Thus the spiritual life of priests does not refer to one aspect of their life but to the whole of it — ministerial and personal — grasped and lived from its deepest source and wellspring, the priests' relationship to Christ and the Church.

I. ORDINATION: SOURCE OF DIOCESAN PRIESTLY IDENTITY, MISSION, AND SPIRITUAL LIFE TEACHING, SANCTIFYING, AND LEADING

48. The spiritual life of diocesan priests finds its deepest source in the sacramental relationships established by priestly ordination.⁴⁷ By the anointing of the Spirit, priests are configured to Christ and empowered to act in his person as head of the Church. They are also designated as special representatives of the Church to act in the name of the whole people of God.⁴⁸ These sacramental relationships to Christ and the Church find their active expression in the threefold ministry of preaching, sanctifying, and pastoral leadership, thereby establishing the inseparable unity of priestly identity, ministry, and spirituality. What a man has become by ordination determines his role as a priest and the way he should live in response to his office.

DIOCESAN PRIESTS IN THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

49. The new, distinctive, and permanent relationship to Christ in ordination brings the Lord's presence to the Christian community in a unique way. The sacrament of orders thereby creates a new sacramental relationship to the family of believers to which priests have belonged since baptism. The community becomes the context and field for preaching, sanctifying, and shepherding. In turn, the community's response and its own unique role in the common mission of the Church help to shape the spiritual life of diocesan priests.

50. The threefold public charge to teach, sanctify, and lead is central to the spirituality of priests because it enters so deeply and so powerfully into their own personal lives. The Church repeatedly underscores this connection.⁴⁹ Priests preach the Word of God first by living it.⁵⁰ In the ordination rite, they are challenged to imitate in their own lives the sacramental mysteries they celebrate.⁵¹ Leadership without the witness of holiness, asceticism, and personal integrity lacks authenticity. This threefold ministry of priests finds its deepest source in prayer: personal and private prayer; the Liturgy of the Hours; the sacraments, especially the sacrament of penance; and the Eucharist. "For priests, as ministers of sacred things, are first and foremost ministers of the sacrifice of the Mass: The role is utterly irreplaceable, because without the priest there can be no eucharistic offering."⁵²

51. The public ministry of priests enters just as deeply and powerfully into the lives of the people whom they serve. For diocesan priests, this interaction with the people with whom and to whom they minister has an

especially profound influence on their own spiritual lives. Typically, priests accompany the people of a parish on their journey of faith as they marry, have children, mourn their dead, and strive to make their communities more humane and just. The people's own journey of faith becomes part of the priests'. For this reason, the renewal of parish life and the emergence of new ministries have had an enlivening and challenging effect on the spiritual life of priests.

52. The socioeconomic situation of the people also calls forth a special kind of leadership. Because Jesus indicates that he has been sent "to preach the good news to the poor,"⁵³ the mission of the priest should always reveal a special sensitivity toward the poor. At times, priests have become and should be advocates of public moral issues because such issues are vital to the lives of their people.⁵⁴

DIOCESAN PRIESTS AND BISHOP

53. Priestly ministry is never undertaken alone.⁵⁵ By ordination, diocesan priests are united to their bishop and fellow priests to form one presbyterate.⁵⁶ This priestly community is also a constitutive factor of the identity, mission, and spirituality of diocesan priests.

54. Together, bishop and priests share a common priestly mission. The unique priestly ministry of preaching, sanctifying, and pastoring belongs primarily to the bishop. Through ordination, this ministry is extended to the priests of the diocese. "United with the bishop and subject to him," priests are enjoined to "seek to bring the faithful together into a unified family and to lead them effectively, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father."⁵⁷ Diocesan priesthood represents a central ministry, indeed a cornerstone, in the mission of the Church in which priests, laity, and ecclesial ministers collaborate to build up the body of Christ according to vocation, talent, and ecclesial responsibility.

55. The sacramental relationship between bishop and priests was a special source of reflection at the Second Vatican Council. Conciliar documents underscored the priests' role as coworkers of the bishop and renewed an emphasis on the close relationship of priests and bishop.⁵⁸ They stressed the communal dimension of priesthood from a theological as well as a pastoral point of view. "The ministry of priests is above all communion and a responsible and necessary cooperation with the bishop's ministry, in concern for the universal Church and for the individual

particular churches, for whose service they form with the bishop a single presbyterate."⁵⁹ This relationship shapes the spiritual life of all priests, especially diocesan priests.

56. On a practical level, the common diocesan mission is served well if the bonds of fraternal charity among priests, and of priests with their bishop, have developed and grown strong. Relationships of respect and charity are always important in the shared mission of priests. Priestly bonding is thus an important component of diocesan spirituality. Without such human ties, the local church and presbyterate inevitably suffer. It is too difficult for pastoral leaders to sustain a priestly way of life alone.

57. An important element in the fabric of diocesan spirituality is the relationship of priests to their bishop. Priests and bishop share a fraternity, and therefore priests of the diocese represent a significant focus of the bishop's pastoral concern. The morale and the spiritual life of priests often reflect the quality of the bishop's pastoral presence, the vigor of his leadership, and his openness to collaboration. He sets the tone and, with his priests, he does so first by the quality of his spiritual leadership. In this regard, the bishop's own spiritual life, his public witness as one who prays, may be considered one of his first ministries to priests and people alike. The same is true of priests.

II. THE CALL TO PRIESTLY HOLINESS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF DIOCESAN PRIESTS AND THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

58. The common vocation of the entire Church to holiness of life finds many different expressions.⁶⁰ For priests — configured in a special way to Jesus Christ, priest, prophet, and king — the call to holiness represents a responsibility closely linked to their identity, ministry, and spirituality. "For it is through the sacred actions they perform every day, as through their whole ministry which they exercise in union with their bishop and their fellow priests, that they are set on the right course to perfection of life."⁶¹

59. In order to fulfill this vocation to holiness in and through their ministry, diocesan priests look to the counsels of perfection as important guidelines in their own spiritual lives. "The teaching and example of Christ provide the foundation for the evangelical counsels of chaste self-dedication to God, of poverty, and of obedience."⁶² Rooted in the life and ministry of Jesus, the counsels have been joined over the centuries to many forms

of Christian spirituality. Their application has been flexibly adapted to the lives of different individuals and groups, clerical and lay, who strive to follow Jesus with special fervor. The counsels represent a "seed" from which "a wonderful and wide-spreading tree has grown up in the field of the Lord."⁶³ In regard to diocesan priesthood, the counsels represent "a particularly significant expression of the radicalism of the Gospel."⁶⁴ They help to formulate the meaning of a priestly way of life in which celibacy, obedience, simplicity of life, and prayer play a role. None of these elements can be properly understood in isolation. Rather, they influence one another and are interwoven as parts of an integral priestly life, helping diocesan priests to fulfill their vocation to lead holy lives in and through the practice of their ministry.

CELIBACY FOR THE KINGDOM

60. "It is especially important that the priest understand the theological motivation of the Church's law on celibacy."⁶⁵ "Guarded by the Church as a brilliant jewel,"⁶⁶ the Church is challenged in every age to articulate the theological meaning of the celibate commitment and its inner affinity to the priesthood to which the tradition of the Western Church has witnessed in a special way.⁶⁷ Programs of priestly formation and the ongoing formation of clergy are especially challenged to explain the rationale of celibacy more consciously and persuasively, and then nourish and support priestly celibate life as a sign of God's kingdom.⁶⁸

61. The essential meaning of celibacy is grounded in Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. Its deepest source is love of Christ and dedication to his mission. All of these elements are rooted in the unique way that Jesus spoke about God's reign and exemplified his teaching in his own life, death, and resurrection.

62. The human family is the paradigm that Jesus' preaching of the kingdom builds on and extends. The first family, Jesus tells us, is the family of believers: those who pray to God as Abba, who hear the word of God and keep it.⁶⁹ In light of the kingdom, even the stranger can become a brother or sister and so enter that haven of peace which is the family.

63. Jesus, whose preaching of the kingdom is filled with the images of family, was a celibate man and his own celibacy was an incarnate sign of his preaching. Jesus witnessed to the coming of God's kingdom not only by his words and deeds but ultimately through his death and resurrection. His advice to the rich young man to give up everything for the sake of the

kingdom touches the heart of discipleship and pertains to celibacy as well.⁷⁰

64. The celibate commitment remains one of the most fundamental expressions of Jesus' call to radical discipleship for the sake of the kingdom.⁷¹ From a Christian point of view, there is no more positive, stronger witness to the kingdom than a willingness to live without wife and family as Jesus did. Even this highest and most cherished natural good, a family, is transformed in light of God's kingdom. The reality of that kingdom, unseen and intangible, yet present in the life of the resurrected Jesus, becomes the touchstone on which a new life is built. Thus for priests, the absence of natural family and genital sexual activity is replaced by a thousand other ties of affection, respect, and love, which take on heightened meaning in light of the presence of God's kingdom. This heightened relationship that the celibate priest has with his people symbolizes how we will experience the fullness of God's kingdom in heaven. At its deepest point, celibacy can be called "a sign and motive of pastoral charity, and a special source of spiritual fruitfulness in the world"⁷² because the celibate commitment means a consecration to God by which a priest "adheres more easily to Christ with an undivided heart."⁷³ In turn, this renders him more focused in his ministry.

65. The use of marriage and spousal imagery for the Church and Christian ministry is ancient and revealing. Priestly celibacy reflects "the virginal love of Christ for the Church."⁷⁴ The fruitfulness of this union is manifested in the family of believers who inevitably surround diocesan priests in their ministry. If priests give up one kind of family, they gain another. In Christ, the people they serve become mother, brother, sister, and father. In this way, celibacy as a sign and motive of pastoral charity takes flesh. Certainly it should be clear as well that celibacy is not a denial of sexuality and love but a specific way of shaping them. Reciprocity, mutuality, and affection shared with many and not one or an exclusive few become channels which mold and shape priests' pastoral love and their sexuality. "The will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in **the link between celibacy and sacred ordination**, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church."⁷⁵ "And so priestly celibacy should not be considered just as a legal norm, or as a totally external condition for admission to ordination, but rather as a value that is profoundly connected with ordination, whereby a man takes on the likeness of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd and spouse of the Church, and therefore as a choice of a greater and undivided love for Christ and his Church, as a full and joyful availability in his heart for the pastoral ministry."⁷⁶

SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

66. For diocesan priests, the evangelical counsel to poverty takes on a distinctive meaning: the call to simplicity of life.⁷⁷ Although they do not take vows of poverty, diocesan priests are challenged to view creation as God's gift, thereby acquiring "a right attitude to the world and to earthly goods."⁷⁸ Such an attitude is not disparaging of the world but sees it in light of freedom and service. Priests are able to understand correctly "that the Church's mission is carried out in the midst of the world and that created goods are absolutely necessary for man's personal progress."⁷⁹ They can also better appreciate that when the passion for acquisition and possession is curbed, the human capacity for appreciation and enjoyment of the world often is enhanced. Having fewer possessions and less burdened by the demands they impose, one can put on more easily the mind and heart of Christ, which give true freedom and perspective.

67. Such perspective is incumbent on all Christians, especially those who occupy positions of pastoral leadership. This outlook is particularly important in our own age when human needs are so consciously manipulated and exploited. A consumer society often reduces people to things, which are used and then discarded, plunging society more deeply into a world of objects, which ironically seem to possess us. In a consumer society, a right attitude to the world and earthly goods is easily lost. It is an important pastoral obligation of diocesan priests who accompany people so closely through the journey of life to acquire a sound and balanced perspective about earthly goods and possessions so that they can impart right attitudes to others.

68. In addition, "the interior freedom which is safeguarded and nourished by evangelical poverty will help the priest to stand beside the underprivileged, to practice solidarity with their efforts to create a more just society, to be more sensitive and capable of understanding and discerning realities involving the economic and social aspects of life, and to promote a preferential option for the poor." "The prophetic significance of priestly poverty. . . so urgently needed in affluent and consumeristic societies" should not be forgotten.⁸⁰

OBEDIENCE

69. A unique characteristic of diocesan priesthood is the special relationship of priests to the bishop of the diocese.⁸¹ Priests promise obedience and respect to their bishop and his successors.⁸² The bishop's authority and the

priests' obedience are central to the unity and vital to the mission of the local church. Consequently, a sound understanding of both is crucial for a healthy diocesan spirituality.

70. The Gospels provide a new model of authority and obedience: The master is to be the servant of all. Power in human terms is transformed into service.⁸³ Authority exercised in such terms elicits a special response of obedience. The latter means a willingness to hear others and to respond faithfully in imitation of Christ who came first to do the will of the Father who sent him and who in the garden of Gethsemane, said to his Father, "Not my will but yours be done."⁸⁴

71. Both authority and obedience must be understood in terms of the unity of the Church and its larger mission. "The priestly ministry, being ministry of the Church itself, can only be fulfilled in the hierarchical union of the whole body of Christ."⁸⁵ Priests are called to be "prudent cooperators of the episcopal college" in this larger mission to build up the body of Christ and carry his mission forward.⁸⁶ At times, they will exercise authority. Equally they will be asked to "carry out in the spirit of faith the commands and suggestions of the pope and of their bishop and other superiors."⁸⁷ "Priestly obedience also has a 'community' dimension: It is not the obedience of an individual who alone relates to authority, but rather an obedience which is deeply a part of the unity of the presbyterate, which as such is called to cooperate harmoniously with the bishop and, through him, with Peter's successor."⁸⁸

72. Human limitations are always present on the part of those who exercise authority and those who respond in a spirit of obedience. The exercise of authority and the response of obedience are works of grace, goodwill, and human effort that play a part in the life of every diocesan priest.

PRAYER

73. The ministry of Jesus is marked by a profound communion with God, which is shown in Jesus' way of praying and in his example. Often in the Scriptures and especially in the Gospel of St. Luke, Jesus goes apart to pray. Prayer marked his passion and death on the cross. To live as Jesus lived means to pray as Jesus prayed.

74. Much of diocesan priestly ministry is spent in liturgical prayer with the community of faith, most often at Eucharist. "For priests, as ministers

of sacred things, are first and foremost ministers of the Sacrifice of the Mass."⁸⁹ Indeed the Eucharist lies at the heart of priestly ministry and spirituality. "For in the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself our Pasch and the living bread which gives life to men through his flesh . . . For this reason the Eucharist appears as the source and summit of all preaching of the Gospel."⁹⁰

75. As Jesus prayed in praise of the Father, so do priests who serve in his place. And as Jesus prayed for the community of believers, so priests pray with and for the Church they serve. The Liturgy of the Hours is the song of praise, which shapes a life of prayer around the mysteries of the Lord celebrated in the liturgical year. The liturgy of the Church becomes the leaven of priestly prayer and a hallmark of all forms of spirituality.

76. Prayer in community finds its necessary complement in private prayer. In the solitude of their own prayer, priests encounter in a special and personal way the Lord whom they proclaim and celebrate in public ministry. In personal prayer, priests find the strength, the courage, and the grace to live an authentic priestly life. They hear God's continuing call as their lives unfold in active ministry and they remember that it is God alone who "gives the growth."⁹¹

77. Around the practices of celibacy, simplicity, obedience, and prayer, other activities of an authentic priestly life find their rightful place, such as fasting, almsgiving, and, in some cases, voluntary poverty.⁹² Priestly life should also include a healthy balance of physical exercise, study, and leisure; priests should develop discerning habits in regard to reading, television viewing, movie going, and other forms of entertainment.⁹³

78. Priests are bound by special ties to the Virgin Mary, mother of the high priest. Prayerfully venerating her, they will find in her a model and support for their celibate commitment, their humble service to the community of the faithful, apostolic zeal, and a growing love for her Son.

PRIESTLY LIFE AND MINISTRY: WITNESS TO THE KINGDOM

79. Priestly ministry which consists in teaching, sanctifying, and leading, together with the elements of priestly life — celibacy, prayer, obedience, and simplicity of life — mutually reinforce one another and belong together. In effect, the priestly call to holiness is deeper and more fundamental than the sum of its parts. A priestly way of life and priestly ministry

also belong together because nothing less than incarnate personal witness will suffice to continue Jesus' own preaching of God's kingdom in our midst.

80. In the parables and in the Gospel story itself, the kingdom appears through a series of reversals. The last invited guests rank first. Sinners are preferred to the righteous. Peter, who denies Jesus, becomes the first of the disciples. Paul, who persecutes the infant Church, leads its mission. In celibacy, simplicity of life, obedience, and a life of prayer, the preaching of the kingdom continues through the symbolic witness of personal lives in which basic human relationships are transformed in light of God's presence. Such witness can offer a glimpse here and now of the reality of God's kingdom.

ARTICLE THREE

PRIESTHOOD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

81. The ministerial priesthood and religious life have developed over the centuries in their own self-understanding and in their grasp of their respective roles in the life of the Church.

82. The identity of the religious comes from his or her religious tradition and community, from the call to live the Christian life in a radical fashion, rooted in the charism of the particular religious institute or society to which he or she belongs. This charism itself emerged and developed historically in response to the call of the Gospel and specific needs of the Church and of the world.

83. The experience and the exercise of the ministerial priesthood within the context of religious life differs from that of the diocesan priesthood. There is one priesthood. Through the vow or promise of obedience to their superiors on the part of religious and the promise of obedience to the bishop on the part of diocesan priests, the exercise of the priesthood in serving the people of God is directed to the harmonious building up of the body of Christ in union with the successor of Peter. Yet the ordained religious exercise their priesthood in the context of a particular religious charism, while diocesan priesthood is exercised directly in communion with a diocesan bishop and presbyterate. "Religious clergy who live and work in a particular church also belong to the one presbyterate, albeit under a different title."⁹⁴ "Priests who belong to religious orders and

congregations represent a spiritual enrichment for the entire diocesan presbyterate, to which they contribute specific charisms and special ministries, stimulating the particular church by their presence to be intensely open to the Church throughout the world."⁹⁵

84. The primary identity of the religious ordinarily comes from the nature of religious life itself. There is considerable diversity among religious institutes and societies. Indeed, the primary identity of some clerical institutes may be derived from their priestly calling. Yet not all religious are called to priesthood, and many religious orders are not clerical in nature. Religious who are called to priesthood exercise that ministry as an expression of their religious charism. The exercise of the priesthood takes on a special quality for a religious, depending upon the rule of life and the charism of a particular institute or society.

85. In general, the deeper identification of religious with the charism of their founders today is due to their obedience to the directives of the Second Vatican Council. "The up-to-date renewal of the religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the Christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time."⁹⁶

86. Religious life in a variety of forms has been called into existence throughout Christian history by the Holy Spirit for the sake of the Gospel. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, in its instruction, *Renovationis Causam*, 1, recognized the diversity within religious life. Pope Paul VI, in his exhortation on the renewal of religious life, called attention to religious life as a witness to the Gospel and as a gift of the Spirit to the Church.⁹⁷

87. Centuries of tradition bear witness to a difference between formation for religious life and formation of diocesan candidates for the priesthood. Formation for religious life must always take into account the charism, history, and mission of the particular institute, while recognizing the academic and pastoral requirements incumbent upon all who are called to the ministerial priesthood.

88. Consequently, religious candidates for the priesthood must understand both the charism of their religious institute and society and the theology of the priesthood and how the two are interrelated. Such instruction is the responsibility of the religious institute and society charged with

the candidates' formation in collaboration with those entrusted with their academic preparation.

89. It is not the purpose of this program of priestly formation to outline the theology of religious life or the history of the various religious institutes and societies. This program outlines the common requirements while recognizing the different process of spiritual formation incumbent upon those whose primary call is to be of service to the Church through religious life and for whom fidelity to the charism of their founder is the gift that is shared.⁹⁸

ARTICLE FOUR

CONCLUDING REFLECTION FOCUSING ON THE PRIESTHOOD

90. In the sacrament of baptism, God forms the people of the new covenant into the body of Christ, the Church. In this sacrament, Christians are given new life in the Spirit. In the sacrament of orders, some of the baptized are chosen by God and called by the Church to serve God's faithful in the person of Christ, head of the Church, by leading, teaching, and sanctifying the community. To do this, priests receive the sacrament of orders, which sets them apart by a new outpouring of the Spirit, permanently configuring them in a unique way to Christ for the service of all the faithful. The sacraments of baptism and orders are constitutive of Christ's body, the Church.

91. As these sacramental relationships to Christ and the Church establish the inseparable unity of priestly identity, mission, and spirituality, they also chart the course of a consistent priestly education. Therefore, priestly formation will concentrate on providing the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral requirements necessary to enable priests to respond faithfully and effectively to God's call and the needs of the Church.

92. Holistic priestly education is comprised of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.

Priests are to be mature persons. Therefore, "the whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation."⁹⁹

Priests are to be disciples, striving for holiness of life. Therefore, "human formation, when it is carried out in the context of an anthropology which is open to the full truth regarding man, leads to and finds its completion in spiritual formation."¹⁰⁰

Priests are to be teachers and preachers of the Gospel. Therefore, "intellectual formation has its own characteristics, but it is also deeply connected with, and indeed can be seen as a necessary expression of, both human and spiritual formation."¹⁰¹

Priests are to be pastoral ministers of the Church. Therefore, "the whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the good shepherd. Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character."¹⁰²

93. The Second Vatican Council "insists upon the coordination of the different aspects of human, spiritual, and intellectual formation. At the same time it stresses that they are directed to a specific pastoral end. This pastoral aim ensures that the human, spiritual, and intellectual formation has certain precise content and characteristics; it also unifies and gives specificity to the whole formation of future priests."¹⁰³ Finally, holistic priestly formation enables candidates for the priesthood fully to appreciate the power of God's word and the efficacy of the sacramental life of the Church, especially as they represent in the eucharistic liturgy the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of the Lord. Such formation prepares priests for a pastoral ministry so that they can stand in the midst of God's faithful as men who serve, confidently guiding them on the spiritual pilgrimage which leads eventually to the fullness of the kingdom.