

The Post-Conciliar Rite of Holy Orders¹

An attack on the Apostolic Succession

by

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The Catholic Church holds that Christ instituted seven sacraments for our sanctification—sacraments being outward signs or rites that convey special inward graces. Of these, five—the Sacrifice of the Mass, Confirmation, Absolution (Penance), Extreme Unction and Holy Orders—require a validly ordained Priest or Bishop for their confection. Protestants accept Baptism and Marriage but deny both the priesthood and the sacraments that are dependent upon it.

It is well known that the post-Conciliar Church changed all the sacraments. The changes in the Mass were covered in the preceding chapter as well as in my book *The Problem with the New Mass*. The present chapter will discuss the changes made in the sacrament of Orders. The importance of this matter cannot be exaggerated; it is that sacrament by means of which priests are ordained, that is, given the “power” to say Mass and administer the other sacraments pertinent to their function. It is said to imprint a “sacramental character” on the recipients that provides them with the special Graces necessary for them to fulfill their high calling and to act *in persona Christi*. Priests are ordained by bishops who are consecrated by other bishops going back in an “initiatic chain” to the Apostles, and hence it is through the “episcopacy” that the Apostolic Succession is passed on.² It follows that, if the rite for consecrating bishops were in some way to be destroyed, then all the other sacraments dependent upon validly consecrated

1. Editor’s Note: The essay which appears here is a substantially reworked version of the one which appeared in *Studies* in 1984. The essay has, since that time, appeared as a part of a chapter in a new edition of Dr. Coomaraswamy’s book *The Destruction of the Christian Tradition* (new edition: World Wisdom, 2006), which was updated and revised by Coomaraswamy himself, including what he considered to be important corrections. It is this revised version that we have reproduced here. The introductory paragraph of the original essay has been left above to provide context.

2. “Apostolic Succession” is to be distinguished from “Apostolicity.” The bishops are the spiritual descendents of the Apostles, and hence the “Apostolic Succession” is passed on through them. “Apostolicity,” however, is one of the qualities of the true Church, not only because it preserves the Apostolic Succession, but also because it teaches the same doctrines and uses the same rites that the Apostles did.

bishops, even if they used proper form and matter, would be null and void.³ (The word “invalid” can be replaced by “doubtful” with similar consequences.) In order to place the subject under consideration in a proper perspective it will be necessary to define the “Sacrament of Orders,” to determine whether the rite of Episcopal consecration is a true sacrament, to specify what is required for validity, and then to examine the new rite and see whether it “signifies the Grace” which it is meant to effect, and “effects the Grace” which it is meant to signify.

Considerable perplexity arises from the fact that while the sacrament of Orders is one, it is conferred in stages. In the Western Church these are divided into seven steps—the “Minor Orders” of acolyte, exorcist, lector, and doorkeeper; and the “Major Orders” of the subdeaconate, deaconate, and priesthood. Almost at once confusion enters the picture, for some of the ancient texts list six, others eight and nine. In the Greek Church, the rites of which are considered unquestionably valid, subdeacons are listed in the “minor” category. In all the Churches that recognize Orders as a sacrament (the Protestants—which category includes Anglicans—do not) we find both deacons and priests are “ordained” and that the episcopate or rank of bishop is included under the heading of “priests”; it is in fact called the “*summum sacerdotium*” or the “fullness of the priesthood.” Higher ranks in the Church such as archbishop, cardinal, or pope, are considered administrative and not sacramental. Thus once a pope is elected he is installed with appropriate ceremonies, but not with a sacramental rite.⁴

For the sake of completeness it should be noted that an ordinand (an individual about to be ordained) to any order, automatically receives the graces pertaining to the lower orders. (This principle is called *per saltum*, or “by jumping”). Thus if an individual were consecrated to the priesthood without receiving the lesser orders, he would automatically receive all the power and Graces that relate to the lesser orders, such as, for example, exorcism. The post-Conciliar Church has abolished many of the minor orders, but if this Church validly ordains priests, then these priests automatically receive the powers that pertain to these lower and “abolished” orders. However, when it comes to bishops, almost all theologians hold that they must already be ordained priests, lacking which the Episcopal rite conveys nothing. The Church has never infallibly pronounced on this issue and contrary opinion—namely that the Episcopal rite automatically confers on the recipient the character of priestly orders—exists.⁵ So critical is the Apostolic Succession that it is the customary practice of the Church to ordain a bishop with three

3. The phrase “null and void” was used with regard to Anglican Orders by Pope Leo XIII.

4. Sacramentally speaking there is no higher rank than that of bishop. Such a statement in no way denies or repudiates the teaching of the Church on the primacy of Peter.

5. Cardinal Gasparri in *De Sacra Ordinatione*, and Lennertz in his *De Sacramento Ordinis* both hold that the recipient of Episcopal Orders automatically receives—if he does not already have it—the powers of the priesthood. It is difficult to see why this should not be the case since he receives the *summum sacerdotium* or fullness of the priesthood. The issue is discussed in *Anglican Orders and Defect of Intention* by Francis Clark, S.J. (subsequently laicized) (Longmans, Green: London, 1956).

other bishops. The rule is not absolute, for validity only requires one, and innumerable examples of where this custom has been by-passed can be given.

It is of interest that many traditional theologians have questioned whether the elevation of a priest to the rank of bishop is a sacramental or juridical act. The point is important because: 1) it implies that an ordinary priest has the ability (not the right) to ordain (make other priests); and because 2), if the Episcopal rite involves no “imprinting of a sacramental character,” the question of validity can hardly arise. However, insofar as the ordination of bishops has a “form” and a “matter,” the greater majority hold that it is in fact a sacrament—or rather that it is the completion of the sacrament of Orders and confers upon the individual the “fullness of priestly powers” and functions. Leo XIII clearly taught that such was the case. To quote him directly: “The episcopate, by Christ’s institution, belongs most truly to the sacrament of Orders and is the priesthood in the highest degree; it is what the holy Fathers and our own liturgical usage call the high priesthood, the summit of the sacred ministry” (*Apostolicae curae*).

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE PRIEST AND THE BISHOP

In the traditional ordination rite of the priest, the bishop instructs him that his function is “to offer sacrifice, to bless, to guide, to preach, and to baptize.” (In the post-Conciliar rite this instruction has been deleted and the priest is consecrated to “celebrate” the liturgy, which of course means the *Novus Ordo Missae*.⁶) Such an instruction is not all-inclusive, for it mentions nothing of the power of absolution—its intent being to specify the principal functions of the priest. The power to absolve is, however, clearly specified in other parts of the traditional rite. (Again, the post-Conciliar rite has abolished the prayer that specifies this power.)

Bishops, however, have certain powers over and beyond those of priests. According to the Council of Trent, “Bishops, who have succeeded to the position of the Apostles, belong especially to the hierarchical order; they are set up, as the same Apostle [St. Paul] says, by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God; they are superior to priests, and can confer the sacrament of Confirmation, ordain ministers of the Church, and do several other functions which the rest who are of an inferior order have no power to perform” (Denzinger, 960).⁷ Again, the seventh canon on the Sacrament of Orders states: “If anyone says the bishops are not superior to priests, or have not the power of confirming and ordaining, or have that power but hold it in common with priests...let him be anathema” (Denzinger, 967).

6. Those who would question this statement would do well to read the Vatican Instruction entitled *Doctrina et exemplo* on “The Liturgical Formation of Future Priests,” *Documents on the Liturgy*, No. 332. They will find no recommendation that seminarians be taught anything about the sacrificial nature of their function or about the Real Presence.

7. Henry Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, a classical source of Catholic doctrine, cited hereafter as Denzinger. The English translation, entitled *The Sources of Catholic Dogma* (B. Herder: N.Y., 1955) is in some places defective.

However, as Fr. Bligh states in his study on the history of ordination:

From the practice of the Church it is quite certain that a simple priest can in certain circumstances (now not at all rare) administer Confirmation validly, and it is almost certain that with Papal authorization he can validly ordain even to the diaconate and priesthood. The Decree for the Armenians drawn up by the Council of Florence in 1439 says that the Bishop is the *ordinary* minister of Confirmation and the *ordinary* minister of ordination—which would seem to imply that in extraordinary circumstances the minister of either sacrament can be a priest. Since the decree *Spiritus Sancti Munera* of 14 September 1946, it has been the common law in the Latin Church that all parish priests may confer the sacrament of Confirmation on their subjects in danger of death. And there exist four Papal Bulls of the fifteenth century which empowered abbots, who were not bishops, but simple priests, to ordain their subjects to Sacred Orders; two of them explicitly give powers to ordain “even to the priesthood.”⁸

Some have held that such ordinations were invalid because the Popes were acting “under duress,” but the fact remains that, at least with regard to the diaconate, these powers were exercised for centuries without papal objection. In the Greek and other “Eastern Churches,” the priest is the ordinary minister of Confirmation and the bishop is the ordinary minister of ordination.⁹

Canon Law (1917) states that “the ordinary minister of sacred ordination is a consecrated bishop; the extraordinary minister is one, who, though without Episcopal character, has received either by law or by a special indult from the Holy See power to confer some orders” (CIC 782 and 951). Now the term “extraordinary” minister is important, for it is commonly used with regard to the priest who administers the sacrament of Confirmation; in the post-Conciliar Church it is used to describe lay-persons who distribute the bread and wine. And so it seems necessary to conclude that a simple priest can, by apostolic indult, be given certain powers, or, since no additional ceremony is involved, the right to exercise certain powers that normally are not considered appropriate to his status. One could draw a parallel with the sacrament of Baptism, which is normally administered by a priest, but which under certain circumstances, can be administered by any Catholic.

How are we to resolve these seeming conflicts? One solution is to consider the right of conferring Orders as juridical. When Pope Pius XII gave permission for parish priests to become extraordinary ministers of Confirmation, he did not confer this power by means of a sacramental rite, but through a mandate. Thus, one could hold that by his ordination every priest receives the power to confirm and ordain, but cannot utilize these powers without papal authorization. As Fr. Bligh says, “by his ordination to the priesthood a man receives no power whatever to confirm or

8. Fr. John Bligh, S.J., *Ordination to the Priesthood* (Sheed and Ward: N.Y., 1956).

9. It is of interest that during the 20th century 12 priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, not wishing to be under state-approved (KGB) bishops, gathered together and ordained a priest.

ordain.” He, however, is stamped with an indelible character so that “he is a fit person to whom Episcopal or Papal authority can communicate power when it seems good.”

On the assumption that the matter is jurisdictional, several questions can be raised. Did Christ Our Lord Himself lay down the rule that in normal—or perhaps all—circumstances, only bishops should confirm and ordain? Was this rule laid down by the Apostles in virtue of the authority they received from Christ? Is the rule sub-Apostolic, which would make it part of Ecclesiastical Law rather than Revelation? Further, the necessity for the papal indult can be conceived of as arising either from an ecclesiastical law restricting the priest’s valid use of his power, or from a Divine Law requiring that a priest who exercises these powers must receive a special authority or some kind of jurisdiction from the Pope. The Council of Trent deliberately left the answer to these questions open and undecided. In its sixth Canon on the Sacrament of Orders it simply states:

If anyone says that in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy, instituted by divine ordination and consisting of bishops, priests and deacons, let him be anathema.

Before adopting the phrase “by divine ordination” the Council considered the phrases “by divine institution” and “by a special divine ordination,” but rejected them because it did not wish to decide the question.

Reference to the practice of the early Church suggests that normally all the sacraments were administered either by the bishop or by priests explicitly delegated by the bishops. Fr. Bligh quotes De Puniet as saying that priests in apostolic times administered the churches under the direction of the Apostles and almost certainly enjoyed the fullness of sacerdotal powers which included the power of ordination. St. Jerome taught that the priest at his ordination received the power to ordain, which power was immediately restricted ecclesiastically. Even in mediaeval times, after the bishops ordained a priest, the other clergy present would place their hands on the head of the ordinands (the “matter” of the rite) and repeat the consecratory prayer—thus acting as “concelebrants.” In current traditional practice the priests bless the ordinands by placing their hands on their heads, but they no longer repeat the consecratory form. The point is important for under such circumstances it is clearly only the bishop who ordains. The post-Conciliar Church retains this practice. It is also pertinent that the history of the Popes as recorded in the traditional Breviary, often informs us of the number of ordinations they personally performed.

IS THE BISHOP ORDAINED OR CONSECRATED?

The question as posed is illegitimate, for Pius XII uses both terms interchangeably in his *Sacramentum Ordinis*.¹⁰ The real issue is whether or not the raising of a priest to the rank of bishop involves a sacramental act or an administrative decision. According to the *Catholic*

10. Pius XII, *Sacramentum Ordinis* (Acta Apostolicae Sedis), January 28, 1948.

Encyclopedia (1908), “most of the older scholastics were of the opinion that the episcopate is not a sacrament; this opinion finds able defenders even now (as for example, Billot’s *De Sacramentis*), though the majority of theologians hold it as certain that the bishop’s ordination is a sacrament.”¹¹ Whatever the answer, two points are clear: 1) the Council of Trent defines that bishops “belong to a divinely instituted hierarchy, that they are superior to priests, and that they have the power of confirming and ordaining which is proper to them” (Sess. XXIII, c. iv, can. 6 & 7); 2) Leo XIII, as already noted, clearly teaches that the episcopate “belongs most truly to the sacrament of Orders,” and Pius XII, in defining both the matter and form to be used in the rite, implicitly teaches that it is, indeed, a sacramental act. The position taken by this author is that, while the issue as to whether a simple priest receives the power (not the right) to ordain remains open, the episcopate remains part of the sacrament of Orders. Despite the fact that the power to ordain is a lesser power than that of offering the propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead (that is to say, the Holy Mass), and despite the fact that the priest may indeed already have this power, one can certainly hold that special Graces are required of a bishop to properly perform his functions, and that these Graces are transferred to him by means of a sacramental act. It is thus that the bishop receives within this sacrament what is called the *summum sacerdotium* or the “fullness of the priesthood.” Again, it should be stressed that in the ordination of priests, regardless of earlier practice, both in the traditional and the post-Conciliar practice, it is only the bishop who repeats both the matter and the form. Consequently, when a bishop ordains, the “validity” of his own orders and of his sacramental act remains not only essential, but critical.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTAL RITE OF ORDINATION

The rites used for ordination are to be found in the *Pontifical*, a book that contains all the rites and ceremonies that are normally reserved to bishops. Such was not always the case, for the first time we find reference to Pontificals as such is around the year 950. Prior to that time, however, ordination rites existed and were to be found in various collections under a variety of different titles. One of the earliest of such collections still extant is that compiled in Rome by the schismatic anti-Pope Hippolytus—about the year 217—and it is essentially from this source that Paul VI derived the new post-Conciliar rite of episcopal ordination.¹² Next in time are the three famous “sacramentaries” of the Roman Church, called the Leonine (Pope St. Leo died in 461), the Gelasian (Pope St. Gelasius died 496) and the Gregorian (Pope St. Gregory the Great died in 604). These collections of ceremonies include ordination rites. The last was revised and introduced into the Carolingian Empire during the eighth century; it was subsequently further

11. Section on “Orders,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908) (Appleton: N.Y., 1911).

12. Hippolytus was a schismatic bishop at the time that he compiled this text. Subsequently he was reconciled and died a martyr. His situation and the nature of this text are discussed in greater detail below. The reader is reminded that prior to the latter part of the fourth century, the Church was under persecution. Documentations during this era are, as a result, sparse.

revised and eventually became the Pontifical, a title that as such dates from 954. In the thirteenth century the celebrated canonist Guillaume Durand once again revised the text and this in turn was the basis of the first printed Pontifical which was issued in 1485. With the advent of printing, greater uniformity throughout Christendom became possible and Pope Innocent VII formally recommended the use of this text to all the churches in communion with Rome. Now, presumably, St. Leo did not himself create the ordination rite found in his sacramentary—but rather wrote down the practice of the Church as he received it. No significant change in the rites of the Western Church occurred between the time of St. Leo (461) and 1968.

THE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF THE ORDINATION RITES

In the sixth chapter of *Acts*, the disciples, at the bidding of the Apostles, chose seven deacons. “These were set before the Apostles; and they praying, imposed hands upon them.” The two elements discernible in this unique description of the Apostolic rite, that is, the outward gesture of imposing hands and the recitation of a prayer, form the substance of the rite of ordination.¹³

Prior to the twelfth century liturgical and theological writers did not concern themselves with determining the precise moment of ordination or the exact words required for validity. They were inspired with the principle of retaining intact all that had been handed down to them, though they did not hesitate at times to elaborate the rites further with appropriate additions. They were doubtless satisfied with the knowledge that the whole rite properly performed conferred the priesthood. However, when one reads their explanations of the symbolism involved in the rites, one can conclude that they had opinions about what was essential as opposed to what was ceremonial—thus some thought that the sacrament was conferred by the imposition of hands on the ordinand’s head, while others considered that it occurred when the bishop anointed the hands or gave the newly ordained priest the paten and chalice—the so-called “tradition of instruments.”¹⁴

As noted above, it was William of Auxerre or St. Albert the Great who introduced the Aristotelian terminology of “matter” and “form” into the discussion, a pattern followed by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, and all subsequent writers. Yet these individuals had differing opinions as to just what constituted proper matter and form. Once again, it should be stressed that they accepted without question the traditional rites of the Church handed down from time immemorial. They also recognized that these rites, like the Mass itself, had undergone certain changes in the way of appropriate additions (but not deletions) over the centuries. Thus, for example, the tapping of the shoulder of the deacon with the Scriptures could not have

13. Walter B. Clancy, *The Rites and Ceremonies of Sacred Ordination: A Historical Conspectus and a Canonical Commentary* (Catholic University of America: Washington, D.C., 1962).

14. “Tradition” in this context means “passing on” or “handing over.”

occurred prior to the establishment of the Scriptures which occurred some 300 years after the death of our Lord. Again, the “tradition of instruments” was added to the rite some time after the fourth century and is not even mentioned in any ritual composed before 900. One must logically assume that the essential form and matter remained unchanged from the time of the Apostles who ordained the first deacons and priests. Appropriate additions, unlike deletions, do not affect validity.

DETERMINING THE “SUBSTANCE” OF THE SACRAMENTAL FORM

As noted above, the form and matter of Holy Orders were not among those given *in specie*, or precise detail, by Our Lord. These being established by the Apostles, the Church was free to change the words of the form, providing she retained their “substantial” nature as specified by Christ and the Apostles.

The first “form” is to be found in the Decree for the Armenians promulgated in 1439:

The sixth sacrament is that of Orders; its matter is that by giving of which the Orders is conferred: thus the priesthood is conferred by giving the chalice with wine and of a paten with bread... The form of the priesthood is as follows: “Receive power to offer sacrifice in the Church for the living and the dead, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

This statement reflected the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas and the shared common practice of the Roman and Armenian Churches. It was, however, never considered as definitive. For one thing, the Greeks, the validity of whose Orders has never been questioned, do not practice the “tradition of instruments.” For another, historical studies demonstrate that this practice was introduced some time after the fourth century. Thus it is that the Fathers at the Council of Trent left the issue open and deliberately avoided defining either the matter or form of this sacrament.¹⁵

15. As Pope Pius XII pointed out in his *Sacramentum Ordinis*, the Church at the Council of Florence did not demand that the Greek Church adopt the tradition of the instruments. Hence it followed that the Decree to the Armenians was not meant to define the tradition of the instruments as being substantial to the rite for ordaining priests. St Alphonsus and Pope Benedict XIV were of the opinion that Eugene IV did not intend to determine the essential matter of the sacrament but desired simply to present a practical instruction to the Armenian Church concerning the use of the delivery of the instruments, and in no way sought to settle the question (Clancy, *The Rites and Ceremonies of Sacred Ordination*). Fr. P. Pourrat comments: “The *Decretum ad Armenos* is the official document of the Church that treats of the binary composition of the sacramental rite. It was, as we know, added to the decrees of the Council of Florence; yet it has not the value of a Conciliar *definition* (Fr. Pourrat’s italics). It is ‘merely a practical instruction’ intended for the United Armenians, and not for the whole Church. Hence, although the decree is worthy of great regard, still it does not impose itself on our Faith.” (*Theology of the Sacraments* [B. Herder: St. Louis, 1914], p. 51). Also see section on “Orders” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908).

EVENTS DURING THE REFORMATION

Luther, and those that followed after him, clearly denied that the Mass was an immolative sacrifice, and among other things, propitiatory for the living and the dead. If such is the case, it follows that there is no need for a priesthood. Hence it is that Protestants deny that Holy Orders and the rites that flow from Orders are in fact sacraments at all. (They only accept Baptism and Marriage as such.) However the reformers faced a serious problem. The laity was unwilling to accept as religious leaders individuals who were not in some way consecrated, and in whom they did not see the character of their familiar priests.¹⁶ As a result, the reformers devised new rites aimed at incorporating their new and heterodox theology, but clothed them in the outward forms familiar to the people. In essence they did this by changing the form of the sacrament, and by deleting any statements in the accompanying rites (what theologians call “*significatio ex adjunctis*”) that specified special powers and graces such as were pertinent to the priesthood or episcopacy.

In England, Cranmer (strongly influenced by both Luther and Calvin) was the individual who masterminded the changes during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI—changes incorporated into the Anglican Ordinal.¹⁷ During this period innumerable “presbyters” and “bishops” were “ordained” with rites aimed at voiding the Catholic understanding of their function.¹⁸ Shortly after this first apostasy of the English realm the true Faith was restored under Catholic Queen Mary. Almost at once the problem of the validity of these Cranmerian ordinations came into question.

In June of 1555 Pope Paul IV issued the Bull *Praeclara carissimi*, in which he stated that anyone ordained a bishop who was not “*rite et recte ordinatus*” (properly and correctly ordained) was to be ordained again. He further clarified this statement in another Brief entitled *Regimini universalis* (issued Oct. 1555) in which he stated, “*eos tantum episcopos et archiepiscopos qui non in forma ecclesiae ordinati et consecrati fuerunt, rite et recte ordinatos dici non posse*”

16. It is never the common people—the laity—who desire changes. On the contrary, the majority of people prefer the security of stability, especially in religious matters. And in fact, it is virtually impossible for the laity to have wished for changes in the sacrament of Orders insofar as their use was restricted to those in religion.

17. The Episcopalians use this ordinal. Prior to the American Revolution they were American Anglicans. However, the Anglican Church recognizes the King or Queen of England as the head of their church and such would have been inappropriate in America after 1776. Doctrinally however they are virtually the same ecclesiastical body. Thus for example, Episcopalians adhere to the same “39 Articles” which among other things deny that the Mass is an immolative sacrifice, or that the priesthood is a sacrament.

18. The Reformers “loved” the term *presbyter*, which literally translated from the Latin meant “elder.” This allowed them to use a Latin word meaning priest in an altered sense in English. (The early Church avoided using the term *sacerdos* or priest because of the confusion that might result with the pagan priesthood.)

(anyone ordained to the rank of bishops or archbishops by rites other than those used by the Church are not properly and correctly ordained). To be properly and correctly ordained it was necessary to use the “customary form of the Church.” In accord with the traditional practice of the Church, the fact that rites were performed by schismatics did not invalidate them. Where doubt existed conditional re-ordination was required.

This practice of the Church did nothing to solve the issue of what was correct form and matter, and what has to be understood is that the theologians of that period were not concerned with determining the matter and the form, but with assuring themselves that the entire rite of the Church be used with the proper intention on the part of the officiating consecrator. But it was also a period when the number of Protestant sects was growing by leaps and bounds, and with them the number of rites containing major and minor changes. As in the Mass, minor changes did not necessarily invalidate the rite or even make it depart from what was considered customary form.

To make matters worse, affairs in the Anglican Church later took a conservative turn. After the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Puritans, with their anti-sacramentarian attitudes, gained increasing control. But in 1662, under Archbishop Laud, there was a reaction in the opposite direction which resulted in the creation of a “High Anglican” party that Romanized much of the Anglican liturgy while firmly retaining her reformist principles. Words were added to the consecratory forms of Orders to bring them closer to Catholic practice—specifically the term “priest” and “bishop” were introduced into their formulas and the claim put forth that the Anglican body was, like the Greek Church, separate but “orthodox.” This led to the birth of the “branch theory” which claimed for the High Anglicans the status of a “sister Church.” Regardless of the words used, however, the adherence to Protestant theology (Anglicans still had to adhere to the “39 Articles”) left these rites with at least a defect of intention.¹⁹ And so the debates went on as to what was proper form and matter, and what constituted the essential words

19. For the sake of completeness the form in the Edwardine Ordinal for the Anglican Priesthood is: “Receive the holy goste: whose synnes thou doest forgeue, they are forgeuen: and whose synnes thou doest retayne, they are retayned: and bee thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments. In the name of the father and the sonne and the holy goste. Amen.” This was changed in 1662 to: “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive etc.”

For the Episcopate: “Take the Holy Goste, and remember that thou stirre up the grace of God, which is in thee, by imposition of hands: for God hath not geuen us the spirite of feare, but of power and loue and of sobernesse.” This was altered in 1662 to: “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of hands; In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And remember that thou stir up etc.” Several theologians have stated their opinion that the 1662 forms would be valid “if used in a Catholic setting or in orthodox circumstances” (*Why are Anglican (Episcopal) Orders Invalid?* by Rev. M.D. Forrest, M.S.C. [Radio Replies Press: St. Paul, Minn., 1938]).

required to confer the priestly and/or episcopal character on ordinands.

A sacrament must by definition be an “outward sign of inward Grace instituted by Christ for our sanctification” (Catechism of the Council of Trent). As Leo XIII stated in his *Apostolicae curiae*, “all know that the sacraments of the New Law, as sensible and efficient signs of invisible Grace, ought both to signify the Grace which they effect, and effect the Grace which they signify. Although the signification ought to be found in the essential rite, that is to say, in the ‘matter’ and ‘form,’ it still pertains chiefly to the ‘form’ since the ‘matter’ is the part which is not determined by itself but which is determined by the ‘form.’” (One can illustrate this with Baptism where the matter is water and the form is “I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”) The “form” is then of paramount importance and it is primarily with this that we will concern ourselves in what follows.

THE WORK OF FR. JEAN MORAN

By the middle of the 17th century, both as a result of printing and the increase in international travel, scholars became familiar with the ordination rites in use throughout the world. In 1665, Jean Moran, a French Roman Catholic theologian, published a work in which he set out a large collection of ordination rites of both the Eastern and Western Churches. Following the principle that the matter and form must be something which was held in common by all these valid rites, he concluded that for matter what was required was the imposition of hands,²⁰ and that all the forms agreed in requiring that the office conferred must be specified. To quote him directly:

Let Protestants search all Catholic rituals not only of the West, but of the East; they will not find any one form of consecrating bishops (or priests), that hath not the word bishop (or priest) in it, or some others expressing the particular authority, the power of a bishop (or priest) distinct from all other degrees of holy orders.

This of course was a private opinion and theologians continued to debate as to whether it was sufficient that the office conferred be mentioned in the other parts of the rite—the so-called principle of “*significatio ex adjunctis*.” Further, as already mentioned, Protestant sects who had in earlier times avoided the word “priest” like the plague, began to reintroduce the word “priest” within the context of their rites—understanding by the term “priest,” not a “sacrificing priest,” but an individual elected by the community to preach the Word of God. In a similar manner they reintroduced the term “bishop”—but understood in a purely juridical or administrative sense and often translated as “overseer.” This particular issue—namely, the need to mention the office of the ordinand within the “form”—was seemingly settled by Leo XIII’s *Apostolicae curae*, which

20. Because the matter has become a contended issue in recent time, it should be noted that while usual practice involves the extension of both hands, it suffices if only one is extended over the head of the ordinand (cf. discussion in *Dictionnaire de la Théologie Catholique*).

criticized the Anglican form prior to 1662 for lacking this specification, and criticized the Anglican form after 1662 for using the terms priest and bishop in other than the Catholic sense.

THE DEFINITION OF PIUS XII

As a result of the work of Jean Moran, Catholic theologians shifted the grounds of their objection to Protestant ordination rites. Two things became clear: 1) the fact that they had no “tradition of the instruments” could no longer be said to invalidate them; and 2) the prayer, “Accept the Holy Ghost,” which the Anglicans used in their Episcopal ordinations and which they claimed transferred the sacramental power, was not universally used, and hence could not be said to constitute an essential part of the rite. Debate on the issue of the “form” continued until 1947 when Pius XII determined for all future times just what the matter and the form for the sacrament of Orders was.

His definition is to be found in the Decree *Sacramentum Ordinis*,²¹ which document has, according to such renowned theologians as J.M. Hervé and Felix Capello, all the characteristics of an infallible definition.²² According to Fr. Bligh, “its purpose was not speculative...but practical.” The rite itself was in no way changed, and, indeed, Pius XII insisted that it should not be. His aim was “to put an end to scruples about the validity of Orders received by priests who felt that some possibly essential part of the long and complicated rite had not been properly performed in their cases.” For the future it intended “to remove all disputes and controversy: the character, Graces, and powers of the sacrament are all conferred simultaneously by the imposition of hands and the words *Da, quaesumus*.... The other ceremonies—the vesting, anointing, tradition of instruments, and second imposition of hands—do not effect what they signify; they signify in detail what has already been effected by the matter and the form.”

FORM AND ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR ORDAINING PRIESTS (PIUS XII)

21. Pius XII, *Sacramentum Ordinis* (Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Jan. 28, 1948).

22. J.M. Hervé, *Man. Theol. Dog.*, Tom. iv, ed. nova A Orentino Larnicol C.S. Sp. Recognita, 1962: “*Atque Pius XII, in Const. Apostl. ‘Sacramentum Ordinis,’ ut omnino videtur, loquitur ut Pator et Doctor Supremus, et vere definit doctrinam de fide vel moribus (doctrinam de essentia sacramenti Ordinis, quae intime connectitur cum aliis veritatibus revelatis), ab universa Ecclesia tenendum.*” Similarly, Msgr. G.D. Smith argues that when the Church defines what is and what is not sufficient to confer a sacrament, such decisions involve an implied infallibility (“The Church and Her Sacraments,” *Clergy Review*, Apr. 1950, and referred to by Fr. Francis Clark in his *Anglican Orders and Defect in Intention*). Fr. Clancy, *The Rites and Ceremonies of Sacred Ordination*, gives many other authorities that concur in this opinion. To quote Francisco Miranda Vincente, Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo: “This Apostolic Constitution is a true and solemn dogmatic declaration, and at the same time, as the terms used in the fourth and fifth point indicate, it is a doctrinal and disciplinary decree.”

Pius XII stated that “the form consists of the words of the Preface, of which these are essential and required for validity”: “*Da, quaesumus, omnipotens Pater, in hos famulos tuos presbyterii dignitatem. Innova in visceribus eorum spiritum sanctitatis, ut acceptum a te, Deus, secundi meriti munus obtineant; censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuent*” (Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty Father, to these Thy servants, the dignity of the priesthood; renew the spirit of holiness within them so that they may obtain the office of the second rank received from Thee, O God, and may, by the example of their lives inculcate the pattern of holy living).

Similarly, in the ordination of bishops, the same infallible document states that “the form consists of the words of the Preface of which the following are essential and therefore necessary for validity”: “*Comple in sacerdote tuo ministerii tui summum, et ornamentis totius glorificationis instructum coelestis unguenti rore sanctific*” (Fill up in Thy priest the perfection [*summum* can also be translated “fullness”] of Thy ministry and sanctify him with the dew of Thy heavenly ointment, this thy servant decked out with the ornaments of all beauty).

It should be stressed that Pius XII in no way changed the rite—indeed, he stressed that the rite was to remain intact. At the end of the document he states:

We teach, declare, and determine this, all persons not withstanding, no matter what special dignity they may have, and consequently we wish and order such in the Roman Pontifical.... No one therefore is allowed to infringe upon this Constitution given by us, nor should anyone dare to have the audacity to contradict it.

THE PROBLEM OF *SIGNIFICATIO EX ADJUNCTIS*

According to the majority of theologians, “Catholic theology teaches that if a properly constituted minister of a sacrament uses due matter and form, with at least the minimum personal intention necessary, his sacrament is valid, even if he adheres to a sect which is openly heretical.”²³ Now if this is the case, it would seem that the remainder of the rite—the so-called “ceremonial” part—is not essential for validity. (As has been pointed out elsewhere, a priest who uses these criteria within a non-Catholic rite is guilty of sacrilege, but sacrilege as such does not necessarily invalidate the sacrament.)

Despite this principle, Pope Leo XIII taught that the revised 1662 form of Anglican Orders is invalid (among other reasons) because the terms “priest” and “bishop” mean vastly different things to Anglicans than they do to Catholics. This, he said, is made clear from the other parts of the Anglican rite which deliberately delete every reference to the sacrificial nature of these

23. Francis Clark, S.J., “Les ordinations anglicanes, problème oecuménique,” *Gregorianum*, vol. 45, 1964. In essence, his address to the Fathers at Vatican II on this topic. See also his review of Michael Davies’ *The Order of Melchisedech* (Augustine: Devon, England, 1979).

exalted states. To quote him directly:

In the whole [Anglican] ordinal not only is there no clear mention of the sacrifice, of consecration, of the priesthood (*sacerdotium*), and of the power of consecrating and offering sacrifice, but, as We have just stated, every trace of these things which had been in such prayers of the Catholic rite as they had not only entirely rejected, was deliberately removed and struck out (*Apostolicae curae*).

In the traditional Catholic rite innumerable references make it clear that the primary function of the priest is to offer the sacrifice; his other functions are also delineated. (So also with the bishop.) The fact that other parts of the rite make the meaning of the form quite clear is termed *significatio ex adjunctis*. It would seem that while a positive *significatio ex adjunctis* may not be essential for validity, a negative one—as for example when every reference to the sacrificial nature of the priesthood is deliberately omitted—may invalidate the form.²⁴

THE POST-CONCILIAR RITE FOR ORDAINING PRIESTS

The issue of *significatio ex adjunctis* becomes critical in evaluating the validity of the post-Conciliar rite for ordaining priests. Like its Anglican prototype, the new Latin “form” contains the word “priest,” but like its Anglican prototype, the remainder of the new rite fails to specify

24. The importance of *significatio ex adjunctis* is a confusing issue insofar as the Church teaches that “form, matter, valid orders, and intention are all that are required for validity of the sacraments” (Council of Florence). Clearly, for a priest to fulfill these criteria in an inappropriate setting (as for example, a Satanic Mass), however sacrilegious, is possible. With regard to Anglican Orders, Leo XIII discussed the importance of the defects of the rite surrounding the form, but left the issue confused. As Francis Clark, S.J. points out, theologians have given seven different interpretations to his words (*Anglican Orders and Defect of Intention*). Francis Clark defines *significatio ex adjunctis* in the following terms: “The sacramental signification of an ordination rite is not necessarily limited to one phrase or formula, but can be clearly conveyed from many parts of the rite. These other parts could thus contribute, either individually or in combination, to determining the sacramental meaning of the operative formula in an unambiguous sense. Thus the wording of an ordination form, even if not specifically determinate in itself, can be given the required determination from its setting (*ex adjunctis*), that is, from the other prayers and actions of the rite, or even from the connotation of the ceremony as a whole in the religious context of the age” (*The Catholic Church and Anglican Orders* [CTS, 1962], quoted by Michael Davies in his *Order of Melchisedech*). The term “negative” *significatio ex adjunctis* is not hallowed by theological usage and is a phrase of convenience. Francis Clark lays great stress on this concept without using the term—compare his *Anglican Orders and Defect of Intention*. A clearer way of demonstrating negative *significatio ex adjunctis* is the following: a priest saying the proper words of consecration in the Mass follows them with a statement or intention that negated the meaning of those words. The deliberate removal of all references to the sacrificial nature of the priesthood (or of ordaining for bishops) in the Anglican ordinal is equivalent to denying the purpose for which a man is ordained.

the sacrificial nature of the priesthood.²⁵ Thus it would appear to suffer from precisely the same defects that Leo XIII pointed to in the Anglican rite.

It is interesting to consider Michael Davies' assessment of the new rite.²⁶ He points out that, while the "form" used in the new rite is not greatly different from that specified by Pius XII, it nevertheless contains nothing "to which any Protestant could take exception," and nothing that "is in the least incompatible with Protestant teaching." Now, if the form is "indeterminate," and if the remainder of the rite fails to specify that it intends to ordain sacrificing priests, then the new rite suffers from exactly the same defects as its Anglican prototype. The fact that Leo XIII's pronouncement irreformably condemned the Anglican rite on just these grounds obviously justifies raising questions about the validity of the post-Conciliar result.

According to Michael Davies:²⁷

Paul VI promulgated the new ordination rites for deacon, priest, and bishop with his Apostolic Constitution *Pontificalis Romani recognitio* of 18 June 1968. Where the rite for ordaining a priest is concerned, the first point to make is that the matter and essential form designated by Pius XII in *Sacramentum Ordinis* remain unchanged. [This is not strictly speaking true as the next section points out.] This is a point in favor of the new rite. It is the only point in its favor. The traditional rite of ordination has been remodeled "in the most drastic manner," and following Cranmer's example, this has been achieved principally by the subtraction of "prayers and ceremonies in previous use," prayers and ceremonies which gave explicit sacerdotal signification to the indeterminate formula specified by Pius XII as the essential form. This formula does indeed state that the candidates for ordination are to be elevated to the priesthood—but so does the Anglican. Within the context of the traditional Roman Pontifical there was not the least suspicion of ambiguity—within the new rite there most certainly is. While the new rite in no way suggests that it is not intended to ordain sacrificing priests, where (and if) it does refer to the sacrifice of the Mass it does so in muted tones, and with considerable stress laid on the ministry of the Word—a change in emphasis well calculated to please the Protestants.... Cranmer's reform has been followed not simply in the composition of the new Ordinal, denuded of almost every mandatory reference to the sacrifice of the Mass—the very term "sacrifice of the Mass" does not occur in either the Latin or vernacular.

25. Cf. the Vatican Instruction entitled, *Doctrina et exemplo*, on "The Liturgical Formation of Future Priests," where there is no recommendation that seminarians be taught anything about the sacrificial nature of their function or about the Real Presence.

26. Taken from his *Order of Melchisedech*, which strongly defends the validity and legitimacy of the new rite.

27. Michael Davies, *The Order of Melchisedech*, p. 75. Michael Davies' "and if," which he places in parenthesis, is highly significant, for in the new rite the priest is not ordained as a sacrificing priest, but in order to "say the liturgy," which is of course, the *Novus Ordo Missae*.

So much is this the case that Michael Davies believes that the strongest—and perhaps only—argument in favor of its validity is that it was promulgated by, in his mind, a valid Pope (Paul VI). While the principle that a valid Pope cannot promulgate an invalid sacrament is correct, Michael Davies seems oblivious to the possibility that his argument can be inverted. If the rite is shown to be invalid, or for that matter, even doubtful, one is forced to question the legitimacy of the Pope.²⁸

Michael Davies is of course mistaken when he states that the post-Conciliar “form” for ordaining priests is unchanged. Consider once again the words specified by Pius XII: “*Da, quaesumus, omnipotens Pater, in hos famulos tuos presbyterii dignitatem. Innova in visceribus eorum spiritum sanctitatis, ut acceptum a te, Deus, secundi meriti munus obtineant; censuramque morum exemplo suae conversationis insinuent*” (Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty Father, to these Thy servants, the dignity of the priesthood; renew the spirit of holiness within them so that they may obtain the office of the second rank received from Thee, O God, and may, by the example of their lives inculcate the pattern of holy living). The sacrosanct character of the substance of a sacramental form has already been discussed. Pope Pius XII specified that for validity the sacrament of Orders must clearly specify the sacramental effects involved. These are, in the rite under consideration, the power of Orders and the Grace of the Holy Ghost (*Sacramentum Ordinis*).

If we examine this new formula we see that the first part expresses the power of the priestly order, but not the Grace of the Holy Ghost. The word “priesthood,” however, has lost its specifically Catholic meaning during the past few centuries, so that the second sentence fulfills two functions: it specifies that the priesthood is an “office of the second rank,” and further specifies that the “Grace of the Holy Ghost” accompanies the sacrament.

When we come to the post-Conciliar form, confusion reigns. In the Latin, the form specified in Paul VI’s official promulgation (found in the *Pontificalis Romani Recognitio*) uses the phrase “*in his famulos tuos*” (similar to the traditional form and Pius XII), while the *Acta Apostolica*—equally official—uses the phrase “*his famulis tuis*.” Further, regardless of which post-Conciliar form is considered “official,” both delete the word “*ut*.”

What do these changes signify? The deletion of the word “*ut*” (meaning “so that”) removes the causal relationship between the two sentences. No longer is it made clear that the ordinand

28. It should be noted that sacramental rites have never been considered valid because they were instituted by a Pontiff, but because they were instituted by Christ. A Pontiff may, when doubt arises, specify what it was that Christ intended. A Pope cannot create a new sacrament. Hence it is important to know whether the claim that the post-Conciliar sacraments are substantially the same as the traditional ones becomes important. If they are, then why the changes; if they are not then are they sacraments? In the second edition of *The Order of Melchisedech* Michael Davies considers it a “fundamental doctrine” that “any sacramental rite approved by the Pope must certainly be valid.” In essence, this means that should the Pope say “green apples” is a valid sacramental form, we must accept it.

receives the “office of the second rank” as a result of the “renewal of the spirit of holiness.” Whether or not this invalidates the rite is open to question and much depends on the reason why *ut* was deleted.

By changing *in hos famulos tuos* (on these Thy servants) to *his famulis tuis*, not only are the words of Pius XII further altered, but their sense is changed. *In hos famulos tuos* implies giving something to the ordinand in such a manner that it enters into him and becomes interior to him. To specify *his famulis tuis* has the sense of giving something to someone merely as an external possession—without the idea of it entering into him and becoming part of him. The significance of this difference should hit home, as Fr. Jenkins points out, when we remember that we are speaking here of the order of priesthood, which involves the indelible character imprinted upon the very soul of the recipient. This idea is clearly conveyed in the traditional expression, but not in the new form created by Paul VI.²⁹ Rather, the new formula communicates the idea that the priesthood is an external office (such as the “Presidency”), and such as Reformers believed in. Such a change in meaning is thus clearly “substantial.”

Things are made even more confusing when the vernacular is used. The “provisional” ICEL (English) translation used between June 1968 and June 1970 asked that the ordinand be given “the dignity” of the “presbyterate.” Now the term “presbyter” has been used throughout history by the Reformers to designate their non-sacrificing and non-ordained “ministers.” As I have clearly shown above, the term in English can in no way be considered as equivalent to “priest”—indeed, it signifies just the opposite, and even the High Anglicans reject its use.³⁰ This casts still further doubt on validity—as is recognized by the fact that after 1970 the ICEL translation no longer used it, but reverted to “priesthood.” However, the innovators seem determined to maintain the doubtful status of the rite. Even though in 1970 they changed “presbyter” back to “priesthood,” they also changed the meaning of the second part of the formula by mistranslating and changing “the office of the second rank” (the importance of which was demonstrated above) to “co-workers with the order of bishops.” Needless to say, this latter phrase is completely indeterminate and can mean almost anything except “office of the second rank.”

Highly significant of the post-Conciliar presidential “ordination” is the omission or rather deletion of the phrase which states that a priest is ordained according to the Order of Melchisedech, for Melchisedech who is both king and priest, is a figure of the Messiah who

29. Fr. William Jenkins has discussed this issue in great detail in *The Roman Catholic*, Vol. III, Nos. 8 and 11 (1981), Oyster Bay Cove, N.Y., 11771. Still further confusion results from consulting *The Documents on the Liturgy, 1963-1979* (Liturgical Press Collegeville, Minn.). Document 324 tells us that the Latin taken from AAS is *in hos famulos tuos*, but the current official English translation is, “Grant to these servants of Yours” rather than “confer on these Thy servants.”

30. Rama P. Coomaraswamy, “Once a Presbyter, Always a Presbyter,” *The Roman Catholic*, Vol. V, No. 7, August 1983.

offers a sacrifice of bread and wine.³¹

Consider some of the other deletions. In the traditional rite the Bishop addresses those about to be ordained stating that, “It is a priest’s duty to offer the sacrifice, to bless, to lead, to preach and to baptize.” This admonition has been abolished in the new ceremony. In the traditional rite, while the men to be ordained lie prostrate on the floor, the Litany of Saints is sung: “That thou wouldst recall all who have wandered from the unity of the Church, and lead all unbelievers to the light of the Gospel.” This unecumenical petition is excluded. Again, in the traditional rite, after the newly ordained priests are vested with stole and chasuble, the bishop recites a long prayer including the words, “Theirs be the task to change with blessing undefiled, for the service of Thy people, bread and wine into the body and blood of Thy Son.” This prayer has been abolished.

In the traditional rite, after the anointing and consecrating of the hands which are then bound together, the bishop extends to each priest the chalice containing wine and water, with a paten and host upon it for the priest to touch, while he says to each: “Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass, both for the living and the dead in the name of the Lord.” This has also been abolished. Again, just before the post-communion, each new priest kneels before the bishop who lays both hands upon his head and says: “Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” Again, this has been abolished. The final blessing of the bishop: “The blessing of God Almighty come down upon you and make you blessed in the priestly order, enabling you to offer propitiatory sacrifices for sins of the people to Almighty God” has been abolished. So much for the *significatio ex adjunctis* of the new rite.

But if all this is not enough to cast doubt on the validity of post-Conciliar ordinations, there is yet more. Obviously, one of the requirements for valid ordination of a priest is a validly ordained bishop. No matter how correct the rites used for the priesthood are, the absence of a validly ordained bishop would make the rite a farce.³² Let us then look at what has been done for the episcopate.

31. The significance of this omission is clarified when we read in Psalm 109 that “the Lord swore and will not repent: thou art a priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek.” St. Paul refers to this in Hebrews 7:21 when he says, “For those [Jewish] priests were made without an oath by Him who said unto Him the Lord swore . . .” By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better priesthood. It further distinguishes the priesthood of Christ, in which the Catholic priest shares, from the Aaronic priesthood which terminated with the Crucifixion. Cf. Rev. J.M. Neal and R. F. Littledek, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. III (Masters: London, 1874), p. 450.

32. It is pertinent that the “bishops” selected for ordaining the priests of the Society of St. Peter (“The Pope’s own traditional Order”) are Ratzinger (now “Pope” Benedict XVI) and Meyer. Both of these received their episcopal “consecration” by the new rites to be discussed in the body of this text. If they are in fact not bishops, all the priests they ordain—even if they use the traditional rites as they state they intend to do—are no more priests than any layman.

COMPARING THE TRADITIONAL WITH THE POST-CONCILIAR MATTER AND FORM FOR ORDAINING BISHOPS

As noted above, Pope Pius XII, while in no way changing the rite used since time immemorial,³³ determined in a presumably infallible manner that:

In the ordination or consecration of bishops the matter is the imposition of hands which is done by the consecrating bishop. The form consists of the words in the Preface of which the following are essential and therefore necessary for validity: “*comple in sacerdote tuo ministerii tui summum, et ornamentis totius glorificationis instructum coelestis unguenti rore sanctifica*”—fill up in Thy priest the perfection (*summum* can also be translated “fullness”) of Thy ministry and sanctify him with the dew of Thy heavenly ointment this Thy servant decked out with the ornaments of all beauty.

Later in the same document he states: “We teach, declare, and determine this, all persons notwithstanding, no matter what special dignity they may have, and consequently we wish and order such in the Roman Pontifical.... No one therefore is allowed to infringe upon this Constitution given by us, nor should anyone dare to have the audacity to contradict it.”

One would have thought that this statement by Pius XII had settled the issue once and for all. Not so! Only 20 years later we find Paul VI issuing his Apostolic Constitution entitled *Pontificalis Romani* (June 23, 1968) in which he retains the matter—the laying on of hands—but in which he specifies that the form for ordaining bishops is to be:

et nunc effunde super hunc electum eam virtutem, quae a te est, spiritum principalem, quem dedisti dilecto filio tuo Jesu Christo, quem ipse donavit sanctis apostolis, qui constituerunt ecclesiam per singula loca, ut sanctuarium tuum, in gloriam et laudem indificentem nominis tui—So now pour forth upon this chosen one that power which is from You, the governing Spirit whom You gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the holy Apostles, who found the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.³⁴

33. As Pius XII stated in his Apostolic Constitution: “Those things which We have above declared and established regarding the matter and the form are not to be understood in such a way as to make it allowable for the other rites as prescribed in the Roman Pontifical to be neglected or passed over even in the slightest detail; nay, rather We order that all the prescriptions contained in the Roman Pontifical itself be faithfully observed and performed.”

34. Pius XII said that the words in his form were “essential” and required for validity. Paul VI states that the words that constitute his form “belong to the nature of the rite and are consequently required for validity.” He further states in the same document that “it is our will that these our decrees and prescriptions be firm and effective now and in the future, notwithstanding to the extent necessary, the apostolic constitutions and ordinances issued by our predecessors and other prescriptions, even those

We have then two forms, or more precisely two groups of “essential” words wherein the substance of the form is to be found, and both of which are stated to be required for validity. How are we to explain this apparent disparity? We know that the Church has the right to change the wording of the form for Holy Orders, but only insofar as she doesn’t change their “substance” or meaning. The problem to be resolved then, is whether both forms mean the same thing. Several approaches are possible:

1) We can compare the wording of the two forms and find those words or phrases held in common. Doing this however yields the following common element: the single word “*et*” which means “and.” Now, obviously “and” cannot represent the substantial aspect of these two forms and such an approach must be rejected as absurd.

2) Another way to determine the substance of the form is to consider the various consecratory prayers in use throughout the universal Church (Eastern and Western). This was indeed done by Jean Moran, and still later, by the English bishops in their “Vindication of the Bull,” *Apostolicae curae*.³⁵

In each of the rites which the Catholic Church has recognized, the “essential form” is contained in a “consecrating prayer” to accompany the imposition of hands, and these prayers are in all cases of the same type, defining in some way or other the Orders to which the candidate is being promoted, and beseeching God to bestow upon him the graces of his new state.³⁶

They then proceed to give a list of these prayers which includes the ancient Leonine Sacramentary “still preserved in the modern Pontifical,” the Greek, the Syro-Maronite (which is also the Syro-Jacobite), the Nestorian, the Armenian, the Coptic (or Alexandro-Jacobite), and the Abyssinian, together with the ancient Gallican, the rite in the Apostolic constitutions, and the “Canons of St. Hippolytus.” They proceed to list the significant words respectively in each—the “high priesthood” (*summi sacerdotii*), the “Pontifical dignity,” the term “bishop,” the “perfect (or requiring particular mention and derogation” (*Pontificalis Romani, Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, July 29, 1968.)

35. *A Vindication of the Bull “Apostolicae curae,”* A Letter on Anglican Orders by the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster in reply to the Letter Addressed to them by the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York (Longmans, Green and Co.: London, 1898); also to be found in Bishop Peter Richard Kendrick’s *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations* (Cummiskey: Phil., 1848).

36. “It is not essential to express the word, ‘deacon,’ ‘priest,’ or ‘bishop,’ but the form must at least express some clear equivalent. Thus ‘the order of the Blessed Stephen’ is a clear equivalent of the order of deacon. It is not essential to express the main power of the priest or the bishop in the form, but if this main power were expressed, it too would be an equivalent. However, it is essential to express *either* the order *or* its main power, and if the main power is not only left out, but positively excluded, then the right name, though kept, is not the right name in reality but only a shadow. Now, the main power of a true priest is to offer a true sacrifice, and at least one of the main powers of a bishop is to make priests” (H.C. Semple, S.J., *Anglican Ordinations* [Benzinger: N.Y., 1906]).

complete) priest,” and the “episcopate.” This specification is to be found in all the known used forms (i.e., in the essential words of the various Western Catholic and Orthodox Churches).³⁷ It is even found in the Canons of Hippolytus. *The form of Paul VI does not fill these requirements.* Present in the words specified by Pius XII, *it is conspicuous by its absence in the post-Conciliar form. Neither the rank, nor the power, nor a clear equivalent is present.* And as Leo XIII made clear in his *Apostolicae curae*, the mentioning of the Holy Ghost—if “governing Spirit” is in fact the Holy Ghost—is insufficient.

3) Another way to determine what is substantial is to consider the opinions of the theologians during the post-Reformation period. They are reviewed in some detail by Paul Bradshaw in his history of the Anglican Ordinal. One such individual was the Benedictine Wilfrid Raynal who stated that a valid form must express the distinctive character of the order being conferred in one of three ways: a) an allusion to the type found in the ancient Testament of the order conferred; b) the mention of some spiritual power which is the distinctive privilege of the order to which the candidate is raised; or c) the actual mention made of the office under the name which from earliest times has become attached to it, namely *summus sacerdos* for bishop or *sacerdos secundi ordinis* for priest. He further added that the actual mention of the words “bishop” and “priest” must really and truly bear the meaning attached to them by the Universal Church. A formal denial of the distinctive character of these two sacred offices must vitiate the intention, and would render the ordination null and void. Now, as Bradshaw points out, “all the Western and Eastern forms fulfilled these requirements.” *The new rite of Paul VI does not.*

All debate is resolved by the statement of Pius XII in his *Sacramentum Ordinis*. As the renowned theologian J.M. Hervé, who considers this definition infallible, states: “*forma vero, quae et una est, sunt verba, quibus significatur effectum sacramentale, silicet potestas Ordinis et gratia Spiritus Sancti*”—the true form (i.e., the substance of the form) is that which signifies the

37. Taken from Semple’s book, *Anglican Ordinations*, the following are the various presumed consecratory forms for bishop (presumed as the Church never so specified prior to Pius XII: Ancient Roman and Ancient Gallican: “. . . and therefore to these Thy servants whom Thou has chosen to the ministry of the *high priesthood*”; Greek: “Do Thou O Lord of all, strengthen and confirm this Thy servant, that by the hand of me, a sinner, and of the assisting ministers and fellow-bishops, and by the coming, the strength, and grace of the Holy Ghost . . . he may obtain the *episcopal dignity*”; Maronite: “Thou who canst do all things, adorn with all virtues . . . this Thy servant whom Thou has made worthy to receive from Thee the sublime *order of bishops*”; Nestorian: “We offer before Thy Majesty. . . this Thy servant whom Thou hast chosen and set apart that he may be a *bishop*”; Coptic: “O Lord, God, Almighty Ruler . . . bestow, therefore, this same grace upon Thy servant N., whom thou has chosen as *bishop*”; Armenian: “The Divine Grace calleth this N. from the priesthood to the *episcopate*. I impose hands. Pray that he may become worthy of the rank of *bishop*”; Liturgy of the Constitutions of the Apostles: “Give O God . . . to this Thy servant whom Thou hast chosen to the *episcopate* to feed Thy people and discharge the Office of *pontiff*”; Canons of Hippolytus: “O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . look down upon Thy servant N., granting him Thy strength and power, the spirit which Thou didst give to the holy Apostles, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Give to him, O Lord, the *episcopate*.”

sacramental effect, which is to say the power of orders (i.e., priest or bishop) and the Grace of the Holy Spirit.”³⁸

Consider once again the form specified by Paul VI:

So now pour forth upon this chosen one that power which is from You, the governing Spirit whom You gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the holy Apostles, who found the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.

It is perfectly clear that in no place is it specified that the rank or dignity of a bishop has been conferred. The request that God give the “governing Spirit” (*spiritum principalem*—whatever that is) “whom You gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the holy Apostles” may imply that he is raised to the rank of the Apostles, but it doesn’t clearly so state. The sacramental effect is not clearly specified and at best we are left with another post-Conciliar ambiguity. Again, in the former, the Grace of the Holy Spirit is clearly indicated by the time-honored phrase “*Coelestis unguenti rore*” while in the latter we are left with a phrase entirely new to sacramental theology—*spiritum principalem*. Insofar as some will argue that this phrase (or the phrase “*eam virtutem quae a te est, spiritum principalem*”) suffices for the substance of the form, and indeed, insofar as it is the only phrase in the new form for which such a claim could be made, it behooves us to examine it in detail.

SPIRITUM PRINCIPALEM—WHAT IS IT?

Apart from the concoction ascribed to Hippolytus (discussed below), the phrase “*spiritum principalem*” is not to be found in any known ordination rite, as can be seen by referring to either *Vindication of the Bull “Apostolicae curae,”* or Bishop Kendrick’s book on *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, both of which list all the known episcopal rites. The phrase is found in only one place in Scripture—Psalm 50, verse 14—“*redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui et spiritu principali confirma me*” (restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and strengthen me with a governing [or upright] spirit). The context is that of David asking God’s forgiveness for his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and the strength to control his passions, and thus can be applied to any individual.³⁹

38. Canon J.M. Hervé, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*.

39. *Concordantiae Bibliorum Sacrorum quas digessit Bonifatius Fischer, O.S.B.*, published by Friedrich Fromman Verlag Gunther Holzborg, Stuttgart-Bad, Germany, 1977. The translation into English is from the Douay version. The Psalm in question is the penitential song of David in response to the Prophet Nathan’s chiding of him for his adultery with Bathsheba. According to Fr. Boylan’s commentary, “*Spiritu principali* is apparently parallel to the *spiritus rectus* of verse 12. *Principalis* represents the Greek *Hegemonikos* meaning princely, leading, or ruling. The Hebrew is *n’dibhah*—a spirit of ‘readiness,’ of

What does the word *principalem* mean? Cassell's *New Latin Dictionary* translates it as: 1) first in time, original; first in rank, chief; 2) of a prince; 3) of the chief place in a Roman camp. Harper's *Latin Dictionary* also translates it by the term "overseer." Now this latter term is of great interest because it is the one used by the Reformers to distort the true nature of a bishop. As the *Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicae curae"* points out:

The fact that the Anglicans added the term "bishop" to their form did not make it valid because doctrinally they hold the bishop to have no higher state than that of the priest—indeed, he is seen as an "overseer" rather than as one having the "fullness of the priesthood."

It is pertinent that post-Conciliar theologians have recognized the difficulty of adequately translating this phrase into the vernacular. Prior to 1977 it was rendered in English as "Perfect Spirit," but since then Rome has officially insisted on the phrase "governing" or "ruling" Spirit, and in French, "the Spirit of Authority."⁴⁰ Fr. B. Botte, O.S.B., the individual (apart from Montini) primarily responsible for the creation of this new rite for ordaining bishops, tells us in the semi-official journal *Notitiae* that the meaning of the phrase need not necessarily be drawn from its Scriptural use. Indeed, he states that in the third century it probably had a meaning quite different from that used during the time of David and that in Hippolytus' document it almost certainly meant Holy Spirit. He explains that meaning in the following words:

The expression has, for the Christian of the third century (the time of Hippolytus) a theological meaning which has nothing in common with the thought of the king of Judah [David] twelve centuries earlier. Even assuming that "*principalis*" is a mistranslation, it is not important here. The only problem is to know what meaning the author of the prayer (Hippolytus) wanted to give the expression.

The statement as applied to a sacramental form is a quite extraordinary new force. It admits that not only are we unsure of the meaning of "*principalis*" but that the word itself may be a mistranslation. It further admits that this critical word is not derived from either Christic or

'willingness'—to learn, to do the right and good (cf. Matt. 26:41, 'the spirit indeed is willing [= ready]')." St. Augustine understands the verse in the following sense: "An upright spirit renew in my inner parts which are bowed and distorted by sinning" (*Commentary on Psalm 51*). Cornelius Lapidus follows Bellarmine in translating the phrase as, "I ask that you stabilize and confirm in the good by means of the governing spirit." Fr. Joseph Pohle, the well-known professor of dogmatics, specifically denies that *Spiritum Principalis* is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity (*The Divine Trinity*, p. 97—translation of Arthur Preuss and familiarly known as Pohle-Preuss).

40. *Notitiae* states that the proper translation of the word *principalis* is "governing," and the same issue of this semi-official journal carries the *Declaration on the Translation of Sacramental Formulas* promulgated by Paul VI on January 25, 1974, a document which states that "difficulties can arise when trying to express the concepts of the original Latin formula in translation. It sometimes happens that one is obliged to use paraphrases and circumlocutions. . . . The Holy See approves a formula because it considers that it expresses the sense understood by the Church in the Latin text."

Apostolic sources. But even more, Fr. Botte, with exquisite historical insight (some seventeen centuries after the fact), proceeds to tell us just what Hippolytus did mean!

The solution must be sought in two directions: the context of the prayer and the use of *hegemonikos* (Greek for *principalis*) in the Christian language of the third century. It is clear that “spirit” means the person of the Holy Ghost. The whole context so indicates: everyone keeps silent because of the descent of the “Spirit.” The real question is why among other relevant adjectives, has *principalis* been chosen? The research must be widened here.

Fr. Botte then proceeds to give us a truly innovative theological interpretation of the primary function of the different members of the hierarchy in orders, and moreover one which the new rite incorporates.

The three hierarchies have the gift of the Spirit, but it is not the same for each of them. For the bishop it is the “*Spiritus Principali*”; for the priests who are the counselors of the bishops, it is “*Spiritus Consili*”; for the deacons who are the right hand of the bishop it is the “*Spiritus zeli et sollicitudinis*.” It is evident that these distinctions are made in accord with the functions of each rank of minister. It is clear then that *principalis* must be understood in relation to the specific function of the bishop. One only has to reread the prayer to be convinced of this.... God has never left His people without a chief, or His sanctuary without ministers.... The bishop is the chief of the Church. Hence the choice of the term *hegemonikos* is self-explanatory. It is the gift of the Spirit that pertains to the chief. The best translation would seem to be “the Spirit of Authority.”⁴¹

Those unfamiliar with Catholic teaching will perhaps not be shocked by this statement made by the person who was the principal architect of the new rite of Holy Orders. Suffice it to say that the primary function of the bishop is to ordain priests; the primary function of the priest is to offer the immolative sacrifice. Without this power, the power to forgive sins cannot be received. It is a common saying among Catholic theologians that the priest must receive first the power over the real Body of Christ, and only afterward over the mystic Body of Christ or over the Christian people whose sins he forgives or retains. Nowhere in the new rite for ordaining priests is it made clear that he is given the power to offer sacrifice, and nowhere in that of bishops that he is given the power to ordain!

41. Luther defined the priesthood in these terms: “The function of the priest is to preach; if he does not preach, he is no more a priest than a picture of a man is a man. Nor does it make a man a bishop if he ordains this kind of clapper-tongued priest, or consecrates church bells, or confirms children? Never! These are things that any deacon or layman might do. What makes a priest or bishop is the ministry of the word.” Elsewhere he says: “Everyone who knows that he is a Christian would be fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the word and the sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his Church, or by call of the majority” (Quoted by Fr. W. Jenkins, “The New Ordination Rite: An Indelible Question Mark,” *The Roman Catholic*, Vol. III, No. 8, Sept. 1981).

The new form also asks that this “governing Spirit” that is given to the ordinand be the same that was given to the Holy Apostles. It should be clear that such a request in no way states that the ordinands are themselves raised to the rank of the Apostles. (It would after all be legitimate to ask God to give any Catholic layman the same Holy Spirit that was given to the Apostles.) Now, Leo XIII makes note of the fact that the Anglican rite has the phrase “Receive the Holy Ghost” but that this “cannot be considered apt or sufficient for the sacrament which omits what it ought essentially to signify.” And so, even if we grant that this “governing Spirit” could be the Holy Spirit, the form lacks sufficient “power” to function in a sacramental manner. What is more, its use thrusts the sacramental form into a totally Protestant setting.

THE PROTESTANT UNDERSTANDING OF THE EPISCOPAL RANK

Many Protestant sects retain the title of “bishop” among their clergy. This is true for the Lutherans in Germany, but not in America. It is also true of the Anglicans, the Episcopalians, and certain Baptist sects. Yet all of these denominations deny that either the priesthood or the episcopacy involves any imprinting of a sacramental character. In what sense then do they understand the function of their bishops? Their primary function is jurisdictional. While it is true that Anglican bishops “ordain” and “confirm”—both are, in their view, non-sacramental acts. In England they are appointed by the reigning King or Queen who is the current “head” of their Church. Among other Protestant sects they are “elected” from among the people. And thus, in all these situations they are seen as “overseers.” The inclusion of the term “bishop” and “high priest” in a Protestant rite in no way confers on such a rite validity in the Catholic sense, especially when all reference to Catholic understanding of their function is deliberately removed from the content of the sacramental form and from the remainder of the rite. Moreover, Leo XIII instructs us in his *Apostolicae curae* that such terms when used in ambiguous situations must be understood in their Protestant sense.

Thus the use of “governing Spirit” is not only inoffensive to Protestants; it also functions to make the new rite highly acceptable to them. This is not to deny that Catholic bishops have such a function—but what is offensive in a supposedly Catholic rite is the implication, if not the ecumenically-inspired surrender, that this is their only—or even their primary—function.

In determining Anglican orders to be “null and void” Leo XIII discussed the “negative” effect of the remainder of the rite—its *significatio ex adjunctis*—upon an indeterminate sacramental form. The deliberate deletion from the rite of all reference to a Catholic understanding of Orders made it quite clear that the sacramental form was meaningless. If the new post-Conciliar rite follows the Anglican prototype in this, then clearly it is subject to the same condemnation that was leveled against Cranmer’s creation. Before discussing this aspect of the problem, however, we must examine with greater care the source from which Paul VI drew his new sacramental form.

THE SOURCE OF PAUL VI'S ORDINATION RITE

When Paul VI approved the new rite for ordaining bishops in June of 1968 he stated that “it was necessary to add, delete, or change certain things, either to restore texts to their earlier integrity, to make the expressions clearer, or to describe the sacramental effects better.... It appeared appropriate to take from ancient sources the consecratory prayer which is found in the document called the *Apostolic Traditions* of Hippolytus of Rome, written in the beginning of the third century, and which is still used in large parts in the ordination rites of the Coptic and Western Syrian liturgies.”

Needless to say, he does not tell us why it was necessary “to add, delete, or change certain things” which had presumably been adequate for some 2000 years. As to whether the result expresses things more “clearly” or “describes the sacramental effects better,” this the reader will have to see for himself. But Paul VI is up to his old tricks again. While he is correct in pointing to the “Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus” as the source of his new rite, he stretches the truth to the limit in stating that this highly questionable document is still used “in large part in the ordination rites of the Coptic and Western Syrian liturgies.” In fact the Hippolytus text has almost nothing in common with the Eastern rites, and the crucial words—especially the critical phrase of “governing spirit,” is nowhere to be found within these Eastern rites.

Let us then compare these still-used rites with the new rite. The first paragraph below is translated from pages 204-5 of the Pontifical of the Antiochean Syrians, Part II, printed in 1952, Sharfe, Lebanon, and carries the *Imprimatur* of Ignatius Gabriel Cardinal Tappuni, Syrian Patriarch of Antioch. This is the rite used by the Coptic and West Syrian Liturgies. The second paragraph is the consecratory prayer promulgated by Paul VI—supposedly taken from the first. It is taken from the new rite in English as used in the United States.

The Antiochean Pontifical:

O God, Thou hast created everything by Thy power and established the universe by the will of Thine only Son. Thou hast freely given us the grasp of truth and made known to us Thy holy and excellent love. Thou hast given Thy beloved and only-begotten Son, the Word, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, as pastor and physician of our souls. By His Precious Blood Thou hast founded Thy Church and ordained in it all grades pertaining to the priesthood. Thou hast given guidance that we may please Thee in that the knowledge of the name of Thine Anointed has increased and spread in the whole world. Send on this Thy servant Thy Holy and Spiritual Breath so that he may tend and oversee the flock entrusted to him, namely—to anoint priests, to ordain deacons, to dedicate altars and churches, to bless houses, to make appointments, to heal, to judge, to save, to deliver, to loose and bind, to invest and divest, as well as to excommunicate. Grant him all the power of Thy saints—the same power Thou gavest to the Apostles of Thine only begotten Son—that he may become a glorious *high priest* with the honor of Moses, the dignity of the venerable Jacob, in the throne of the Patriarchs. Let Thy people and the flock of Thine inheritance be well established through this

Thy servant. Give him wisdom and prudence and let him understand Thy will, O Lord, so that he can discern sinful things, know the sublimities of justice and judgment. Grant him this power to solve difficult problems and all bonds of iniquity.

Paul VI's consecratory prayer:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you dwell in heaven, yet look with compassion on all that is humble. You know all things before they come to be; by your gracious word you have established the plan of your Church. From the beginning you chose the descendants of Abraham to be your holy nation. You established rulers and priests and did not leave your sanctuary without ministers to serve you. From the creation of the world you have been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen. (All consecrating bishops) *So now, pour out upon this chosen one that power which is from you, the governing spirit whom you gave to your beloved son Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the Holy Apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name.* (Principal consecrator alone) Father, you know all hearts. You have chosen your servant for the office of bishop. May he be a shepherd to your holy flock, and a *high priest* blameless in your sight, ministering to you night and day; may he always gain the blessing of your favor and offer gifts of holy Church. Through the Spirit who gives the grace of high priesthood grant him the power to forgive sins as you have commanded, to assign ministries as you have decreed, to loose every bond by the authority which you gave to your Apostles. May he be pleasing to you by his gentleness and purity of heart, presenting a fragrant offering to you, through Jesus Christ, your Son, through whom glory and power and honor are yours with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church now and forever. (All) Amen.

The essential words of Paul VI's form have been placed in italics, but are not to be found in the Antiochean Pontifical. In the Antiochean rite, while the essential words are not specified—the theological terms of form and matter are not used in the Eastern Churches—the bishops hands—the matter of the sacrament—are placed on the ordinand's head for the entire prayer, while in the new Roman rite, only during the repetition of the essential form. As pointed out in the introduction, form and matter must be united to effect the sacrament.

Clearly the prayer taken from the Antiochean Pontifical is intended to consecrate a Catholic bishop and fulfills several times over all the requirements we have discussed in the section in this chapter on the history of sacramental rites. The latter has barely a dozen words in common with the former and is suitable for use in the most liberal Protestant communions. It is hardly just to say that one is derived from the other.

Obviously deleted from the Eastern liturgical prayer are such phrases as “anointing priests”—there is a vast difference between “ordaining priests” and “assigning ministries.” Also deleted are references to his function of protecting the Church against heresy. The post-Conciliar “bishop” is to “loose every bond” but not “to loose and bind, to invest and divest, as well as to

excommunicate.” Retained, however, are two important words, that of “bishop” and “high priest,” but they are placed outside the “essential” form. Moreover, one can seriously question whether the terms “bishop” and “high priest” can be understood in the Catholic sense of the words. In view of any proper indication in the *significatio ex adjunctis*, one can be permitted to doubt it.

Where then does the new “form” of Paul VI come from? The answer is the “Apostolic Tradition” of Hippolytus.⁴²

THE “APOSTOLIC TRADITION” OF HIPPOLYTUS

The real source of Paul VI’s new consecratory prayer is the so-called *Apostolic Traditions* of Hippolytus—a composite document of dubious origins for which there is no evidence whatsoever that it was ever actually used to consecrate a bishop. We shall consider two aspects of the problem raised by the use of this source: Who was Hippolytus and what do we really know about the form he used?

Hippolytus was a highly enigmatic person who lived in the third century. He was born about 160 and is thought to have been a disciple of St. Irenaeus. He became a priest under Pope Zephyrinus about the year 198 and won great respect for his learning and eloquence. Because of doctrinal differences with the Pope, Hippolytus left Rome, found a bishop to consecrate him, and established a schismatic Church, as a result of which he was formally excommunicated. He drew up his *Apostolic Traditions* while he was outside the Church, presumably to establish a “pontifical” for his schismatic sect. Subsequently, after Maximus became emperor and instituted a new persecution against the Christians, both he and the reigning Pontiff (Pontianus) were arrested and sent to the mines in Sardinia. It was here, just prior to his death, that he became reconciled to the Church. Both he and the Pope were martyred together and later canonized. The Hippolytic schism ended with this event.

The text written by Hippolytus as a “Pontifical” for his schismatic sect was named by him *The Apostolic Traditions*. (He was not the last to lend authority to his acts by referring them back to “earlier authority”!) Insofar as Hippolytus was extremely conservative—he objected to the legitimate relaxation of the Church’s laws, especially those related to forgiving and readmitting to communion those Christians who in times of persecution had sacrificed to the Roman gods—it has been assumed that he preserved the rites then in use—but this is by no means certain.

Now Hippolytus wrote in Greek, and once the Roman Church adopted the almost exclusive use of Latin, his works were for all practical purposes forgotten in the West. The particular work in question, *The Apostolic Traditions*, was rediscovered by Job Ludolf in Ethiopia in 1691. In

42. Fr. Clancy, quoting Johannes Quasten’s *Patrology*, tells us in his historical study of the rite of ordination that “the *Apostolic Traditions* had no appreciable effect on the development of the rite of ordination in the West.”

1848 another version came to light through the study of Coptic documents. Still later a Sahidic version was found, and then, around 1900, a Latin translation from the Greek in the sixth century came to light. None of these versions were complete and scholars therefore were forced to “reconstruct” the various segments in order to produce a relatively cohesive document. According to Professor Burton Scott Easton of Cambridge University, we can summarize what we know of this document in the following words:

The original Greek of the *Apostolic Tradition* has not been recovered, except in small fragments. The Latin is generally trustworthy, but is incomplete. The only other primary version, the Sahidic, is likewise incomplete, and the results of the moderate abilities of its translator have been further confused in later transmission. The Arabic is a secondary text, offering little that the Sahidic does not contain. The only practically complete version, the Ethiopic, is tertiary and is otherwise unreliable. All four of these versions presuppose a common Greek original, in which two different endings have been conflated. The other sources, the Constitutions, the Testament, and the Canons are frank revisions, in which the original is often edited out of recognition or even flatly contradicted. Under these conditions the restoration of a really accurate text is manifestly impossible.⁴³

With this in mind, and with absolutely no idea of what Hippolytus considered to be the “form” or essential words involved, let us consider his consecratory prayer as the scholars have reconstructed it:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who dwellest on high, yet hast respect to the lowly, Who knowest all things before they come to pass. Thou hast appointed the borders of Thy Church by the words of Thy grace, predestinating from the beginning the righteous race of Abraham. And making them princes and priests, and leaving not Thy sanctuary without a ministry, Thou has glorified among those (or possibly, in those places) whom Thou hast chosen. Pour forth now the power which is Thine, of Thy governing spirit which (Greek version)...Thou gavest to Thy beloved Servant (Greek but not Latin) Jesus Christ which He bestowed on his Holy Apostles (Latin)...Who established the Church in every place, the Church which Thou hast sanctified unto unceasing glory and praise of Thy name. Thou who knowest the hearts of all, grant to this Thy servant whom Thou hast chosen to be bishop, (to feed Thy holy flock, in some versions) and to serve as Thy high priest without blame, ministering night and day, to propitiate Thy countenance without ceasing and to offer Thee the gifts of the Holy Church. And by the Spirit of high-priesthood to have authority to remit sins according to Thy commandment, to assign the lots according to Thy precept, to loose every bond according to the authority which Thou givest Thy apostles, and to please Thee in meekness and purity of heart,

43. Burton Scott Easton, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, translated into English with an introduction and notes (Cambridge University Press: 1934; republished by Arenon Books: England, 1962).

offering to Thee an odor of sweet savor. Through Thy Servant Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom be to Thee glory, might, honor, and with the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church both now and always world without end. Amen (Greek).⁴⁴

Such then is the true nature and source of the post-Conciliar sacramental prayer for ordaining bishops. Clearly we have no exact knowledge of the form that Hippolytus used, and just as clearly, there is no evidence that the form adopted by Paul VI was ever used to ordain anybody. What are we to say when the Church teaches:

Matter and form must be certainly valid. Hence one may not follow a probable opinion and use either doubtful matter or form. Acting otherwise, one commits a sacrilege.⁴⁵

THE *COUP DE GRACE*

In the traditional rite, *prior* to the superimposition of hands—the matter of the rite—the consecrator took the open book of the Gospels, and saying nothing, laid it upon the neck and the shoulders of the bishop-elect, so that the printed page touched the neck. One of the chaplains kneeled behind supporting the book until it was given into the hands of the bishop-elect. After this the consecrator superimposed his hands on the head of the ordinand, saying, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” and then proceeded with a short prayer and the preface which contained the words of the form. There was a moral continuity of action so that the form was not really separated from the matter.

In the new rite the principal consecrator lays his hands upon the bishop-elect in silence. *Following* this the principal consecrator places the open book of the Gospels upon the head of the bishop-elect; two deacons, standing at either side of the bishop-elect, hold the book of the Gospels above his head until the prayer of consecration is completed. Here the continuity of action is discontinuous, which is to say that the matter and the form are separated by the imposition of the Gospels over the head of the bishop-elect.

Whatever we may think of the new “form,” Tradition makes it clear that the form must be

44. According to Fr. (subsequently Cardinal) J. Tixeront, *Holy Orders and Ordination* (Herder: St. Louis, 1928), the consecrating bishop held his hands over the ordinand’s head throughout the entire prayer. According to Fr. Semple S.J., *Anglican Ordinations*, after asking God to give the ordinand that spirit which “Thou didst give to the Holy Apostles.” Hippolytus continued: “Give to him, O Lord, the episcopate.” He adds the following note: “But if a priest is ordained, all is done with him in like manner as with a bishop, except that he shall not sit in the chair. The same prayer shall be prayed in its entirety over him as over the bishop, with the sole exception of the name of episcopate. A bishop is in all things equal to a priest except in the name of the chair, and in ordination, which power of ordaining is not given to the latter.”

45. Quoted from Fr. Brey’s introduction to Patrick Henry Omlor’s book, *Questioning the Validity of Masses using the New, All-English Canon*. This is the common teaching of moral theologians.

added to the matter in order for the sacrament to be effected. In Holy Orders, it is the superimposition of the hands which is the matter (as confirmed by Leo XIII in his *Apostolicae curae*). As Augustine said with regard to Baptism: “What is the Baptism of Christ? A washing in water by the word. Take away the water and you have no Baptism; take away the word, and you have no Baptism.” And again: “And in water the word cleanses. Take away the word and what is water but water? The word comes to the element and a sacrament results.”⁴⁶

Matter and form must be united or concurrent. “The matter and form must be united—so far as union is possible—to produce the one external rite, and so to produce a valid sacrament.” However in Holy Orders, “moral simultaneity is sufficient, that is, these sacraments are valid though the proximate matter is employed immediately before or after the use of the word. What interval would suffice to render the sacrament invalid cannot be determined; the interval of the recital of the ‘Our Father’ appeared sufficient to St. Alphonsus, but in such matters we should not rely on probabilities, we should make sure the matter and form are as united as we can make them.”⁴⁷

In the new rite, the placing of the Gospels on the head of the bishop-elect comes after the superimposition of hands and thus breaks the “moral simultaneity” between the matter and the form much in the same way as taking a coffee-break at this moment would break it. Once again, one is given grounds for seriously doubting validity.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE NEW EPISCOPAL RITE—ITS “*SIGNIFICATIO EX ADJUNCTIS*”

It may be argued that the other parts of the post-Conciliar rite—its “*significatio ex adjunctis*”—function to correct the obvious defects of a highly indeterminate form. It behooves us then to examine the remainder of the ceremonies and see if such is the case. We will consider this under the two categories of additions and deletions:

What has been added?

Reading through the text of the new Ordination Rite for Bishops one finds the Consecrator’s Homily given under the title “Consent of the People.” This is a totally Protestant concept, for in Catholicism the bishop is appointed by the Pope (or his agent), and no consent on the part of the laity is required. Did Christ ask for the approval of anyone in appointing the Apostles?

Continuing in the next paragraph we are informed that “in the person of the bishop, with the

46. Bernard Leeming, S.J., *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Longmans Green: London, 1955).

47. Henry Davis, S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology* (Sheed and Ward: N.Y., 1935), Vol. III, p. 10. Dr. Ludwig Ott says much the same: “It is not necessary that they coincide absolutely in point of time; a moral coincidence suffices, that is, they must be connected with each other in such a fashion, that according to general estimation, they compose a unitary sign” (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* [TAN: Rockford, Ill., 1986]).

priests around him, Jesus Christ the Lord, who became High Priest for ever, is present among you. Through the ministry of the bishop, Christ Himself continues to proclaim the Gospel and to confer the mysteries of Faith on those who believe.” Such a statement is again misleading, for strictly speaking, the presence of Christ among us and the proclamation of the Gospel do not depend upon the bishop. However, this manner of expressing things has the advantage of being acceptable to Protestants.

Next we read that the bishop is a “minister of Christ” and a steward of the Mysteries of God. He has been entrusted with the task of witnessing to the truth of the Gospel and fostering a spirit of justice and holiness. But this task is not particular to a bishop. Each and every Catholic is obliged “to give witness to the truth and to foster a spirit of justice and holiness.” In a still later paragraph the bishop-elect is told that he is to be an “overseer.” Once again we are left with an individual whose function as a Catholic bishop is in no way delineated. There is nothing in the entire statement that would offend Protestants, and indeed, the delineation of his function as “overseer” would delight them. And so this homily continues to the end without providing any positive *significatio ex adjunctis*.

What follows is the “Examination of the Candidate.” Again, the bishop-elect is asked if he is “resolved to be faithful and constant and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.” The only part of this examination which could relate to his function as a Catholic bishop is the question as to whether or not he is “resolved to maintain the Deposit of Faith entire and uncorrupt as handed down by the Apostles and professed by the Church everywhere and at all times.” He must respond in the affirmative, but then, so must every layman who wishes to call himself a Catholic. Moreover, it is obvious from the statements of the post-Conciliar bishops that they hardly take this responsibility seriously.⁴⁸

After the Litany of the Saints we find what is perhaps the only saving statement in the entire post-Conciliar rite. The principal consecrator at this point stands alone, with his hands joined and prays: “Lord, be moved by our prayers. Anoint Your servant with the fullness of priestly grace and bless him with spiritual power in all its richness.” This prayer is also found in the traditional rite where the Latin for the important phrase is “*cornu gratiae sacerdotalis*” (literally, “the horn of sacerdotal grace”). The statement however is ambiguous because the “horn of sacerdotal grace”—or even the mistranslation “fullness of priestly grace”—could be applied to the priesthood as much as to the episcopacy. Moreover, and most important, it is made outside the sacramental form and apart from the matter, and it in no way specifies the power or Grace conferred in the sacrament.

What has been deleted?

In the present historical context, and in view of Pope Leo XIII’s *Apostolicae curae*, what has

48. Strict adherence to this response would require that they reject the heresies of Vatican II. Under such circumstances one can question whether they would be chosen by modern Rome to be “overseers.”

been deleted is of greater significance than what has been added. Because of the great length of the traditional rite (taking some two or three hours to say), I shall only discuss those passages which might influence the validity of the sacrament.

The traditional rite is initiated by a request on the part of the senior assistant to the consecrator: “Most Reverend Father, Our Holy Mother the Catholic Church asks that you promote this priest here present to the burden of the episcopate” (Retained). This is followed by an oath on the part of the ordinand in which he promises God “to promote the rights, honors, privileges, and authority of the Holy Roman Church,” and to “observe with all his strength, and cause to be observed by others, the rules of the Holy Fathers, etc.” (omitted in the new rite and replaced by the Homily described above under the title of “Consent of the People.”) Next proceeds the “examination of the candidate” in which he is asked among other things if he will “keep and teach with reverence the Traditions of the Orthodox Fathers and the decretal constitutions of the Holy and Apostolic See.” (omitted, though he promises to “maintain the Deposit of Faith, entire and uncorrupt, as handed down by the Apostles and professed by the Church everywhere and at all times.”) Then he is asked to confirm his belief in each and every article of the Creed (omitted). Finally he is asked if he will “anathematize every heresy that shall arise against the Holy Catholic Church” (omitted). The deletion of the requirement to anathematize heresy is significant, for this is indeed one of the functions of a bishop. Further, this function remains unspecified in the remainder of the post-Conciliar rite.

In the traditional rite the consecrator instructs the bishop-elect in the following terms: “A bishop judges, interprets, consecrates, ordains, offers, baptizes, and confirms.” Now such a statement is indeed important for the *significatio ex adjunctis*. Its deletion in the new rite is most significant. Nowhere in the new rite is it stated that the function of the bishop is to ordain, or to confirm, much less to judge (“to loose and to bind”).

The consecratory prayer in the traditional rite of the Roman Church is different from that of the Antiochean-Syrian rite and provides the necessary “form” (including the essential words as specified by Pius XII). Its content or “substantial meaning” is sufficiently close to that of the Coptic, Antiochean, and Syrian prayers as to require no further discussion. If in fact Paul VI had adopted the form used in the Eastern rites, absolutely no doubt would remain about validity.

In the traditional rite, after the consecratory prayer, the functions of a bishop are once again specified. “Give him, O Lord, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven... Whatsoever he shall bind upon earth, let it be bound likewise in Heaven, and whatsoever he shall loose upon earth, let it likewise be loosed in Heaven, Whose sins he shall retain, let them be retained, and do Thou remit the sins of whomsoever he shall remit... Grant him, O Lord, an episcopal chair ...” This entire prayer has been omitted in the new rite.

THE RESULT OF THESE CHANGES IS THE PROTESTANTIZING OF THE ORDINAL

Clearly, almost every reference to a specifically Catholic understanding of the episcopate

has been deleted from the post-Conciliar rite. Included in these deletions are his function of ordaining priests, confirming, and his use of the “Keys.” Admittedly the term “bishop” is retained, but outside the essential form, and in such a way as would in no way offend our Protestant brethren. As such there is no positive *significatio ex adjunctis*, but rather a negative one. With this in mind, let us consider some of the statements of Leo XIII in his *Apostolicae curae* that irreformably declared Anglican Orders “null and void.”⁴⁹

In vain has help been recently sought from the plea of the validity of Anglican Orders from the other prayers of the same Ordinal. For, to put aside other reasons which show this to be insufficient for the purpose of the Anglican rite, let this argument suffice for all. From them has been deliberately removed whatever sets forth the dignity and office of the priesthood of the Catholic rite. That “form” consequently cannot be considered apt or sufficient for the sacrament which omits what it ought essentially to signify.... The same holds good of Episcopal consecration.... Nor is anything gained by quoting the prayer of the preface, “Almighty God,” since it, in like manner, has been stripped of the words which denote the *summum sacerdotium*.... The episcopate undoubtedly, by the institution of Christ, most truly belongs to the sacrament of Orders and constitutes the *sacerdotium* in the highest degree, namely that which by the teaching of the Holy Fathers and our liturgical customs is called the *summum sacerdotium, sacri ministerii summa*. So it comes to pass that, as the sacrament of Orders and the true *sacerdotium* of Christ were utterly eliminated from the Anglican rite, and hence the *sacerdotium* is in no wise conferred truly and validly in the Episcopal consecration of the same rite, for the same reason, therefore, the episcopate can in no wise be truly and validly conferred by it and this the more so because among the first duties of the episcopate is that of ordaining ministers for the Holy Eucharist and sacrifice.

Michael Davies, despite his dubious conclusion in *The Order of Melchisedech* that the new ordination rite is unquestionably valid, provides us with all the necessary evidence required to state that the intention of Paul VI was to make the new ordination rites acceptable to Protestants. He also provides us with the evidence that Paul VI’s Ordinal was created with the help of the same henchmen that assisted in creating the *Novus Ordo Missae*—Archbishop Bugnini and the six heterodox (Protestant) “consultants.” Francis Clark also stresses Paul VI’s ecumenical intent. Indeed, he goes so far as to parallel it with Cranmer’s intent in creating the Edwardian (Anglican) rite, namely that of destroying the sacerdotal character of Orders. He considers the Cranmerian result invalid, but that of the post-Conciliar Church as legitimate because it derives from a Pope.⁵⁰

49. Some liberal theologians argued that this Bull was not binding. Pope Leo XIII subsequently made it clear that the Bull was “irreformable.”

50. Francis Clark, S.J., *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Augustine: Devon, 1981). In his second edition of *The Order of Melchisedech*, Michael Davies again reiterates his opinion to the effect that there can be no question about the validity of the new rites for administering Holy Orders, because they have the approval of a Pope. He quotes Francis Clark with special emphasis: “The wording of an

Let the import of such an intent be clear. Protestants deny the sacramental character of Orders, and any attempt to create a rite that would satisfy them must resort to both ambiguity and deliberate obfuscation of doctrine. If Michael Davies' contention is correct, and I believe it is, Paul VI had no choice but to deliberately delete every reference to a specifically Catholic characterization of the episcopacy. Let us once again turn to Leo XIII's *Apostolicae curae*:

For the full and accurate understanding of the Anglican Ordinal, besides what we have noted as to some of its parts, there is nothing more pertinent than to consider carefully the circumstances under which it was composed and publicly authorized.... The history of the time is sufficiently eloquent as to the animus of the authors of the Ordinal.... As to the abettors whom they associated with themselves from the heterodox sects...for this reason, in the whole Ordinal not only is there no clear mention of the sacrifice, or consecration, of priesthood (*sacerdotium*), and of the power of consecrating and offering sacrifice, but, and as We have just stated, every trace of these things which have been in such prayers of the Catholic rite as they had not entirely rejected, was deliberately removed and struck out.... In this way, the native character—or spirit as it is called—of the Ordinal clearly manifests itself.... *Any words* in the Anglican Ordinal as it now is, *which lend themselves to ambiguity, cannot be taken in the same sense as they possess in the Catholic rite.* For once a new rite has been initiated in which, as we have seen, the sacrament of Orders is adulterated or denied, and from which all idea of consecration and sacrifice has been rejected, the formula, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” no longer holds good, because the Spirit is infused into the soul with the grace of the sacrament, and so the words “for the office and work of priest or bishop,” and the like no longer hold good, but remain as words without the reality which Christ instituted (emphasis mine).

CONCLUSION—THE INVALIDITY OF ORDERS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

If the post-Conciliar rite, animated by a spirit of false ecumenism, follows the pattern established by its Cranmerian prototype; if it is, as Michael Davies contends, a move in the direction of a common Ordinal; and if it deletes every phrase which characterizes a Catholic episcopacy, not only from the essential form, but from the entire rite, then it must logically be subject to the same condemnations that Leo XIII promulgated against Anglican Orders. In fact, there is not one statement in the above quotations from his Apostolic Bull which cannot be applied to it. If one adds to this the abrogation of the traditional form as specified by Pius XII's *ex cathedra* pronouncement, and the change in the “substance” or meaning of the essential words

ordination form, even if not specifically determinate in itself, can be given the required determination from its setting (*ex adjunctis*), that is, from the other prayers and actions of the rite, or *even from the connotation of the ceremony as a whole in the religious context of the age.*” Such a doctrinal position means that the new Church can ignore 2000 years of sacramental theology and declare anything it wishes to be a valid sacramental rite. It could for example declare “monkey-shines” or “abracadabra” to be a valid sacramental form.

specified as its replacement, we are left with the unfortunate conclusion that the bishops ordained by the new rite may be in no way different from their Lutheran and Anglican counterparts.

And if the ordination of post-Conciliar bishops is at best extremely doubtful, what is one to say of the ordination of “presbyters” under their aegis? Insofar as the ordination rite for the priesthood has been criticized on similar grounds, we have a situation where doubt is added to doubt. This in turn places all the other sacraments (except of course Baptism and Matrimony) on equally dangerous ground. The reader is reminded that, in the practical order, for a rite to be doubtful is the same as for it to be invalid. As Francis Clark says: “Probabalism may not be used where the validity of the sacraments is in question,” and as Fr. Jone states: “Matter and form must be certainly valid. Hence one may not follow a probable opinion and use either doubtful matter or form.”⁵¹

Even worse than placing the various aspects of the sacrament of Orders and their dependent sacraments in doubt, is the question that these ritual changes raise about what is called the Apostolic Succession. The bishops are the descendents of the Apostles and retain all the functions of the Apostles except that of Revelation. If their “descent” is nullified and voided, hopes for reconstituting the Church as we have known it are destroyed. Again, it must be stressed that the true Church cannot be destroyed any more than the Truth itself can be destroyed. But the existence of the true Church will take some other form or will continue to exist in an “underground” manner apart from the organized structure that we have hitherto been used to see. The serious nature of such a situation is well born out by the comments of Monsignor Charles Journet, Professor at the major Catholic Seminary of Fribourg in Switzerland. Writing in 1955, he commented:

To maintain that the true Church is apostolic is to maintain that she depends, as heat on fire, on a spiritual virtue residing in the Holy Trinity and thence descending by stages, first into the humanity of Christ, then into the two-fold power, sacramental and jurisdictional, of the apostolic body, and finally to the Christian people. Where we find this mediation, this chain of dependence, there we find the true Church (composed, it must be added, of the just who are to be saved and of sinners who are to be damned). Where this mediation is lacking there also the true Church is lacking; there may be inchoate [rudimentary] ontological [spiritual] membership, of itself salvific, but certainly not fully achieved ontological membership in the true Church. No link of the chain can be omitted or even changed. The Godhead is eternal; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), and to the end of the world He will assist the apostolic body (Matt. 28:19-20). An eternal God, an immortal Christ, an indefectible apostolic body, lastly, the generations of the faithful, that is the evangelical order.... But the apostolic body can be indefectible only in virtue of an uninterrupted succession. Suppose it had failed and then been replaced by another institution to all appearances identical: apparently nothing would have been altered, but in point of fact everything would have been subverted; and this would quickly

51. Rev. Heribert Jone, *Moral Theology*.

become apparent. Naturally, both God and Christ would remain untouched; but the institution claiming to take the place of the apostolic body and separated from it by a break, would be a new institution, and could not be that indefectible institution set up in the world by Christ. It would therefore inherit none of the mysterious privileges attached by Him to the true apostolic body; it would have but a simulacrum [simulation] of the power of order, a simulacrum of the power of jurisdiction, and any appearance of permanency would be illusory. From this standpoint, the need for an uninterrupted succession in the apostolic body, *apostolicae successionis praerogativa* [the prerogative of apostolic succession] is obvious. Without it, the last link of the chain by which the Church is suspended would be broken, and the divine apostolicity of the Church would have foundered.⁵²

(Original editorial inclusion that followed the essay:)

We do not look for gulfs when we compare religions, rather we try to find similarities and unity. This is the essential difference between the Chinese and Western view points. We firmly believe in the truism that all faiths are the paths leading towards the Ultimate Reality, just as the spokes of the wheel converge to its axis. When the people are too immersed in the dogmas and rituals of their chosen religion, it appears to them to be the only one worth following and they defend their own particular faith. However, when they have acquired enough wisdom, charity and discernment, they too are bound to perceive that the road to Heaven is nobody's monopoly and that the divine laws apply equally to all. It is the dogmas, ritual and the mode of worship that divide the faiths and not the basic essence of their beliefs.

But I am not in favour of conversion from one faith to another, neither do I believe in the fusion of all religions into one. The Ultimate Truth is one, but it has an infinite number of aspects and what is more beautiful than that each faith should reflect only one facet of the Divine, all of them together creating a shining gem of beauty. Would the world be more beautiful if all the flowers on earth had been blended into one uniform colour or all mountains razed to make the globe monotonously flat? Each religion offers something glorious, peculiarly its own, to point out the road to the Ultimate Reality. What man or group of men would be able to prescribe a single form of religion that would satisfy all and everybody? That would be an

52. Msgr. Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (Sheed and Ward: London, 1955), p. 526-527.