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THE REPORT OF THE BISHOPS' AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR PRIESTLY LIFE AND MINISTRY

AUTHORITY
MATURITY
MINISTRY
SCHOLARSHIP

The Report of the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to receive the various parts of the following report in their general meetings of November, 1972, and November, 1973. This vote, while not necessarily implying approval of the contents, does signify a willingness to have the report referred to the permanent committee on Priestly Life and Ministry for further consideration and development. The bishops also agreed to have the report made available to priests desiring copies of it.

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INTRODUCTION

By way of background information, the following is offered relative to the status of the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry.

In April, 1971 the bishops of the United States received the results of their Study on the American Catholic Priesthood. The Study consisted of five works, namely: *The Priest and Sacred Scripture*, *The Systematic Theology of the Priesthood*, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: The Historical Investigations*; *The Psychological Investigations*; and, *The Sociological Investigations*.

In September, 1971 an Ad Hoc Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry was appointed and charged with the implementation of the Study.

In April, 1972 the Conference of Bishops enlarged the scope of the task of the Ad Hoc Committee from solely the implementation of the Study to the inclusion of the present experience of priests and bishops relative to the renewal of priestly life and ministry.

In November, 1972 the Conference of Bishops received the first half of the Ad Hoc Committee's report which consisted of two parts: *Authority and Its Exercise* and *Evaluation and Priestly Growth*.

In November, 1972 the Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the establishment of a permanent Committee of the NCCB on Priestly Life and Ministry to take effect in November, 1973. This would also involve representative members of both diocesan and religious priests to act as consultors and advisors to the permanent Committee of Bishops in setting its goals and carrying out its functions. It also approved the establishment of a permanent Office within the NCCB to service this Committee.

In November, 1972 the Conference of Bishops approved the publication of a study of Priestly Spirituality which was done by the Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry. The Study is entitled, *The Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*.

The Ad Hoc Committee here presents the final Report which reflects its study and work during the past two years. It consists of four sections: *Authority and Its Exercise* and *Evaluation and Priestly Growth*, which were previously presented to the NCCB in November, 1972; and, *Priestly Ministry* and *Research and Scholarship* as it pertains to the American

priesthood. With this presentation the Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry finishes its commission.

While this report is clerically oriented, this is not meant in any way to reflect on the role of the laity in the Church or the essential relationship of the clergy to the laity. By charge given the Ad Hoc Committee the report responds to various studies dealing with the clergy and to the findings of this Ad Hoc Committee in the course of its own work. The Ad Hoc Committee did not have before it studies on the laity.

The recommendations presented throughout this report are based on problems and opportunities revealed in priestly life and work as we find it today. The Ad Hoc Committee is aware that there are evolving concepts of the very nature of the priestly ministry. It feels, however, that it is beyond its competence to conceive or judge and "canonize" any new concepts upon which its practical recommendations would be based.

The Ad Hoc Committee has endeavored to view the priest as an ordinary man with an extraordinary spiritual call and an extraordinary role to play. The subject of its work, then, has been how the priest, as an ordinary man can fill that extraordinary role in the light of his life style, his training, the structures within which he functions and the needs of those whom he serves.

It is the mind of the Ad Hoc Committee that this report is not meant to provide instant solutions. Rather, its approach is to try to create a spirit and a certain freedom in which, under the Holy Spirit, sound developments in priestly life and ministry will appear and be encouraged, monitored or initiated by the continuing action of the permanent Office on Priestly Life and Ministry.

We are not attempting to offer the last word. Rather, we trust that the reaction to and experience with our proposals will stimulate further creative thinking and implementation in making ever more effective the marvelous priestly vocation we are called to share.

Since the statement about Priestly Life and Ministry is an abstract expression of principles, the Ad Hoc Committee believes this report will not be effective unless it is discussed by bishops with their priests so that it can be interpreted and used in accordance with local and concrete circumstances. Only through such fruitful dialogue can it have meaning to bishops and priests.

Gratitude is expressed to Monsignor Colin A. MacDonald who served in the capacity of Executive Director of the project and to the members of the Consultative Committee of Priests: Monsignors William E. Gallagher, George G. Higgins, Robert G. Peters, Alexander O. Sigur and Fathers Coleman J. Barry, O.S.B., Paul M. Boyle, C.P., John T.

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Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry

Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan, Chairman
Most Reverend Ignatius J. Strecker
Most Reverend James W. Malone
Most Reverend Edward A. McCarthy
Most Reverend Thomas J. Grady

I

AUTHORITY AND ITS EXERCISE

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH . . . AN OVERVIEW

Those who stand in the person of Christ and exercise authority in His name look first, of course, to Christ Himself as their model and exemplar. To a large extent, the considerations that follow center on episcopal authority and its exercise, but they are not limited to the episcopal office for they refer as well to all who act in the person of Christ.

A vast heritage is presupposed and not repeated here concerning the person, powers and functions of a bishop. While the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church describes the theological dimensions of his office and the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church explains the different forms of episcopal ministry, the Code of Canon Law sets forth his juridical status. Moreover, the Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops provides an explicit moral-ascetical-mystical treatment of the bishop in his day-to-day life and work as shepherd exercising the care of souls. In effect, this recent Directory is a kind of handbook for the proper exercise of the pastoral ministry of bishops. No convenient summary can substitute for a serious and prayerful reading of that Directory. We hope to highlight the pastoral spirit and intent of that Directory as the proper context for the considerations and recommendations reported.

Concisely, and with the Council, we repeat that the bishop is a shepherd who, in the name of and by the authority of Christ, makes the person and mission of Christ, The Shepherd, enduring and visible in the world: ". . . undertaking Christ's own role as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, they act in His person."¹ A bishop's leadership extends to the entire community as well as to his diocese. It especially extends to the members of the presbyterium. The bishop's office confers upon him authority. He is not true to himself, to his role, or to the expectations of his priests and people if he abdicates that authority, or fails to give strong, courageous, decisive leadership.

At the very core of a bishop's exercise of authority is the manner in which he relates to his priests. After the model of Christ, the local bishop

relates to his priests as servant, friend, brother and model of reconciliation.

Servant: This image is given to us by Christ Himself as the most significant characteristic of leadership in His kingdom. The availability of the local bishop to his priests is likewise a significant exercise of his witness as servant. As such, then, it should become one of his highest priorities.

“After he had washed their feet, he put his cloak back on and reclined at table once more. He said to them: ‘Do you understand what I just did for you? You address me as “Teacher” and “Lord,” and fittingly enough, for that is what I am. But if I washed your feet—I who am Teacher and Lord—then you must wash each other’s feet. What I just did was to give you an example: as I have done so you must do.’” (John 13: 12-15)

Friend: This is one of the great paradoxes of Christ’s life—a leader, exercising authority by seeing himself as friend to those over whom he exercises authority and his subjects responding with their friendship.

“You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer speak of you as slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is about. Instead, I call you friends, since I have made known to you all that I heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit. Your fruit must endure, so that all you ask the Father in my name He will give you. The command I give you is this, that you love one another.” (John 15: 14-17)

Brother: The last quarter of the 20th Century might be called the Age of Brotherhood. Hence, episcopal leadership can and must become the epitome of selfless, sincere and complete witness of brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God. Bishops are in the unique position of bringing to fruition in these times the high priestly prayer of Christ which begs the Fatherhood of God to make His disciplines one—in Brotherhood. The Psalmist envisions a world where this priestly work is done:

“Behold, how good it is, and how pleasant, where brethren dwell as one! It is as when the precious ointment upon the head runs down over the beard, the beard of Aaron, till it runs down upon the collar of his robe. It is dew like that of Hermon, which comes down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, life forever.” (Psalm 133)

Mover and Model of Reconciliation: The bishop should be seen as a man who gives support and comfort to those most in need of them. He is expected to be a model of sensitivity toward the hopes and fears of his priests and all his people. Through his exercise of forgiveness and reconciliation the bishop comes closest to doing what Christ did best and most frequently. While all creation groans under the burden of achieving peace and reconciliation, we find the chasm between priests and bishops widening. But there is a place of meeting; it is found in the mutualities of responsibility, commitment, trust and loyalty—the stuff out of which love grows.

“Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger, neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love’s forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure.” (I Cor. 13: 4-7)

By word and sacrament, the minister’s proper task is to render present the love of God in Christ for us, and at the same time to promote the fellowship of men with God and with each other. If such a goal can locate the priestly ministry within the Church, it surely can provide the stimulus for promoting fellowship and incentive among the closest collaborators within the Church.

THE AUTHORITY OF BISHOPS

I. *Authority Exercised by the American Bishops*

The Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests and the more recent document issued by the Third Synod of Bishops on the Ministerial Priesthood stressed the fact that bishops and priests, being united in their participation in the one priesthood and ministry of Christ, fundamentally are brothers in the service of the People of God. This brotherhood of service is not a mere communion of mind and heart, but is a sacramental reality. It is especially close among the priests of a given diocese forming one body (the one *presbyterium*) under the leadership of the bishop.

The Synodal Document on the Ministerial Priesthood also notes, however, that this communion, this brotherhood of service, between bishops and priests, extends beyond the limits of the individual diocese or local *presbyterium* and points out, accordingly, that new forms or

structures must be found "to facilitate contacts between local churches" and that "a search must be made for ways whereby priests may collaborate with bishops in supra-diocesan bodies and enterprises." ²

This "search" has already begun in the United States. Priests are now taking part, in a representative capacity, as observers in the annual meetings of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and in regional and provincial meetings of the bishops. In addition, priests are represented on the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry.

In the context of what has been said above the Ad Hoc Committee regards the following recommendations as particularly helpful:

1. That the practice of inviting priests to take part in national and regional and especially provincial meetings of the bishops be continued and expanded. That the agenda of such meetings be distributed to participating priests in ample time to enable them to consult when necessary with their own priests' councils and other appropriate organizations of the clergy. Participating priests should also be authorized and encouraged to report back to their constituent organizations.
2. That serious consideration be given to permitting participating priests to have a voice in national, regional and provincial meetings of bishops at least on those matters which relate directly to the priestly life and ministry.
3. That, since the Synodal Document on the Ministerial Priesthood, as noted above, calls for new structures to make it possible for bishops and priests to collaborate in supra-diocesan bodies and enterprises, a formal and structured relationship be established between the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and such provincial, regional and national organizations of priests as may now exist or may develop in the future.

II. *Processes and Structures to Foster Shared Authority*

The pertinent documents of Vatican II and the Synodal Document on The Ministerial Priesthood strongly emphasize that the unity of consecration and mission requires "the hierarchical communion of priests with the order of bishop" and calls upon bishops to put this principle into practice through new structures adapted to the needs of the times.

More specifically, the above-mentioned documents call for the establishment of a council (or senate) of priests in each diocese. The Synodal Document points out that the functioning of these councils or senates "cannot be fully shaped by law" and that their "effectiveness depends

especially on a repeated effort to listen to the opinions of all in order to reach a consensus with the bishop, to whom it belongs to make a final decision.”

Councils or senates of priests have already been established in almost every diocese in the United States. The studies made by this Ad Hoc Committee indicate, however, that their effectiveness varies from one diocese to another and that their future development demands a clearer understanding by both bishops and priests of the meaning of “consultation.”

Consultation of the kind referred to in this context is a part of the canonical and cultural tradition in the Church, but now reflects a new appreciation of rank and file participation in the life of human institutions. Above all, the fact that consultation is somewhat less than full legislative action or parliamentary decision-making must not be permitted to denigrate the crucial significance of consultation in the Church. Thus, it would be misleading to refer to participation in policy-making as *merely* consultative, even if, as the Synodal Document points out, the process does require a complex interaction of dialogue, reflection and consensus, rather than the mathematical and absolute results of a vote.

Consultation in the Church is not based upon any concession or privilege; it is derived from the very nature of the Church as a people and as a communion of believers who share in the priestly office of Christ. It reflects, moreover, our belief in the universality of the gifts of the spirit of God.³

A bishop must give serious consideration to the views of those whom he consults and should not act contrary to them without a weighty reason. Only in exceptional circumstances should the judgment of councils or senates especially those representative of the ordained ministry or of the entire People of God in which the Spirit resides be rejected.

Consultation, properly understood, also imposes a corresponding obligation upon priests vis-a-vis bishops. If it is the responsibility of the bishop to listen to his priests, obviously it becomes the responsibility of priests to speak in a spirit of loyalty and fraternal charity about their bishop. The conciliar Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, in speaking of priestly obedience says:

“This obedience leads to the more mature freedom of God’s sons. Of its nature, it demands that in the fulfillment of their duty priests lovingly and prudently look for new avenues for the greater good of the Church. At the same time, it demands that they confidently propose their plans and urgently expose the needs of the flock

committed to them, while remaining ready to submit to the judgment of those who exercise the chief responsibility for governing the Church of God.”⁴

Nor is there any room for the so-called “loner,” who thinks he can fulfill his pastoral responsibility on his own. The Council document referred to above declares in this connection:

“No priest can in isolation or single-handedly accomplish his mission in a satisfactory way. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests under the direction of Church authorities.⁵ Hence it is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, always help one another to be fellow workers on behalf of truth. Each one, therefore, is united by special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry and brotherhood with the other members of this *presbyterium*.”⁶

Human nature being what it is, the rights of individuals may at times be violated or abridged even in the life of the Church. In order that the rights of all—bishops, priests and laity—be adequately protected, procedures to guarantee due process must be initiated in every diocese. The norms published by the NCCB on due process are a means of establishing a process and remedy that will protect any member of the Church who claims to have a legitimate grievance. The procedural steps of conciliation, arbitration, and judicial hearing have built into them opportunities for the rights of all parties to be respected and adjudicated.

In affirming what has been stated we believe that the following should be implemented in every diocese.

1. That the Council or Senate of Priests become truly consultative in the proper meaning of that word as delineated above.
2. That the norms on due process issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and formally approved by the Holy See be put into practice.

THE SELECTION OF BISHOPS

Since the role of bishops is so significant, the method of choosing men to fill the episcopal office has always been an object of greatest concern. History reveals constant solicitude among Christians for the process of selecting their bishops. One of the oldest traditions in the Church is par-

participation in the process of choosing bishops. Variations in this process have developed across the centuries for changing reasons, but the testimony of Scripture and the primitive Church is clear. There is a perennial need to review the process of choosing bishops in the perspective of the Church's firm tradition.

The question that has to be faced today is how to involve the faithful more effectively in the process of selecting their leaders. For priests, religious and faithful of all stations and walks of life can and should contribute their grace and insight to the ascertainment of need in Christ's Church and to the discovery of leadership. The notion of co-responsibility has been singled out by many experts as a central theme of the Vatican Council. Over and over again the laity, religious and clergy have been reminded of their important roles in the Church, that they are the People of God, that the mission of the Church is their responsibility.

As for the clergy, the Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry has discovered that few issues are of more vital concern to the priests than the manner in which bishops are chosen.

Undoubtedly, the expectations of some who think that a broader participation in the selection of bishops will solve all the problems of the Church are unrealistic. It is certainly no panacea, nor does it even offer a guarantee that the best men will always be chosen. On the other hand, few decisions are of more significance to the local church than the choice of its leader. If all the People of God share in the responsibility for the continuation of the mission of Christ, so, too, should they participate to some degree in the determination of the one who will have the most to say about how that mission will be accomplished.

If any of the faithful in the United States have been and are still effectively excluded from such determination, it has been the Spanish-speaking and black people. Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee feels it to be of utmost and immediate concern that Spanish-speaking and blacks be included in the ranks of the American hierarchy.

The reasons for this special attention are both the fact that traditionally these minorities have been excluded from selection as bishops and also because, by their faith-experience, they have a special and most valuable contribution to make to the mission of the Church.

The manner in which the recent (1972) Norms of the Holy See for the Selection of Episcopal Candidates in the Latin Church are implemented will determine the degree of confidence and response with which they will be accepted. There are steps that can be taken which the Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry believes are in conformity

with the new Norms and which hopefully would give to the process of choosing bishops a greater degree of acceptability than it presently enjoys. With this in mind, the Ad Hoc Committee wishes to make some observations and recommendations which should be given serious consideration by every Ordinary:

(1) Article I, n. 2, of the Norms permits the Ordinary to consult clergy, religious, and laity, but does not *require* that he do so. If the faithful of a diocese are co-responsible for the local Church, they must be involved in an authentic way in the choice of the one who will lead them. This cannot be left to chance. Nor should it be contingent upon the attitude of an Ordinary toward the principle of consultation.

From its findings, the Ad Hoc Committee believes that every Ordinary should consult representatives of all segments of the local Church in the choice of episcopal candidates.

(2) The value of information obtained by secret and individual consultation is very limited. Only a healthy exchange of information and opinion can help the local Church reach a common judgment on the merits of those who it feels are capable of leading. Without this, one who is consulted individually and under the oath of secrecy is apt to propose a name which he would not have suggested had he had the benefit of discussion on the qualifications of other candidates who he would come to realize are superior to his own.

That the Holy See appreciates the value of such corporate discussion is evident from the fact that the new Norms require that the bishops of a Province proceed in exactly that manner when they meet to determine the most qualified candidates. Unless the clergy, religious and laity are afforded the same opportunity, very likely many will simply refuse to participate in what they would consider an unintelligent and therefore meaningless process. In view of the enormous size of the United States, long before vacancies occur there should have been serious and regular consultations in every diocese and region of the nation.

It is therefore regarded as particularly helpful that an Ordinary, before he initiates the individual and secret consultation called for by the New Norms should, as a preliminary process, authorize his diocesan pastoral council or senate of priests to supervise a preliminary process on an on-going basis in which the clergy, religious and laity are invited to delineate the specific needs of the diocese, the particular qualities with which the bishop of that diocese should be endowed, and, finally, to suggest the names of candidates who they would feel are best qualified. To assist those who will participate in this process, the Ordinary should make

known a detailed account of just what he considers the responsibilities of his office, his priorities, the demands upon his time, etc.

(3) In authorizing the establishment of a special committee of the National Episcopal Conference, Article X, n. 2, of the new Norms provides the vehicle for conducting these consultations. If this committee has broad acceptance by the clergy of the country, the process of choosing bishops will have a greater degree of credibility than it could possibly enjoy otherwise.

Furthermore, the principle of subsidiarity would seem to require that the National Episcopal Conference play a far more important role in this process than has hitherto been the case. Consequently, the Ad Hoc Committee suggests to the permanent Committee that it review for possible implementation the following procedure which would indicate to the Church of the United States the practice of the aforementioned principle and would enhance the credibility of this special committee:

- (a) That the bishops in each of the twelve regions of the United States elect one of their number to this special committee and that consultation be made by each bishop with the diocesan pastoral council and senate of priests in his diocese prior to casting his ballot for this committee member.
- (b) That in addition to the functions indicated in Article X, n. 2, this special committee should also study carefully the potential nominees for a specific diocese which has already, or soon will, become vacant, so that when the President of the Episcopal Conference is asked for his opinion, in accord with Article XIII, n. 2, his recommendation will be a well-informed one.

(4) Important to the question of the selection of bishops is the notion of a limited term of office. No one can deny that the burdens imposed on the local bishop in the post-conciliar church are great. Many a capable man might well shrink from accepting such a responsibility. A limited term of office would make it easier for a bishop to serve a community in spite of the great demands made on his time and energies.

However, as vital as this question is, there are too many theological and canonical implications, as well as human considerations, that would have to be studied before a definitive position can be taken. There are many advantages to imposing limitations on an office holder's responsibilities. But at the same time one cannot ignore the disadvantages that would result from a possible loss of effective leadership and a lack of continuity in the diocese. In the light of the difficulties that such a propo-

sition entails, the Ad Hoc Committee believes that the permanent Committee should give consideration to the frequently received recommendation: that the NCCB establish a competent inter-disciplinary committee to research this question of a limited term of office for bishops.

AUTHORITY IN PRIESTLY MINISTRY

While there are many important forms of priestly service, this section will concern itself primarily with the parochial ministry, since studies reveal that this is the area which requires the most attention. In considering the exercise of authority in the parochial ministry it should be kept in mind that the image—and therefore the effectiveness—of authority involves more than just the exercise of power. It encompasses the entire gamut of interpersonal relations that make the use and acknowledgment of power a reasonable and voluntary experience. It is for this reason our consideration of authority in the parish involves far wider matters. Ultimately they are highly important to authority in that area.

I. *The Pastoral Ministry*

The pastor must be a true spiritual leader, one who is concerned, alert and sensitive to needs, one who listens seriously, with a clear view of objectives.

His office confers upon him authority. He has been placed in the role of a supervisor; he is not being true to himself or to his role if he does not exercise that authority and show true leadership. He must be conscious of his role and regularly evaluate his own performance, being responsible and accountable.

The pastor must lead by example and be a person of faith, of prayer and personal holiness. The following should be his standard: He must be able to form a congregation which is truly a community of active faith, composed of Christians who are living their commitment to Christ. This means that he must provide: a) effective preaching of the Word; b) competence in liturgical celebration; c) genuine social concern; d) ability to stimulate and motivate others in realizing their talents; e) ability to lead the community in collaboration with other churches and the wider community; f) skill in pastoral counseling.

The pastor must look upon his brother priests as co-workers, be open with them, honest, compassionate, willing to share, respecting their rights

and dignity as mature men, never being paternalistic. He must respect their personal freedom and right to privacy.

The rectory should be a true home—with an atmosphere of brotherly love, of patient consideration and tolerance and a place of genuine hospitality. The pastor must realize that the parish and the rectory are not “his.” Although invested with authority and responsibility in his relationship to the parish and rectory, he shares them with others. Although the Studies on the Priesthood indicate that the majority of priests are satisfied with rectory living, consideration nevertheless ought to be given to the possibility of alternatives should circumstances warrant it.

Priests must relate to each other as true Christians before telling others how to live as Christians. The priests of the parish must give an example of real unity even though they differ in age, personality, temperament, by showing their people how to live together in tolerance and understanding.

They must show their unity by sharing—sharing in the work to be done, sharing in the social life of the rectory, sharing in prayer by working into their schedule some time for common prayer, sharing in the Liturgy—concelebrating the Eucharist and other ceremonies whenever feasible. “Since priests are bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood and by their mission, and since they work and plan together for the same task, some community life or a certain association of life shall be encouraged among them.”⁷

Yet, they must respect each other’s individuality, each other’s right to freedom and privacy. “Personal freedom, responding to the individual vocation and to the charisms received from God, and also the ordered solidarity of all for the service of the community and the good of the mission to be fulfilled are two conditions which shape the Church’s proper mode of pastoral action.”⁸

II. *Shared Authority*

There must be a continuing, on-going communication so that the priest, in exercising his leadership role, can be open and effective in sharing the work of the parish. He must be willing to recognize that all his parishioners have the right and duty, and must be encouraged to exercise the gift of the Spirit entrusted to them. “Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others” (1 Peter 4: 10). St. Paul emphasizes the same obligation, “There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord.” (I Cor. 12: 4)

III. *Alternate Ministries*

The Vatican II Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church and the apostolic letter implementing it provide a broad base for experimentation, adaptation, and creative innovation in parish structures. Ample authority has been restored to diocesan bishops to enable them, in consultation with their priests and people, to appraise the pastoral needs of the diocese and make substantial alterations in the traditional forms of the parish. The bishop is clearly empowered to innovate for the good of souls.

This new vision of pastoral responsibility in the local church opens the way for a variety of experiments in parochial ministry. "Team Ministry," or the sharing of the pastoral office with its responsibilities and rights, is one of the forms of parish ministry which is now undergoing experimentation in several dioceses in virtue of the above-mentioned episcopal authority.

Various other forms of specialized parish arrangements (e.g., non-geographic parishes, student communities, professional or occupational groups, etc.) warrant special consideration. None is free of problems, but many deserve careful experimentation as we search for solutions to present pressing pastoral difficulties.

What has been said above about the relationship between priests applies also to their relationship with the people they serve. "Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the role which is proper to them in the mission of the Church. . . . They should listen to the laity willingly, consider their wishes in a fraternal spirit, and recognize their experience and competence. . . . Priests should also confidently entrust to the laity duties in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action."⁹

In the light of what has been said above, the Ad Hoc Committee strongly recommends:

1. That participation in programs to develop skills in leadership and interpersonal relationships should be made available to all priests.
2. That matters affecting the parochial ministry and interpersonal relationships be considered at regularly scheduled staff meetings.

IV. *Other Considerations*

It would be impossible to address ourselves in this section to each and every problem revealed by the Studies on the Priesthood. What has

been said above represents an effort to address those areas of priestly life and ministry which seem to require more immediate attention—namely, authority and its exercise.

Because of the constant changes both in the Church and in civil society, the Studies on the Priesthood will have to be continually updated. Moreover, the researchers themselves say that there is still considerable data in their studies that remains to be analyzed. Many things are being proposed which will have to be experimented with, watched and evaluated. (An added reason for the establishment of the permanent NCCB Office on Priestly Life and Ministry as proposed below.)

After in-depth study the Ad Hoc Committee is convinced that much of what is said in this section and what will follow, can only be incorporated into the American Church through the adoption of the following recommendation. The Ad Hoc Committee, therefore, presents for formal vote by the Conference of Bishops at its November meeting the following proposition:

A. That there be established a permanent Committee of the NCCB on Priestly Life and Ministry in November, 1973, and that representative members of both diocesan and religious priests be added to this Committee as consultants and advisors who will collaborate in setting its goals and in carrying out its functions.*

B. That a permanent office or bureau be established within the NCCB to service this Committee, e.g., to help implement its recommendations, to carry on or to stimulate research on the priestly ministry, to act as a clearinghouse of information in this area, and to work with religious, diocesan or regional offices in the area of the Committee's competence.*

* These two proposals were adopted at the general meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in November, 1972.

II

EVALUATION AND PRIESTLY GROWTH

NEED FOR EVALUATION

Today's world needs the message of the Gospel. As one called to be a speaker of the Gospel message, the priest is therefore a most important member of our society. He deals with the basic needs facing modern man, giving faith-illumination to the challenges of everyday life—among them, establishing relationships that are stable and loving, the religious sense of marriage and family, the problems of racism, poverty, peace, sickness, aging, and loneliness.

An important goal of the NCCB Studies on Priesthood in the United States is to help the priest grow to be a more effective minister of this Gospel to the people. But both the Sociological and Psychological Investigations show that basic to such effectiveness is the personal maturity of the priest and that continued personal growth is needed for even the more mature priest.¹⁰

These Studies and other authorities consulted by the Ad Hoc Committee strongly recommend some kind of program to enable each priest to recognize his strengths and weaknesses, his achievements and his potential, and, consequently, to set realistic goals for his life and ministry. Such an on-going evaluation of the priest and his work would contribute greatly to his needed growth and maturity. It would add to work satisfaction and would help to develop the "support systems" cited by the researchers.

In recommending such a system of evaluation, we emphasize that it, in no way, is to be considered the sole or final factor in measuring effective priestly ministry. Ultimately, it is only one of many important elements.

CURRENT SITUATION

The evaluation that the Ad Hoc Committee envisions has not been entirely untried. Some American dioceses have already proceeded with

such programs in varying degrees. Parish or congregation profiles are appearing in increasing numbers, and self-studies have been made by most of the religious communities in this country.

Many parishes have used simple evaluation processes in asking for pastors with certain basic qualifications that were deemed necessary for the special needs of the parish in question. A number of religious communities have compiled job descriptions for superiors so that the superior together with his community might have some standards of measurement.

From the viewpoint of Sacred Scripture, personal appraisal is consistent with the Gospel message, especially in the parable of the talents (Mt. 25: 14-30). Nor is evaluation as a process entirely unknown to the congregations of the Holy See, e.g., the quinquennial report required by every bishop on the quality of Catholic life in his diocese. In religious orders of both men and women, periodic "visitation" by specially appointed persons have provided the framework for appraisal of the quality of the religious community and its members.

The practice of assessing professional personnel is likewise well established in the academic community. Throughout the United States accrediting agencies, both national and regional, long ago developed and put into use evaluating procedures for faculty and staff members at the level of both secondary and higher education.

But in citing the use of evaluation by many agencies and groups, our aim is not to adopt uncritically their methods for our own use. On the contrary, the priesthood is more than a profession, and unique features are required of a program which proposes to appraise the priest and his work.

We wish an evaluation process which will radiate the personal concern and love of Christ for each individual priest felt and experienced through the action of the Church. We wish an evaluation process which shows a positive concern for each priest as an individual, which assists him to proclaim the Gospel, to set realistic goals for his ministry, to provide him with on-going opportunities for theological updating, to enable him to perceive himself as always becoming a man who is a meaningful and needed minister of the Gospel in the lives of his people.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The mind of the Church is clear: "Throughout their lives (priests) should labor earnestly to perfect their spiritual, doctrinal, and professional development."¹¹ It is incumbent upon us to establish an order "which

will to an ever better extent serve man and help individuals as well as groups to affirm and develop the dignity proper to them.”¹²

It would seem that bishops are called upon to provide both the opportunity and the resources which will enable priests to achieve these goals. Indeed priests today are quite conscious of the need for their continued development. The large percentage of priests reading scholarly professional journals, as shown by the Sociological Investigations, is one evidence of this. It would, however, be unrealistic to underestimate the initial apprehension with which many priests might view an evaluation program. It is important, therefore, that the real purposes of evaluation should be explained.

Evaluation is intended to help the priest to grow, both personally and professionally. It aims to strengthen the priest through his interaction with his people and others involved in the evaluation process.

The program of ministry assessment we envision is not one of a checklist of strengths and weaknesses, plus and minus. It is not a static or perfectionist set of standards far beyond the reach and hope of the ordinary priest. It is a process of concern and support for each priest, a process which takes into account new forms of ministry.

TOTAL PARTICIPATION

For an evaluation program to be truly effective for any persons in any diocese, it must be introduced only in full consultation with all the people involved. The programs that have failed to gain acceptance have usually been those that were planned by specialists and then, with little or no preparation, imposed on those whose task it was to implement them. It is basic that any program must be drawn up, set in motion, carried out and regularly reviewed by those who will do the evaluating and those who are to be evaluated.

As for the method of evaluating priests, we deliberately offer no details. However, we cannot emphasize enough that those who have professional experience with this topic insist that priests to be appraised must be part of any such plan from the very beginning, especially in establishing the criteria and goals of the process.

Some possible designs for the evaluation of bishops would include a self-evaluation profile based on the *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*, issued by the Holy See for the guidance of diocesan bishops. It would be the responsibility of the NCCB to devise an adequate sup-

port system to assist the local bishop in accepting an accurate evaluation of himself and his work.

Professional persons familiar with goal setting, program planning and priority setting must also be a part of the plan from its inception. Of ultimate importance in any such program is some sort of professional training for the person designated to discuss the evaluation results with the one being evaluated. And such results will have been obtained on the widest possible scale, from all those whom the priest serves, keeping in mind the needs and aspirations of the total Christian community.

BENEFITS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Of the many benefits stemming from the evaluation of bishops and priests in the Church, the principal benefits go to the individual himself and to the Christian community which he serves.

Benefits to the priest himself include meeting his psychological need for recognition and appreciation realistically. The Sociological Investigations show work satisfaction is a special problem for associate pastors. It is the feeling of psychiatrists and sociologists with whom the Ad Hoc Committee has consulted that evaluation would go a long way toward increasing this satisfaction with one's work. Even a somewhat critical discussion of one's performance is psychologically speaking preferable to working in a vacuum.

Evaluation would give the priest evidence that others are interested in him, especially his bishop. It would mean a periodic review of potential and achievement. It would help him accept change and the reality of his status as a cleric.

Above all, evaluation will promote the growth and maturity so essential to personal well-being and effective fulfillment of the priest's apostolate. The Psychological Investigations commissioned by the NCCB repeatedly emphasize the importance of setting professional standards for the priest and then measuring his performance. "Greater accountability for the manner in which a priest discharges his obligations of service can only increase maturity." ¹³

Part of maturity is the ability of the priest to realize how he can continue to improve the quality of his service with and to the people. Evaluation may help the priest to realize his inability to meet the needs of the post he is in and lead him to request or accept a change to a different assignment or even a different form of priestly work.

Such a move would be consistent with the words of the Synod of

Bishops on the Ministerial Priesthood: "the exercise of the priestly ministry often in practice needs to take different forms in order better to meet special or new situations in which the Gospel is to be proclaimed." ¹⁴

BENEFITS TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Evaluation brings many benefits to the People of God, among which the following may be mentioned:

A program of appraisal can help the priest himself find the right place, making him a more effective minister of the Gospel to the people. Evaluation of persons in the ministry is to be done with the people and for the people. An obvious example is the judgment of the people on the effectiveness of his preaching.

An adequate evaluation program can facilitate the measurement and assessment of new forms of ministry. The proper judgment of the effectiveness of a team ministry, for instance, is best rendered by an evaluation of it made by those being served. The same could be said of current experiments with limited tenure which to be effective must be coupled with an evaluation process.

Supportive evaluation can lessen the gap between priests, between priest and people, and between priest and bishop and help ease the tensions arising from the everyday exercise of authority. The information that grows from an evaluation program can likewise lend assistance in the more effective nomination of bishops, assuring a use of special talents.

Since such an appraisal of the clergyman presupposes the development of a consensus on the goals of the local Church, the evaluation program can contribute to the collegial discussion and implementation of those goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To respond to some of the human and professional needs of the priests of the United States as revealed by the Studies commissioned by the NCCB, and to the priorities expressed by the priests themselves to the members of this Ad Hoc Committee, we recommend:

- 1) That professional expertise be recommended to dioceses by the permanent Office, to assist in setting up programs of evaluation and that all dioceses take first steps toward the eventual adoption of an evaluation

program as soon as possible. It is further recommended that within each diocese the program of evaluation be developed by all those persons to be evaluated. The new program at first will preferably be used experimentally with a few especially willing individuals. After appropriate adjustments and refinements, the program can be extended to all members of the presbyterate.

2) That the bishops discuss their early experiences with the evaluation programs, which may have been inaugurated previously in other dioceses, at the NCCB regional meetings in April, 1973,* and that, at a later date, there be a comparative study of models of evaluation programs. Uncritical adoption of another diocese's instruments, however, may not profit the Church as a whole or the great variety of priestly ministries found in today's societies.

In light of this, it is envisioned that evaluation programs will be interpreted to candidates for the priesthood in our seminaries, both to promote their growth in the seminary and to prepare them for future evaluation programs in the priestly ministry.

* This section of the Report was received by the bishops in November, 1972.

III

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

In keeping with the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, this section on Ministry limits itself to the ordained priestly ministry and omits the consideration of any of the other ministries within the Church.

This section will follow this order: (I) the ministry and mission of the Church; (II) priestly ministry within the Church; (III) the common elements of priestly ministry; (IV) varying elements within priestly ministry; (V) factors that affect the ministry; (VI) structures that support the ministry; (VII) celibacy; and (VIII) recommendations.

THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the Church is specified by the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." (Jo. 20: 21). The mission of the Church is to give believers access to the Father through Jesus Christ in the Spirit (Eph. 2: 18), to make Christ present to mankind, to make his saving action available and operative. All Christian ministry is a sharing in the ministry of Christ. (1 Tim. 2: 5) ¹⁵ "In the last analysis there is only one ministry and one service, that which the Father lavishes on all creation through His Son in the wisdom and charity of the Spirit." ¹⁶

The mission of the Church is given to the total Church. The whole Church is sent to proclaim Christ to mankind. The whole People of God is sent to be a messenger. In baptism and in confirmation, as well as in ordination, there is also a sending. The Holy Spirit who gives life also gives a mission, an imperative to bear witness.

PRIESTLY MINISTRY WITHIN THE CHURCH

While lay persons share in the Mission of the Church and in the one priesthood of Christ, baptismal priesthood and ordained priesthood differ

essentially. "Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless inter-related. Each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. Acting in the person of Christ, the ministerial priest brings about the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. For their part, the faithful join in the offering of the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood." ¹⁷

The priest has a special relationship with Jesus Christ. "By the sacrament of orders priests are configured to Christ, the Priest, so that as minister of the head and coworkers of the episcopal order they can build up and establish His Whole Body which is the Church," ¹⁸ . . . "They have become living instruments of Christ the Eternal Priest . . . every priest in his own way represents the person of Christ Himself." ¹⁹

While the call to configuration to Christ must be taken seriously, it must also be taken realistically. The Psychological Investigations emphasize that basically the priest is an ordinary man.²⁰ The call, while setting him apart, does not make a priest a superman, a caste figure. An unreal understanding of the lofty ideal could lead the priest, conscious of his own imperfect humanity, to cynicism, frustration or despair. The ideal should be understood in terms of God's abiding mercy and goodness, of God's patience in the Old Testament, of Christ's patience with His Apostles. It should be understood in terms of God's wisdom and power: "I shall be very happy to make my weakness my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me . . . For it is when I am weak that I am strong." (2 Cor. 12: 9-10).

Under the guidance of the Spirit the Church has the authority to regulate, to modify, to bring to an end, or to create new ministries. She has restored the permanent diaconate and has empowered ordinaries to mandate lay persons as extraordinary ministers of communion. The Church can and does regulate ministries according to the needs of the people.

Pope Paul's *Motu Proprio, Ministeria Quaedam* (August 15, 1972) presumes this authority of the Church to adapt ministry to current needs: "Since minor orders have not always been the same, the many tasks connected with them, as at present, have also been exercised by the laity, it seems fitting to re-examine this practice and to adapt it to contemporary needs . . . It is in accordance with the reality itself and with the contemporary outlook that the above-mentioned ministries should no longer be called minor orders."

THE COMMON ELEMENTS OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

The basic elements of the priestly ministry are: a) to proclaim the Gospel; b) to preside over the sacraments and liturgy; and c) to build up and serve the community which in turn serves the world.

a) The function of the priest, obligated to become an effective preacher, is to make the Word—to make Christ—present to particular people in their particular circumstances in life.

The priest would hope to be possessed by the “good news,” not merely to preach Christ, but be Christ: to preach the whole Gospel, to bear witness to the total Gospel by example and by service, by a personal testimony. He should mediate the truth to the people. Modern man responds more to persons than to propositions. Modern man seeks authenticity and honesty. He looks for these qualities—especially in the priest. Modern man tends to say, “Don’t preach to me about love—love me—show me a loving man—a real man who is poor in spirit, meek, humble, hungry for justice, a peacemaker.”

As one who proclaims and bears witness to the Gospel the priest should be able to listen to and understand many viewpoints. He must teach with patience and compassion, seeking, after the example of Christ, to comfort and reconcile. In the face of the radical changes which have taken place in the world in the last thirty years and the accelerating rate of change, some Catholic people are experiencing confusion about what they are to believe and what they are to do. They fall into groups which are poles apart, which are antagonistic, which attach different meanings to the same words and thus have lost the power to communicate with each other. The priest has a special obligation today to be an agent of reconciliation and of peace. He must be patient, understanding, and knowledgeable. Today he has a serious obligation to read and to study and above all to pray to understand the truth in faith and charity.

b) The Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests calls the Eucharist “the very source and apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel” and “the very heartbeat of the congregation of the faithful over which the priest presides.”²¹ The Synodal document on priesthood states, “The priestly ministry reaches its summit in celebration of the Eucharist . . . source and center of the Church’s unity.”²²

The Mass is at once the renewal of the saving action of Christ, the renewal of His death and resurrection and also the gathering together in offering of all the daily events in the lives of the people, their sorrows, their joys, the reality of their lives. The Mass brings into communion their lives with His life, death and Resurrection. By the way he presides,

the priest must show that he is truly united to Christ in whose place he stands as head of the body. He must be deeply and compassionately aware of the people before him, of the community over which he presides. The priest does not merely officiate at a ceremony. He presides over the participation of his community of people in the death and resurrection of Christ, their access through Christ to the Father and to each other, their being one with each other in Christ and in the Spirit.

A priest should be aware of the continuity of sacramental life, conscious that the sacraments are not mere performances or mechanical actions, but are particular experiences of the saving action of Christ in the on-going renewal of the Paschal Mystery in each man. The priest should show by the way he administers the sacraments that he is aware that the sacraments which he administers at particular times to particular people continually build up the Body of Christ and that through them the Holy Spirit constantly opens new possibilities for His life to become fruitful in man.

The sacramental rites now involve previous instruction, the explanation of options, the involvement of parents, sponsors, the parish community. As well as being a source of grace for individuals, the present rituals for conferring the sacraments now offer increased opportunities for contact, for teaching, for participation, for building up the Church in a very literal sense.

c) The priest desires to build and to serve the community that arises out of the Eucharist and the Word. This involves learning the necessary skills. He will help his people renew the Paschal Mystery of Christ in their daily lives and to celebrate this on-going event in the Eucharistic Liturgy. Normally, and most basic to the mission of the Church, he builds and serves this community as parish, which, in turn, serves the world.

Perhaps more than ever before in history people need each other. They need to be gathered into a community, into Church. People need each other to dialogue about their understanding of truth in the changed circumstances of society. They need support from each other in faith, in the expression and practice of their values. They need to feel that they are not alone, that they are not unknown, that they are not without meaning. Today a priest needs a deep understanding of the value of community. He needs to be personally open to others. At Mass a priest presides over a community. This should be a real community of faith and trust and love, a living source of support and inspiration and continuity.

The priest is a spiritual leader. No matter what form his ministry

takes or in what style it is exercised, the norm against which it must be judged is: does it truly continue the mission of Christ, build up the Church and serve the needs of the people?

The function of leadership is to inspire, to show the way by identifying goals, to facilitate, coordinate, support, correct, commend, to share the effort, to celebrate the passing moments of the community. The leader is not alone as the sole possessor of truth or as one ruling from above. Rather he is one member of a mystical body, a member with a specific and essential task in the organism. But he lives and works through the same Spirit who gives gifts to others. It is through the effectiveness of all the gifts of the Spirit combined that the Body of Christ is built up. Neither a bishop nor a priest can be a loner, can be apart from or above his people. It is the inner dynamism of the Church or of the Spirit living within the Church, to draw all people into one, into unity, into community, into one body where all members, each in his own proper way, work together for the glory of the Father and the spread of Christ's Kingdom.

The priest himself needs his bishop as the center of unity in the diocese and as the link to the universal Church. He needs wisdom and strength from his bishop. He needs the bishop's vision of where the Church is today and where his particular people are. He needs to know the long range and immediate goals of the diocese. He needs inspiration, support, and encouragement from the bishop. He has the right to expect strong, positive, supportive leadership from his bishop.

The priest also needs the support of his fellow priests. Priests should feel that, associated with their bishop, they are in the forefront of the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in their diocese. They should share their wisdom and their strength with each other. They should be a true fraternity. Periodic meetings can do much to break down patterns of polarization. If the bishop and priests do not work together in the Gospel sense, if they do not exemplify the justice, the mutual trust and love preached by Christ, then there will simply be no vibrant Church in the diocese.

It is the office of priest with his bishop to guarantee the continuity, vitality and endurance of the mission of Christ. He has been called and appointed to proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers, to teach and direct believers, to guard the faith and direct the churches and preside over the community. The seriousness of the call and the character of leadership indicate that the commitment should be permanent and full time.

VARYING ELEMENTS IN THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY

It is in the exercise of parish ministry that the basic elements of priestly ministry are usually and most clearly seen by most laity. The parish priest: (1) preaches, (2) bears witness by his service to the people, and (3) celebrates the Eucharist and administers the sacraments. He strengthens, supports and builds up the community.

Other ministries include all these elements but with a particularized emphasis. Chaplains to the military, to hospitals, to prisons, to homes for the aged or orphans, minister to very particular groups and accommodate their ministry to their needs. Some priests exercise a special ministry of preaching; some exercise a ministry of silence and prayer; some exercise a ministry of presence.

Priest teachers, scholars, researchers proclaim the gospel on a different level and in a different way from parish priests. They truly serve the life and growth of the community. They may contribute to the understanding and better practice of the liturgy. Administrators serve the community by means of prudent government and the promotion of good order. Although sometimes at a distance from the faithful, they nevertheless contribute indirectly and in a necessary way to the proclamation of the faith and the celebration of liturgy. In their own way priest psychologists, sociologists, ecologists, urban planners, demographers serve the community in important ways. They enable the community to bring the truth of the Gospel to bear on the currents where life in the world is flowing strongly. As the Synod of 1971 states: "The exercise of the priestly ministry often in practice needs to take different forms in order better to meet special or new situations in which the Gospel is to be proclaimed." ²³

Team Ministry is a style of ministry that is sometimes being tried experimentally as an alternate to the traditional pastor-associate style of parish ministry. In team ministry, several priests serve a parish as partners.

A variation on team ministry is *area ministry* in which a group of priests, either as a team of equals or with an elected coordinator serve a group of parishes or an area. It can represent an efficient pooling of resources, material and human. It can open the possibility of a somewhat larger and warmer community of priests.

Another type of ministry in which there have been a few experiments is ministry to a non-geographic parish, e.g., to special interest groups: those interested in a certain kind of liturgy or a certain style of preaching, to charismatics, to professional groups. These have already been con-

sidered above in the context of Alternate Ministries, and their study deserves high priority.²⁴

Within the framework of the traditional parish with pastor and associates, two experiments are currently being tested—namely, a limited term of office for pastor or of assignment for associates and open listing. Open listing is a process by which, after prudent consultation concerning a parish from which a priest is to be changed, the personnel board of a diocese advises all priests of the opening and of the kind of man desired and then accepts and considers all applications and finally suggests names to the ordinary.

The Synod dealt with the ministry of a priest-politician or a priest-public servant.²⁵ However, the Bishops' permanent Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry might address itself to questions concerning the value of clerical dress, of residence in rectories, of outside employment, of part-time ministry. These questions need to be heard officially and answered prudently according to local situations and needs.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE MINISTRY

Since Vatican II certain factors affecting priestly ministry have received fresh emphasis. The emphasis is due both to statements of the Council itself and to cultural changes which have occurred in the last decade, especially the cultural emphasis on personal dignity, on autonomy, on freedom, on participation in decision-making, on ethnic or racial identity and pride, on the place of women in the Church.

Some of these aspects are:

Collegiality: Collegiality, involves the relationship of Pope to Bishops and Bishops to Bishops as arranged by Christ. A characteristic of collegiality, therefore, is the unity of many in charity and peace. The collegial spirit should also be the characteristic relationship between a bishop and his priests, between priest and priest, and between pastor and people.²⁶

Subsidiarity: Is a principle by which a higher competency does not usurp a work which is the responsibility of a lower competency. It is respect for the legitimate competencies of others. It means granting lower competencies the powers they need.²⁷ In this way the subordinate enjoys both reasonable autonomy and reasonable support. Acknowledgment of the principle of subsidiarity leads to a more mature, more productive and more satisfying exercise of office on the part of the subordi-

nate and strengthens the authority of the superior. It gives the superior freedom to deal productively with a greater number of people.

Freedom: Personal maturity is so important for the priest who is in service to the People of God, and responsible freedom and the experience of life are so necessary for his growth and maturity, that the Psychological Investigations suggest that rather than trying to specify exactly what priests should be, authorities should encourage the priest to exercise his freedom as fully as possible within the parameters of the goals of the Church.

Accountability: Freedom without accountability is counter-productive. In the exercise of his ministry the priest and his superior should share a common understanding of goals and objectives. The priest should recognize a clear obligation to render an account of his ministry.²⁸

Professionalism: Today a priest needs continuing education and professional skills in theological sciences, in preaching, in counseling, in group dynamics. He should look upon himself as one who is accountable for professional standards of performance. There has been an increased awareness of the professional aspects of ministry. Likewise, however, there has been a reawakening of interest in prayer and in spirituality. The current problem seems to be integration: how to combine the professional and spiritual aspects of ministry into a personal whole. The recent study of the Ad Hoc Committee, *Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*, offers many valuable suggestions for achieving an integrated life.²⁹

The Relationship of Ministries: Because of the recent restoration of the permanent diaconate, the suppression of minor orders and the sub-diaconate, the establishment of ministries such as lector and acolyte as well as the employment of lay persons as extraordinary ministers of communion, etc., there is need for theological and practical rethinking of the variety and relationships of ministries.

Presence: At a time in history when people are particularly conscious of their human dignity and personal value and importance, the *presence* of the priest is seen to be of particular value. Directions from afar, impersonal service do not have the impact that direct presence has. The priest must convey the truth by personal witness; he must convey compassion to people through direct and available contact.

The priest is a different kind of presence in the world. In a world preoccupied with technology, the priest is a person with the understand-

ing, the motivation, the aspiration of faith. In a world of suffering and oppression, the priest is a person of founded hope and the standard bearer of hope. In a world where bondage, in various forms, is common both to the affluent and to the poor, the priest is free and available to help people improve the quality of their lives. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor. 3: 17). "We have shared our awareness of the Church's vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. The hopes and forces that are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees men from personal sin and from its consequences in social life."³⁰

Distribution: Population shifts as well as cultural and canonical factors, have produced a disproportionate concentration of priests in certain dioceses and shortages in others. A better distribution of priests and their talents is necessary.³¹ This disproportionate concentration of priests should be a subject for further study by the permanent Office on Priestly Life and Ministry.

Ministry and Varying Cultures: Within the United States people of various races and cultures, aware of their dignity and worth as individuals and as a community, are working to make other people aware and respectful towards them and their heritage. They seek to help form the universal Church with their own talents and genius, their own leadership, their own culture, customs and traditions. The Christian message must take root within a people. Hence, there is a pressing challenge for the Church in the United States to encourage the people of each race and culture to develop their own clergy, liturgy, and other elements of church life and to accept these developments. Imposition of norms and practices upon a people by persons of a different cultural background is contrary to real Christian evangelization.

STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT THE MINISTRY

Because of the complexity of life in modern times, because of the many different attitudes, even with good will and good faith on the part of all concerned, it is difficult to work out a harmonious and efficient solution to the problems that confront the priest of today. Certain structures help to draw out of many viewpoints a single, agreed-upon course of action. Some structures help to settle disputes. Some help to

make the exercise of authority better informed, more collegial, more fraternal, more democratic. The very existence of some structures creates a healthy atmosphere. The existence of all of these structures prior to a crisis situation renders them more effective in dealing with a crisis.

Some structures helpful to the exercise of priestly ministry are:

- a) a Presbyteral Senate/Council
- b) a Personnel Board
- c) Due Process Procedures
- d) An evaluation program ³²
- e) a Diocesan Pastoral Council
- f) Parish Councils
- g) Boards of Education

Not only helpful but necessary are programs for Continuing Education. A priest should speak knowledgeably and to do so must read more and study more. A set of guidelines for continuing education was prepared by the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation and approved by the NCCB in November, 1972.

Essential as a support to ministry, on another level, are habits of prayer and recollection. Prayer is an avenue to God's help and an avenue to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through prayer and reflection a priest can draw strength from the very exercise of ministry itself. "Priests can be conscious of this presence of the Lord in the midst of their work . . . there seems to be in this regard a correlation between prayer on one's knees and prayer 'on location'. Faithfulness to normal prayer heightens the remembrance of God's presence in ministry; the latter experience in turn whets the appetite for contemplative prayer and reflective solitude. The truly apostolic man yearns for time alone with the Lord." ³³

A spirit of fraternity among priests in many dioceses has led them to structure days of spiritual renewal, prayer groups, or other activities aimed at mutual support in their spiritual lives; such efforts should be continued and encouraged.

The priest himself needs the community which he serves. He needs to be able to listen and to communicate. For his own benefit, he needs the response, the affirmation, the support of the community. His own needs are served by those he serves. As he helps others draw closer to God, he is helped by their faith and generosity to be drawn closer to God. He is an organic part of the Mystical Body and cannot live in the Spirit without the other members.

CELIBACY

Among the most important elements that affect the priest and his pastoral service to the People of God is celibacy.

Vatican Council II, Pope Paul VI, the United States Catholic Bishops (Statement of November 13, 1969) and the Synod of 1971, noting the value of celibacy in contributing to complete discipleship of Christ and its validation in history have restated that celibacy is mandatory for priests of the Latin rite.

St. Matthew presents the teaching of Christ: "Some men are incapable of sexual activity from birth; some have deliberately been made so; and some there are who have freely renounced sex for the sake of God's reign. Let him accept this teaching who can." (Mt. 19: 12) St. Paul says: "To those not married and to widows I have this to say: It would be well if they remain as they are, even as I do myself." (1 Cor. 7: 8).

The Sociological Investigations authorized by the bishops show that some priests, while leading celibate lives, do raise questions about the value of celibacy or about the value of mandatory celibacy as opposed to optional celibacy. This Study completed in 1970, shows that more than eighty percent of the priests under 35 favor optional celibacy, more than half the priests under 45 favor optional celibacy, and among priests over 55 twenty percent favor optional celibacy. Eleven percent of the bishops favor optional celibacy.³⁴

On the other hand, priests seem to achieve an "operational" consensus in favor of celibacy. The Sociological Investigations state: "But while more than half the priests in the country expect a change, only one-fifth of the diocesan priests and one-tenth of the religious say that they would 'certainly' or 'probably' marry in the event of a change. The celibacy change, then, is apparently advocated as a matter of principle more than as something that has a direct relationship with the personal plans and inclinations of most priests."³⁵

"We observe in Table 12.5 that 78 percent of the diocesan priests think the celibacy is an advantage for doing their work better. Furthermore, 56 percent see it as a means of developing their love of God and 56 percent also describe it as a means of relating more fully to other people. Finally, 52 percent endorse it as a means of personal growth and development."³⁶ Table 12.6 shows that 73 percent of diocesan and religious priests under 35 consider celibacy as an asset for doing their work better.³⁷ (It must be noted that the authors of the Study are

simply reporting the answers given them by priests. The figures indicate widely differing viewpoints.)

In the light of these facts it is necessary to recognize that there are different perceptions of the value of celibacy and that therefore a question does exist and must be examined and discussed. There is need for open, rational, candid dialogue. In their 1969 *Statement On Celibacy*, the bishops of the United States stated, "In the present statement it is not our intention to foreclose free and responsible discussion of these issues which seriously concern all Catholics."³⁸

It is necessary to recognize that celibacy must be considered within the context of faith, of pastoral service and of moral responsibility and of modern understanding of sexuality, of modern appreciation of personal dignity, of human rights, of freedom, of multiple options and pluriformity, of current mistrust of enduring commitment.

In this modern context the bishops of the United States saw celibacy in this way: "Celibacy is a way of being human, Christian, priestly. It is a way of living and hoping and believing. It does not diminish but enlarges the priest's capacity for love. Celibacy does not negate his personality or any of its component parts. The priest's total strength as a man goes into his life of service because he is called to live in the midst of the people in a close and trusting manner."³⁹

It is necessary to recognize that younger people tend to judge truth by people or experience rather than by abstract notions. They will ask whether this celibate priest can be a more admirable person or Christian servant because of his celibacy. They will ask what celibacy can do for the priest and for the mission of the Church.

It is the judgment of the Ad Hoc Committee that in the light of the considerations mentioned above, the very definition of celibacy needs to be clarified. It makes a great deal of difference whether celibacy is considered as merely the unmarried state, or a commitment to the unmarried state, or a permanent commitment to the unmarried state, or a duty of the state of life of the clergy in the Latin Rite. It makes a difference whether celibacy is considered as a passive acceptance of the obligation not to marry for the sake of being ordained, or a charism offered by the Holy Spirit, separately and freely accepted in faith, in and for Christ and for the sake of total dedication to the Kingdom of the Father by which a person commits himself permanently to remain unmarried.

Even more needs to be done to clarify the understanding of the optional nature of celibacy. Does the discussion, for instance, concern the ordination of married men or permitting ordained men to marry? Some

ask whether celibacy in the present discipline is distinct from Sacred Orders and its acceptance truly free? Another question arises as to whether optional celibacy is historically viable, especially in view of the Protestant experience which suggests that, because of social pressures, the alternative to mandatory celibacy may be mandatory marriage?

The Synod of 1971 ⁴⁰ makes the following statement about celibacy:

Celibacy makes the priest wholly available for the worship of God and service of the people. It is a sign, a personal witness that gospel life is radically new life, a sharing in Christ's life through his death and resurrection and our baptism and lifelong spiritual effort. It promotes full maturity and the integration of the human personality. As a counterbalance to disoriented values current in the world, celibacy bears witness to the ultimate meaning of life as faithful response to the faithful love of the Absolute God. While sacrificing conjugal love, celibacy strongly affirms the value of what it foregoes, widens the scope of human love and bears witness that "at the resurrection men and women do not marry." (Mt. 22: 30). Celibacy is a source of power for the building up of the Church. Celibacy frees the heart and energy to promote evangelization and Church unity. Celibacy has a social character as the witness of the whole priestly order.

Popularly, however, celibacy has been regarded as a sign of the cross that must be born by every Christian under different forms in every state of life.

It would be well to restate each of the values traditionally attributed to celibacy in order to clarify them in the estimation of the clergy and laity. These values, especially when expressed in terms like "eschatological sign," "witness to the radical character of the Gospel," "indication of the presence of the Absolute God" are not popularly understood or appreciated. An effort should be made to express these values more simply and more realistically.

It would be fitting to parallel the relationship of the values attributed to celibacy with other values. If a priest, for instance, is asked for an adult commitment with regard to celibacy, he should be treated similarly as an adult in his working and living conditions.

Celibacy does not exist in isolation from the whole man. Therefore, care should be taken to create an atmosphere supportive of the celibate life, e.g., a high degree of job satisfaction (which involves collegiality, subsidiarity, autonomy, support, expressed norms of accountability, mature relationships, fraternity, cooperation, recognition).

The Sociological Investigations show a significant relationship between loneliness and the desire to leave the celibate state and to marry. But it is not the only factor. Values, work satisfaction, personality and sheer age are also involved.⁴¹ Loneliness is basic to the human condition and also to fellowship with Christ. With reference to loneliness Pope Paul VI suggests that, besides spiritual helps, the priest should not be lacking “the kindly care of his Father in Christ, his bishop,” “the fraternal companionship of his fellow priests and the comfort of the entire people of God.”⁴²

Not to be overlooked would be an interpretation of celibacy in more simple human terms. What clear effect does celibacy have on the spiritual growth of the celibate priest and on his ability to serve?

Related to the problem of celibacy is the matter of laicization. Several questions are asked, viz., should the process of laicization be facilitated and expedited? Should laicized priests be permitted under appropriate circumstances to exercise special forms of service to the Church?

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Introduction

It is important to maintain a proper evaluation of the ordained priesthood under the pressures of modern culture and circumstances. It is true that there is current emphasis, obvious in the psychological and sociological studies in question, that the priest is an ordinary man. And there is fresh and valuable emphasis on the need for variety in ministries and for the development of managerial and professional skills.

But it must also be emphasized that while the priest is an ordinary man he has been called by Christ to bear an extraordinary message, to carry on Christ's mission, to teach Christ's truth, to shepherd God's people. The priesthood must be understood and exercised in faith.

It is also important to note that, at this point in post-Vatican II history, it is the parish priest who needs validation and support more than the priest in other ministries. The Ad Hoc Committee asserts this fully aware of the necessity of other ministries and their importance in the life of the Church. However, it is the parish priest who has borne the brunt of criticism in these times, and it is the parish and the parish priest around which most of Catholic life centers.

Some of the following recommendations are made for the use of the

local Ordinary according to the needs of his diocese and in virtue of his faculties, while others are made to the permanent Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry for possible implementation.

The Mission of the Church

It is recommended that, since the total church shares in the Mission of the Church, bishops encourage the establishment of Parish Councils and Diocesan Pastoral Councils in their dioceses to give all the people a greater voice in the Mission of the Church.

Priestly Ministry within the Church

a) It is recommended that the bishops continue their efforts to emphasize the nature and the essential difference of the ordained priesthood while not in any way detracting from the baptismal priesthood.

b) It is recommended to the permanent Committee that it have liaison with the Committee on the Permanent Diaconate concerning the effect of renewed emphasis of the permanent diaconate on the ordained priestly ministry.

c) It is recommended that within each diocese a continuing study be made of how the development of the ministries of lector, acolyte, extraordinary minister of communion, etc., exercises the mission of baptismal priesthood and how it affects the ministry of the ordained priest.

The Common Elements of Priestly Ministry

a) Since the bishop and his priests share a common priesthood, it is recommended that the bishop strive to maintain a personal unity with his priests, to give them the example of leadership and priestly ministry that they have a right to look for in their bishop.

b) It is recommended that the bishop take the initiative in building up the fraternity of the priesthood in his diocese. The bishop together with his priests should form a faith community which would be an example to the diocese of unity, mutual concern and encouraging support. Prayer shared by bishops and priests would help to deepen the bonds of faith and fraternity which are basic to the understanding and exercise of ministry.

c) It is recommended that on a diocesan level priests, both diocesan and religious, should come together two or three times a year not only to discuss diocesan work, but also to enhance a spirit of fraternity and for mutual spiritual assistance. On a deanery level, it would be desirable to have monthly meetings.

d) It is recommended that the bishop should plan meetings with his priests to know them personally. He should be open to discussing with them their priestly life and ministry as a means of mutual support.

e) It is recommended that the bishops make every effort to emphasize the primacy of the Eucharist in the life and work of the priest and in the origin of the faith community he builds and serves.

f) It is recommended that bishops of dioceses should suggest that their priests be involved with meetings that deal solely with spirituality in the priesthood. Priests need an in-depth approach to their spirituality in the context of modern life and ministry. Much could be done through the use of the study, *The Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*, as a working document.

g) It is recommended that while the bishops make every effort to help every priest find and prepare himself for the work for which he is best suited, they continue to emphasize the importance of the parish ministry as basic to the Church and its mission.

h) It is recommended that in each diocese programs should be instituted to offer even experienced priests opportunity to improve their ability to preach and to preach to the real needs of the people.

i) It is recommended that the NCCB document, *The Program of Continuing Education of Priests*, be implemented according to the needs of each diocese.

j) It is recommended that each bishop encourage and lead his priests to make an annual retreat and to make some days of renewal during the year. Opportunities should be arranged for priests to pray with each other.

k) It is recommended that bishops arrange to receive information in the areas of recent developments in management, communication and human relations especially ethnic and racial relationships, for their personal benefit as well as that of their diocese.

l) It is recommended to the permanent Committee that professionally assisted programs be established and made available to dioceses for the identification, selection and development of leaders among the priests.

m) It is recommended that bishops encourage opportunities for priests, non-clerical religious, and laity to pray together in various ways and share together the concerns of their own lives.

Various Types of Ministry

It is recommended that bishops not only be open to the possibility of varying types of ministry for the efficient promotion of the Mission of the

Church but be willing to experiment with new forms of ministry and to allow development of responsible freedom in the exercise of the priesthood according to the letter and spirit of Vatican Council II. It is suggested to the permanent Committee that it consider recommending to ordinaries new types of ministries which in its judgment have proven effective.

Factors that Affect the Ministry

a) It is recommended that bishops promote in their own and in their priests' approach to the Church those aspects of collegiality, freedom, subsidiarity and accountability that effect a healthy and modern priesthood.

b) It is recommended that, in a milieu of professionalism, multiplied meetings, and further studies, the value of the personal presence of the priest and of direct personal contact must not be lost.

c) It is recommended that the permanent Committee give serious consideration to the problem of an equitable distribution of clergy, diocesan and religious, throughout the country. This would involve continuing investigation into more expeditious procedures by which men may be transferred from one diocese to another.

d) It is recommended that in each diocese, pastoral work be done in cooperation with racial, ethnic and geographic groups to help form the Church in their midst. The contribution of these groups must also be incorporated into the total context of the Church in the United States. Consequently their participation at all levels, including the decision-making level, of the Church's life must be facilitated.

Structures that Support the Ministry

a) It is recommended that the bishops in their own dioceses make available to all priests those structures fundamental to the well-being of the priest and the Church today—viz. structured opportunities for prayer and spiritual renewal, a senate/council of priests, a personnel board, due process procedures, evaluation and goal setting programs and opportunities for continuing education.

b) It is recommended that personnel directors and personnel boards of a diocese be given the opportunity to undertake such helpful programs as interviews, open listing, conciliatory practices, etc. It is important that the expertise of personnel boards be periodically updated and evaluated.

c) It is recommended that programs for the education of priests and

laity be undertaken to prepare everyone for the most effective use of such advisory structures as diocesan and parish councils and boards of education.

d) It is recommended that, through research, broad consultation and planning, priorities be established for the diocese and for each parish community.

Celibacy

a) It is recommended that bishops in their dioceses initiate popular catechesis concerning a genuinely Christian understanding of celibate priestly ministry in the light of recent papal documents.

b) It is recommended to the permanent Committee that, in order that such catechesis might answer real questions and be expressed in understandable language, a survey should be taken to see how the layman looks at celibacy and in what terms the values of celibacy might best be expressed in today's world.

c) The Ad Hoc Committee affirms that celibacy must be regarded as a way of life involving many dimensions. If a priest is to make a mature commitment, he should in all circumstances be treated as a mature and responsible person. To this end he needs the support of his bishop, his brother priests and the faithful.

d) It is recommended that bishops and their seminary administrators provide appropriate preparation for celibacy in the seminaries.

e) It is recommended that in each diocese particular care should be taken to discuss the problem of how lay persons view the permanent commitment to celibacy in relationship to the indissolubility of marriage.

f) It is recommended that in priests' retreats, priests' days of recollection and prayer and study sessions there be a more frequent and open discussion of the positive value of celibacy.

Laicization

a) The Ad Hoc Committee proposes for consideration of the permanent Committee that it study how the process of laicization can be facilitated and expedited.

b) It is recommended that the permanent Committee study the possibility of seeking from the Holy See permission to authorize the proper Ordinary or a committee of the NCCB to grant dispensations.

c) It is recommended to Ordinaries and to the permanent Committee that, while avoiding scandal and at the same time exercising charity and justice, appropriate opportunities for service to the Church be made

available to legitimately laicized priests. In reaching a decision in this matter, consideration should be given to current attitudes towards priests who have sought and received laicization, to the needs of the Church, and to the education, talents and good will of the laicized priest.

Ordination of Married Men

In view of the evolving life of the Church and recognizing the consequent emergence of the question of ordaining married men to the priesthood, it is recommended that the permanent Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry give further study to this question in the light of the action of the Synod of 1971.⁴³

IV

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The 1971 Synod document, *The Ministerial Priesthood*, opens with a capsule-like description of the “situation” in which priests find themselves in today’s rapidly changing technological society. The document takes note that today’s priests, in the exercise of their ministry, are faced with “serious problems . . . questions . . . and difficulties” radically different from those with which their predecessors in the ministry were confronted even a generation or two ago. For present purposes, it is not necessary to list or to catalogue these problems. Suffice it to say that they point up the urgent need for continuing research of a serious and scholarly nature not only on the theology, but also the sociology of the priestly ministry—research aimed at assisting priests to serve the People of God more effectively by means of pastoral methods aptly suited “to meet the modern mentality.”

The Second Vatican Council, in its *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, also took note of the rapidly changing nature of modern society and the consequent need for continuing research into all aspects of the priestly ministry. The pertinent section of this *Decree* reads as follows:

Since in our times human culture and the sacred sciences are making new advances, priests are urged to develop their knowledge of divine and human affairs aptly and uninterruptedly. In this way they will prepare themselves more appropriately to undertake discussions with their contemporaries.

That priests may more easily pursue their studies and learn methods of evangelization and of the apostolate to better effect, every care should be taken to provide them with opportune aids. Such would be the instituting of courses or of congresses, according to the conditions of each region, the establishment of centers dedicated to pastoral studies, the setting up of libraries and appropriate programs of study conducted by suitable persons.⁴⁴

Both the Council and the Synod clearly recognized that the problems, etc., facing today's priests in the exercise of their ministry, while tending more and more, because of the speed of communications, to cut across national boundaries nevertheless differ in many respects from one part of the world to another. For this reason it would not be practical to carry on the kind of pastoral research referred to above in one international institute. Each country or region, while coordinating its efforts with those of other centers of study and research and taking full advantage of their findings, must carry on its own continuing study of the priestly ministry in the light of its own cultural background and its own pastoral needs.

In the United States the National Conference of Catholic Bishops took the initiative in this regard shortly after the Council ended and well in advance of the 1971 Synod. The NCCB:

- a) Established a permanent Committee on Priestly Formation.
- b) Sponsored and financed five major studies of a scholarly nature on various aspects of the priestly ministry.
- c) Appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry and mandated this Committee to draft a series of recommendations aimed at implementing the conclusions and findings of the studies referred to above and reflecting the present experience of priests and bishops relative to the renewal of priestly life and ministry.

Recommendations

After nearly two years experience in carrying out the aforementioned mandate, the Ad Hoc Committee believes that in the area of research and scholarship as it pertains to priestly life and ministry, the following recommendations should be considered by the permanent Committee:

I. Within the permanent NCCB Office on Priestly Life and Ministry, previously recommended to the Conference by the Ad Hoc Committee, there should be a special division manned by at least one full-time professional staff person and charged with the responsibility of initiating and correlating research on the priestly ministry and establishing links with research centers working in this area.

Among the subjects to which this research division would be expected to direct its attention, the following may be listed simply by way of illustration:

- (a) The "theory" of the priestly ministry in the light of the NCCB Studies on the Priesthood and current developments in dogmatic and pastoral theology, Scripture studies, religious sociology, etc.
- (b) The need (referred to in the Synod document as well as in the Council's Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) for new methods and new structures aimed at assisting priests to carry out their ministry more effectively.
- (c) Specialized training for these new forms of ministry.
- (d) Continuing study of priestly spirituality and the training of priest specialists in this area.
- (e) Pastoral Planning.
- (f) Evaluation Procedures.
- (g) Continuing Education of the Clergy.
- (h) Personnel Practices.

It would not be the function of this proposed research office to do original research of a scholarly nature in any of the areas referred to above, but rather to initiate and correlate such research in cooperation with universities, appropriate research centers, with diocesan, professional and regional research and planning directors, with councils of priests and with organizations of the laity and religious. Its orientation would be a pastoral one, concerned with pastorally useful research.

II. The feasibility of a full-fledged interdisciplinary Research Institute on Priestly Life and Ministry at the Catholic University of America should be explored at the earliest possible date.

The Ad Hoc Committee is persuaded, on the basis of its own informal soundings, that the Catholic University of America would be the most appropriate sponsor of such an Institute. The Ad Hoc Committee is also convinced that, with the full backing and support of the American hierarchy, adequate funds for the operation of such an Institute could be raised from philanthropic foundations and other sources.

This proposed Institute would not take the place of the research office referred to above or other agencies of research. This research office would continue to serve within the area of its competency as a liaison between the NCCB and the Catholic University Institute and between the clergy of the United States and the Institute. On the basis of its own contacts and its own field work, it could also serve to bring to the attention of the Institute the need for additional research on this or that particular aspect of the priestly ministry and could assist in funneling information to the Institute from various sources.

III. The continuing education of the Clergy—called for so insistently in the Vatican Council's Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests—has already been studied by the NCCB Committee on Priestly Formation. The latter Committee's report on this subject was adopted in November, 1972 by the NCCB and has since been made available in printed form for general distribution.⁴⁵

In the judgment of the Ad Hoc Committee, it remains to be seen whether the implementation of this report on continuing education of the clergy (and future studies in this same area) should be carried out by the Committee on Priestly Formation or by the permanent Office on Priestly Life and Ministry.

Meanwhile, it is recommended that this matter be discussed by the two permanent Committees—Committee on Priestly Formation and the Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry—and that their conclusions be transmitted to the NCCB in the form of a joint resolution.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 21.
2. Synod of Bishops—1971—*The Ministerial Priesthood*—Part II, n. 1.
3. Cf. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, nn. 10, 12, 30.
4. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, n. 7.
6. *Ibid.*, n. 8.
7. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. 2.
8. *Ibid.*, Part I, n. 1.
9. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 9.
10. *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations, Psychological Investigations*.
11. *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life*, n. 18.
12. *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, n. 9.
13. *Psychological Investigations*, p. 179.
14. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. 1b.
15. *Ibid.*, Part I, n. 1.
16. *The Priest and Sacred Scripture*, C. IV, p. 28.
17. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 10; cf. Synod, n. 4; *Mediator Dei*, nn. 83, 84; Trent DS 1767-1770.
18. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 12.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations*.
21. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 5.
22. *Ibid.*, n. 4.
23. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. I, 1, b.
24. Cf. previous sections of this Report: *Authority and Its Exercise*.
25. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. I, 2.
26. Cf. also *Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church*, n. 16, C & D; *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 7.

27. *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops*. Cf. also *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, n. 86, *Quadragesimo Anno*, NCWC text, p. 26.
28. Cf. previous section: *Evaluation and Priestly Growth*.
29. Cf. *Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*.
30. *Justice in the World*, Synod of 1971, Introduction.
31. Cf. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 10.
32. Cf. section on *Evaluation and Priestly Growth*.
33. *Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood*, p. 17.
34. *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations*, p. 234.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Statement on Celibacy*, NCCB, n. 3.
39. *Ibid.*, n. 13; cf. also *Encyclical Letter on Priestly Celibacy*, Paul VI, n. 32, *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 16.
40. In a summarized form, cf. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. 4.
41. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 250.
42. *Encyclical Letter on Priestly Celibacy*, n. 59.
43. *The Ministerial Priesthood*, Part II, n. 1, 4, f.
44. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, III, n. 19.
45. *The Program of Continuing Education of Priests*.

Documents referred to above are available from
Publications Office, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

