

March 2017

Mission and Priesthood in the Church

Rev. Richard P. McBrien

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/tcl>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Catholic Lawyer by an authorized editor of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact selbyc@stjohns.edu.

MISSION AND PRIESTHOOD IN THE CHURCH[‡]

REVEREND RICHARD P. MCBRIEN*

THE ASSIGNED TITLE for this paper is "Mission and Priesthood in the Church." Perhaps a more precise title for these reflections would be "The Mission of the Church and its Ministries, with Special Reference to the Ordained Ministry." My remarks will be divided into two major sections. The first I call general systematic remarks, in which I will try to indicate the relationship between ecclesiology and our understanding of the ministries of the Church, i.e., how our concept of Church affects our concept of ministry, whether the ordained ministry or any one of the several ministries of the Church. In the second part of my presentation I shall indicate ten theses on the mission and ministries of the Church which will be by way of specifying some of the material in the first general section.

For a bibliographical basis for these remarks, in addition to the obvious grounding in the New Testament, I am indebted to certain documents of the Second Vatican Council, in particular *Christus Dominus*, *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. I am also reflecting in the presentation perhaps more than any other source a report which I worked on as a member of the subcommittee of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. That report was done under the chairmanship of Carl Armbruster, S.J. It was submitted in its totality at the recent bishops' meeting in Atlanta. I am also indebted for my thinking on the ministry of the Church and particularly on the ordained ministry to a letter on celibacy of the American Catholic Bishops in November of 1969, a letter which has gone

‡ Paper delivered the Eastern Regional Conference, Canon Law Society of America, at Scranton, Pennsylvania on May 2, 1972.

* Priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford; Professor of Theology at Boston College and Pope John XXIII Seminary, Weston, Massachusetts; Chairman of Joint Doctoral Program with Andover Newton Theological School.

largely unread by two sides in the Church for very different reasons: one side figuring there is no point reading and studying it because it took our position, and the other side figuring that there is no point reading that statement because it didn't take our position. It is still holding the line on celibacy. But, as a matter of fact, at least in my judgment, there is some very good material in that letter whatever your position on the celibacy question might be. I am also indebted to various writings on the ordained ministry by Edward Schillebeeckx, Walter Kasper, Raymond Brown and Karl Rahner, and Hans Kung's book, *Why Priests?* It is a presentation on the ordained ministry within the Church. And finally I am indebted to the various symposia of the Canon Law Society of America, which, I say as an outsider, are the most significant contributions your Society has made to the American Church.

Part I: General systematic reflections on the relationship between ecclesiology and our understanding of ministries or ministries of the Church. I am going to read just a few lines from the aforementioned report to the American Bishops. I am quoting from page 26: "To understand better the meaning and role of Christian priesthood, besides recalling the priest's relationship to the person of Jesus Christ, one needs also to situate the specific responsibilities of the priest within the broader context of the mystery of the Church itself. The priest serves the faithful and the world from within the family of the Church which clearly shapes his particular self identity. Our concept of the purpose of ordained ministry is decisively formed by our understanding of the Church."

It seems to me that a crucial methodological principle contained in that document to the American Bishops is that our concept of the purpose of ordained ministry is decisively formed by our understanding of the Church. One theologian, a biblical scholar, once said it this way, "Have as high a doctrine of ministry as you like so long as your doctrine of the Church is higher, and have as high a doctrine of the Church as you like so long as your doctrine of the Kingdom is higher." In other words, the concept of Church makes sense only in terms of its ultimate purpose which is the same as the purpose of Jesus himself, that is, to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God, in word, in sacrament and in ministry. And just as the Church makes sense only in terms of its ultimate responsibility of the coming of the Kingdom, so the ministry or the various ministries of the Church make sense only in terms of their ability to help the Church fulfill that mission for the sake of the Kingdom. Have as high a doctrine of the ministry as you want so long as your doctrine of the Church is higher. Have as high a doctrine of the Church as you like so long as your doctrine of the Kingdom is higher.

Now this is not the place to explain how our understanding of Church affects our understanding of ministry except in a very schematic way. I have said on other occasions that we have operative in the American Catholic community today various models or images of Church. I have listed them in a way that is subject to variation and subject to change and to challenge. But I have listed them for purposes of discussion as a hierarchical, an existentialist and a prophetic model of Church. I am not saying

that any one of those models is wrong or corrosive of our understanding of Church. The only thing I have said about them is that each one of them is an inadequate model for understanding the mystery of the Church and that somehow we must be able to construct an open-ended model of Church that absorbs the distinctive values of each of these three models without, however, becoming locked into any one of them.

A hierarchical model of Church which says something very right about the Church is a model which emphasizes the Church as a visible society with a hierarchical structure, which emphasizes the Church as an institution over against community. It doesn't deny community. We are talking in terms of emphasis. The hierarchical model of Church would have been the model that was dominant in the early drafts of *Lumen Gentium*. It is the model of Church which remains dominant in Catholic thinking today. It remains, in fact, crucial in much policy making in the Catholic Church. I have quarreled with it only when it is proposed as an absolute, self-contained, closed model of Church, as if it reflected the total mystery of the Church. It emphasizes, first and foremost, the Church as a visible society with a hierarchical structure. I have suggested that, as the report of the American Bishops indicates, the model of Church that we operate on will dictate the model of ministry or, more specifically, the model of ordained ministry within the Church. For example, if the dominant model of Church is hierarchical, then the understanding of ministry is going to be a ministry of cult, a ministry of magisterium, that is, a ministry of word and sacrament. Am I suggesting that that is not part of the essential com-

posite of ordained ministry? Not at all. What I am suggesting, however, is that when this model of Church is the dominant model or indeed the exclusive model, then it is very easy to develop a theology of ministry, and ordained ministry in particular, which not only concentrates on, but makes almost exclusive, the task of the ordained ministry as a task of word and sacrament.

And just to give some kind of grounding to that general remark I would urge you to study the first of the two synodal documents developed in Rome last November. First, study the one on the ministerial priesthood and notice how its understanding of ordained ministry, of priesthood, of ministerial priesthood reflects at every crucial point a particular understanding of Church. In other words, its understanding of the mission of the Church is pretty much limited to a mission of word and sacrament. The goal of evangelization is generally limited to word and sacrament. We proclaim the Word of God that we might draw people to faith in Jesus Christ and draw them to gather around the common table of sacrifice. Am I suggesting that that is not part of the mission of the Church? Am I suggesting that that is not part of the essential task of evangelization? Not at all. But I am suggesting that, because the model is an inadequate model of Church, it tends to bring with it a restricted and, therefore, inadequate concept of the mission of the Church. Or again compare the concept of ordained ministry in that document on the priesthood with its notion of Church and ministry, and the concept of Church in the second of the synodal documents on justice in the world. I would think any fair minded reading of both of those documents would

disclose different approaches to the mission of the Church. In the latter document evangelization is described in this way. It says that the pursuit of justice and the transformation of the earth are seen as “a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.” Now that is different from an earlier concept which makes the Church’s concern for justice and the transformation of the earth a matter of pre-evangelization, things that the Church ought to be interested in if it has sufficient personnel and resources. The second synodal document on justice in the world takes a position which I think is basically the same as *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II, namely that the pursuit of justice and the transformation of the earth, as engaged in by the Christian community, is a constitutive dimension of evangelization.

A second model of Church which is operative in the Catholic community today I’d call an existentialistic model for want of a better term. There are Catholics today who look upon the Church not at all as a visible society, hierarchically structured. They might be the type who not only do not like too much law; they might not like any law. But they look upon the Church first and foremost as a community, as an encounter group, you might say. The Church is principally a context for human growth. Now if that is your model of Church, (and there is some basis for this in Catholic theology and in Vatican II if you elaborate on the concept of Church as people of God, as pilgrim people), if this is not only your dominant but your exclusive model of Church, then you are going to develop a distinctive notion of priesthood and ministry within the Church. The ordained min-

ister is going to be principally a ‘facilitator’ or an ‘enabler’ of community, to use some common psychological terms. They even use the term “tuner” now. When you have people together for discussion, facilitators, enablers or tuners, whatever you prefer to call them, people who are in the group as a resource person or as a catalyst, they somehow can get interpersonal relationships going and can sustain them. Is that part of the mission of the Church? I do not see why we should deny it. Therefore, I do not see why we should deny that that is not a viable aspect of the responsibility or task of the ordained minister within the Church. But if that is your exclusive model of Church and that is your exclusive concept of ordained ministry, it seems to me that both are defective for basically the same reason.

A third model of Church, in addition to the hierarchical or existentialist model, is prophetic—that is, an understanding of Church not so much as a visible society, hierarchically structured, in fact, very little of that, not even so much as a community where interpersonal relationships can be sustained and supported, but more importantly as a movement or agency of social change. The Church is the avant-garde of the kingdom. The Church is to be where the action is. The Church happens wherever there is a struggle for justice and peace. I do not see how we can realistically and theologically deny that that is saying something true about the mystery of the Church. Vatican II, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*, speaks of the Church very much in that accent, that the Church is to be like Jesus, a servant. The Church is to discern and respond creatively and imaginatively to the signs of the times and to distribute its re-

sources for the sake of facilitating the coming of God's Kingdom by humanizing the world, by bringing justice and peace to the world. That is a third model of Church. It is a viable model of Church except when it is adopted as a closed-ended or self-contained or exclusive model. When that model of Church is adopted in a limited way, then there develops a self-contained, exclusive, closed-ended model of ordained ministry. The priest or ordained minister becomes in that instance principally a political activist. Father Groppi or the Berrigans, for example, are not only viable expressions of ordained ministry, they are the norm. They become, in fact, the exemplars of what ordained ministry is all about.

Now I am suggesting in this first part of my presentation, in these general systematic reflections, a point that may or may not be entirely obvious to you. But it is not obvious to many people in the Catholic Church and to many people we mutually serve.

To refer again from the report to the American Bishops, our concept of the purpose of ordained ministry, what it means to be priests today, to use the traditional way of asking the question, is decisively formed—those are the words in the report—is decisively formed by our understanding of the Church. And what I have done thus far in this first part of my paper is to indicate, very schematically to be sure, that if we look at some of the dominant models or some of the popular models of Church today in the Catholic community, hierarchical, existentialist and prophetic, we can see how these models in turn produce their own distinctive models of ordained ministry.

To provide a concrete point of reference,

I have cited the two synodal documents in order to let you see how we have working in the same synod different models of Church, not contradictory, but different models of Church, with a notable difference in attitude towards the scope of ordained ministry. The first document is very cautious on the involvement of priests in politics and the second, even though it is talking about the problem of politics and justice in the world, makes no such reservation. Let me read another few sentences now from that report on the priesthood to the American Bishops. This is from page 29, which illuminates a second principle in this first general systematic section, the first principle being that our understanding of ministries in general and of ordained ministry in particular is decisively formed by our prior understanding of Church. The second principle is: Ministry is related to mission as means to an end.

Let me just digress here for a moment. Oftentimes some of us, even in theology and I suppose in Canon Law, rank and file, non-professional, non-academic Catholics, will use the words "mission" and "ministry" as if they were synonymous. They are not. We often multiply words casually: the goal, the mission, the purpose, the task of the Church. And we assume all the while that these words are basically saying the same thing. Sometimes we do that with the "mission" and the "ministry" of the Church, as if they were the same thing. They are not. Even their Latin derivative is different, mission coming from the word having to do with the "sending forth" of the community in the Spirit and the word ministry having to do with "service." So, as the report to the American Bishops states, and I think it is

on excellent theological grounds, ministry is related to mission as means to an end.

The Church has a mission. The Church has been given a responsibility by Jesus Christ in and through the power of the Spirit, that is, to hasten the coming of the Kingdom in word, in sacrament and through its service. Furthermore, the Church has been given certain ministries which allow the Church to fulfill its mission. Ministry is related to mission as means to an end. The Church realizes its mission, quoting again from the report to the bishops, "The Church realizes its mission in the concrete by ministry to mankind as the sacrament of Christ in the world. This ministry can be understood as the Church's activity exercised in all its members and given life through various structures. The Church's ministry despite its diverse forms should be viewed as one common enterprise undertaken at the inspiration of the one Holy Spirit. In different ways all the faithful are continuing the work of Christ the Lord who gathers and constructs His Church in preparation for a coming eschatological fulfillment. Each person and each office in the Church cannot do everything. Indeed, God's call to service addressed to each member is particularized. But the diversity of Church functions are unified in its common mission."

So from these general systematic reflections on the relationship between ecclesiology and our theology of ministries and ordained ministry in particular, we can construct as the subcommittee on the theology of the priesthood has done, two working theological principles which, it seems to me, have immediate canonical implications. First, our understanding of ministries in

general and the ordained ministry in particular is decisively formed by our understanding of Church. Thus, as we go through this process of renewing and revising, of enacting laws, we have to be mindful of the obvious theological and intellectual fact that our attitude toward form and structure, as it applies to ministry, will always be a reflection in some way of our prior understanding of Church. Now I am not suggesting our awareness of this principle is going to solve all the problems, but being so aware will at least help us to see where the problems lie. It is not so much a matter of determining whether we should have team ministries operating in that particular style or whether we should have the election of pastors or limited tenure in office. What is important is that we realize that the differences that ensue over very specific details of pastoral and canonical concern are oftentimes reflections of deeper differences in our understanding of Church.

What I am doing, therefore, is making an appeal to the Canon Law Society, or at least in its Eastern Regional Conference, to take ecclesiology as seriously as possible. Not my ecclesiology, necessarily. I do not pretend to offer the only insight into the Church and I do not pretend to offer an insight which cannot stand correction. But I urge you at least to take the issue of ecclesiology seriously and not try to domesticate it by imposing your canonical prejudices on it. Try to see that there are in fact in the Catholic Church today different models of Church. Even in the documents of Vatican II there is no one single model of Church. Even though the hierarchical model quantitatively is clearly dominant, there is a basis for the other models that I have

discussed, in *Gaudium et Spes* and even in *Lumen Gentium* with its emphasis on People of God and on placing the hierarchical structure in the context of the Church as People of God. At least can we agree upon that? At least can we agree that we do not have to accept a single model of Church and judge all others according to that model and that, consequently, we need not lock ourselves into a particular way of structuring and institutionalizing ministry in terms of a single closed-ended model of Church?

The second conclusion of these general systematic reflections is that ministry is related to mission as means to an end. In other words, as we work together to revise and restructure ministry and ministries of various kinds, we realize all the while that what we are doing is simply trying to fashion more effective instruments for fulfilling the mission of the Church. The Church is not where ministry is. Ministry is where Church is. I realize historically that has not always been accepted. I realize historically that people have operated on the principle, and many still do, that where the valid minister is, there, and there alone, is the Church.

I am suggesting ecclesiologicaly that this is not the only viable way to proceed. It is equally viable, and in my judgment more viable, to say that where the valid Church is, there is the valid ministry and that to the extent that the Church is valid, to that same extent is the ministry valid. That is the kind of ecclesiological method which is at the root of much of the present day ecumenical thinking, for example, on the questions of intercommunion and the mutual recognition of ministries. In other words, if we acknowledge these other communities,

these other churches, as being a part of the Body of Christ (having circumvented at Vatican II the very thorny question of membership and what constitutes membership), we ought to acknowledge as well the validity of their respective ministries. To be sure there are very definite differences of degree of affiliation with the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, to the extent that these communities may be valid expressions of the Body of Christ, then to that same extent would the ministry of these communities participate in the valid ministry of Christ's Church. If they are part of the Body of Christ, they share in the responsibility of the Body of Christ for the sake of the Kingdom, and if that statement is going to be a meaningful statement, they must have the ministerial wherewithal to fulfill that kind of missionary responsibility.

Part II: Ten theses on mission and ministry.

And now to the second major portion of my remarks. I propose to list ten theses. The order is not necessarily the best order. It is the order I regard as the best for the moment. I will be open to suggestions later on by letter regarding a better organization or regarding possible additions. These ten theses on the mission of the Church and its ministries do not introduce new material but rather specify what has gone before and try to give, at least in schematic form, some footnoting to the points I made in the first part of my presentation.

The first thesis: There is a variety of ministries within the Church. For example, preaching with wisdom, preaching with knowledge, that is, the ministry of instruction, healing, miracle working, prophecy,

the discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, teaching, exhortation, almsgiving, presiding, performing works of mercy, administration, the ministry of the apostle, the ministry of the evangelist, and the ministry of the pastor. Now these are just some examples taken from the New Testament. The references are I Corinthians 12:4 ff, Romans 12:6 ff, and finally Ephesians 4:11 ff. This thesis is almost yawn provoking. There is a variety of ministries within the Church. It is obvious. *Lumen Gentium*, in article 18, the very first paragraph in its section on the hierarchical structure of the Church, acknowledges that Jesus Christ established a variety of ministries in the Church. But for some reason this obvious theological principle, grounded in the New Testament, has not been assimilated and has not become part of the intuitive theological thinking of many people in the Catholic Church, including some of us who have the responsibility of leadership. In our common everyday language—and often that is much more important than the language we use in theology books or in Church documents where we make a kind of mental adjustment and say: “Now we have to be on guard and think theologically,”—when we use the term ‘ministry,’ we say there is really only one ministry in the Church and we mean the ordained ministry. Yet it violates a principle which is thoroughly established not only in the New Testament but in the documents of Vatican II; namely, that there is a variety of ministries within the Church. I would urge you very much to pursue this question, in Raymond Brown’s very popular paperback, *Priest and Bishop*, which will not only indicate the biblical basis more fully than I have, but will also

draw out some of the implications of acknowledging a plurality of ministries within the Church.

The second thesis: Each ministry within the Church is a function of the mission of the whole Church. Now again this thesis is not any different from some of the remarks I made earlier. Each ministry within the Church is a function of the mission of the whole Church. Some references: I Corinthians, 12:4: “Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of ministries but the same Lord, and there are varieties of workings but the same God who works all things in all;” or Ephesians 4:12 which speaks of charisms of the Spirit given so that the saints together form a unity in the work of service in building up the Body of Christ. Ministry is a means to mission. Or finally, *Lumen Gentium*, article 30, one of the most practical statements pastorally speaking in the Council documents: “Pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary, they understand that it is their noble duty so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart.”

After all, as it says very clearly both in chapter 2 and chapter 4 of *Lumen Gentium*, the mission is given to the whole People of God and this is meant to apply to laity, religious and clergy. There is then a variety of ministries within the Church and each ministry of whatever nature it might be, whether administration or teaching or exhortation or preaching or healing, is to be

tested and to be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness in facilitating and implementing the one mission of the Church.

The third thesis: The mission and ministries of the whole Church are in turn functions of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Notice what I have done in moving from thesis two to thesis three. In thesis two I am saying that ministry is a function of the mission of the Church. In thesis three I take it a step further and say that the mission of the Church with all of its ministries is in turn a function of the mission and ministries of Jesus. This is a point which is clearly developed in the report of the subcommittee on the theology of the priesthood. It is so obvious that there is no insistence here upon proving it, that is, proving the connection between the mission and ministry of the Church and the mission and ministry of Jesus. But *Lumen Gentium* in article 5 very nicely outlines that relationship. In fact, it sets up a kind of parallel saying that the Church is to the Kingdom as Jesus is to the Kingdom, that is, the mission and ministries of Jesus are. And Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom, says article five of *Lumen Gentium*, by preaching the good news and by revealing it to mankind by his word, by his works and by his presence. Let me quote a portion of article five: "The Church, consequently, equipped with the gifts of her founder and faithfully guarding his precepts of charity, humility and self-sacrifice, receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God. She becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom. While she slowly grows the Church strains toward the consummation of the kingdom and with all her strength hopes

and desires to be united in glory with her king." That is why, in the report I referred to, the theology of the ordained ministry is very closely linked with the theology of the ministry of Jesus Christ, particularly with the ministry as it is expressed in some of the key New Testament titles—high priest, suffering servant of God, and so forth.

The fourth thesis: The mission of the Church as a participation in the mission of Jesus Christ is three-fold. So again the fourth thesis is a specification of the third. This three-fold mission is traditionally expressed by three Greek words: kerygma, koinonia, diakonia. Putting them into English, the mission of the Church as the mission of Jesus is to be the one movement, the one community, the one agency, call it what you will, which in season and out of season is the spokesman or indeed the spokeswoman, the herald, the proclaimer of the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. To put it in political language: the Christian movement is the only movement in the world which, in the name of Jesus Christ, holds before the world the hope of the final coming together of mankind, of the final humanization of the world, if you will, of the final perfection of justice and peace and brotherhood and truth and the other values that are mentioned in *Gaudium et Spes* (art. 39). The Church is the one movement which proclaims its hope in the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ. The Church is the one movement which links the coming of the Kingdom of God inextricably with what Jesus of Nazareth did, with what he preached and with what he accomplished in his death and resurrection, specifically in his new and

decisive release of the Holy Spirit which is the 'stuff' of the Kingdom of God, which is already the pledge of future glory, which is the anticipation of the final Kingdom.

Secondly, *koinonia*. The Church is responsible by mission to be a credible anticipation, an anticipatory sign of what it preaches. It is not enough to say "Jesus is Lord;" the Kingdom is coming in his power and through the Spirit. But the Church has this additional mission to be a credible sacrament of the kingdom, as *Lumen Gentium* says in the very first article of chapter one, that Christ is in the Church as in a sacrament. And so the Church by mission is responsible to show forth the presence of the Spirit, to show forth the presence of the Kingdom in its lifestyle and that is, again, why ecclesiastical reform, structural reform, legal reform in the Church is not simply a matter of political housekeeping. It is not simply a matter of ecclesiastical furniture shuffling. It is directly related to the credibility of the Church as a sign of the Kingdom of God, as a credible, anticipatory sign of that Kingdom.

And, finally, *diakonia*. The Church is a movement which not only proclaims the lordship of Jesus, not only offers itself as a kind of anticipatory sign of what Jesus preached and embodied and released, but also is a movement which freely and voluntarily and, we hope, generously allocates and distributes its resources to help in whatever way it can to hasten the coming of that Kingdom. It does this by moving into those crisis areas where the Kingdom of God is suppressed or blocked out and obstructed, that is, where there is still injustice, where there is still hostility, where there is still

apathy. And so when we as lawyers or when we as theologians or when we as professional resource persons in the Church are concerned about the question of *reinstitutionalization* (and that is what it is, it is not a *deinstitutionalization*) or restructuring, it is always in terms of somehow participating more effectively in the mission of the Church which in turn is a participation in the mission of Jesus. And that mission, for schematic purposes and only for schematic purposes, can be understood as a mission of proclamation, a mission of signification, a mission, if you will, of facilitation.

Of that three-fold mission of the Church or of these three aspects of the one mission of the Church, the only aspect which is distinctively Christian is the first. Let's take them in reverse order. The Christian movement: Christian people are not the only people concerned about justice, although sometimes the rhetoric of the prophetic model gives that impression. Our commitment to justice does not distinguish us. If there is no commitment to justice, we are highly undistinguished in a different way. Secondly, *koinonia* is not distinctively Christian. The Christian community is not the only community. The Christian community is not the only place where the Spirit takes hold and renews hearts and renews structures and makes the Kingdom of God at least in some way transparent. The one aspect of the mission of the Church which is distinctively Christian is its announcement both in word and in sacrament that the Kingdom of God has come in a decisively new way and will, in fact, come in all its fullness at the end, in and through the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, that the Christian community is the only place where the lordship of Jesus

of Nazareth is proclaimed and celebrated in word and sacrament. We say that ministry is a means to mission and mission is a participation in the mission of Jesus. This is what we are talking about. The movement that we are involved in, the movement whose structural and institutional expression we are interested in, is a movement which alone history proclaims the lordship of Jesus as the lynchpin of the coming of the Kingdom of God and which as part of its essential, but not distinctive, mission offers itself as credible anticipation of this Kingdom of God and allocates its resources freely and generously to facilitate the coming of that Kingdom which it has already proclaimed in word and sacrament.

The fifth thesis: It is a mistake to isolate the ordained ministry of priest, bishop and pope as the dominant and almost exclusive ministry of the Church. The task of ordained ministry is not to suppress the other ministries but to integrate them and coordinate them. I refer you again to *Lumen Gentium*, article 30, and I would also refer you to *Christus Dominus*, article 17. In fact, most of the second chapter of *Christus Dominus*, the decree on the bishop's pastoral office, is a modern day job description of the office of bishop. And if one accepts the theological hypothesis, which I think is a reasonably well grounded one, that for all practical purposes bishop and pastor participate in the same kind of ministry, then that second chapter of *Christus Dominus* is just as much a job description for any pastor in the Church. And that distinctive ministry of the pastor, that distinctive ministry of the bishop is a ministry of the overseer, that is, of the one who alone stands in the midst of the community, as a sign of unity and as an

integrator of charisms. Of course, he has many other tasks to be a Christian, to preside over the celebration of the Eucharist, etc., but the distinctive task of the ordained ministry, the pastorate, office of the episcopate, the overseer, is somehow to coordinate and to integrate all the other ministries and gifts and charisms. That is the distinctive task, it seems to me. And more and more as I do research in the area of ordained ministry, the more I read, whether it is Kasper or Schillebeeckx or Rahner or the American Bishops' statement on celibacy or several other documents including the one we submitted to the American Bishops, I am convinced that the distinctive aspect of ordained ministry is pastoral leadership. It is not so much the cultic in itself or spiritual direction or the other things I mentioned, but that which subsumes them all and then makes that ministry distinctive is the ministry of pastoral leadership which is a ministry of integrating and coordinating the charisms. It requires a very special kind of person or team to exercise that kind of ministry.

The sixth thesis: The lay apostolate and the various ministries this might encompass, for example, teaching, counselling, social work, administration, even fund raising, are not simply a participation in the ministry of the hierarchy or clergy in the manner of Catholic Action. The lay apostolate in the '40's and '50's was a very liberal and progressive movement for its time. But by theological hindsight the notion of Catholic Action, that is "the participation of the laity in the ministry of the hierarchy," is really based on bad ecclesiology. The point is that there is only one ministry that all of us participate in and that is the ministry of

Christ. The mission has been given to the whole People of God to be exercised in different ways. I have already said in the preceding thesis, and I am going to come back to it in the next thesis, that there is a distinctive ministry which cannot be expunged from the Church, a distinctive ministry of the pastorate conferred by ordination. However, we cannot allow emphasis on that distinctive ministry to suppress the equally Christ-instituted ministries that we call teaching, counselling, social work and so forth. The lay apostolate is not simply a participation in the ministry of the hierarchy or clergy in the manner of Catholic Action but, quoting from *Lumen Gentium*, article 33, it is rather a participation in the saving mission of the Church itself, through baptism and confirmation — not through canonical deputation. Through baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord himself. By way of *obiter dicta*—do you recall the argument at Vatican II about whether or not a bishop enters the episcopal college by ordination (consecration) or by some legal deputation? And how the issue was resolved on the side of ordination? This principle follows the same kind of spirit. The participation in the mission of the Church, the integration of the various ministries into the mission of the Church, is not the fruit of legal or canonical concessions, but rather originates in sacramental commission.

The seventh thesis: It is a mistake to suppress the distinctive ministry of the ordained for the sake of exalting or preserving the charismatic ministries. There is a distinctive ministry conferred by ordination, it seems to me, and again I refer you to some of the authors and documents that I mentioned at

the beginning. It seems that we are coming more and more to an understanding of the distinctive ministry of the ordained as a ministry of pastoral leadership, not necessarily parish leadership, “pastoral” can have a much broader meaning than that. But the distinctive ministry is a ministry of pastoral leadership. And I would point out that *Lumen Gentium* in the beginning of the chapter on hierarchy (article 18) reminds us that Christ instituted a variety of ministries so that the Church might on the one hand “freely” and on the other hand “in good order” pursue its goal which is the Kingdom of God and salvation. And that is the issue. How do you balance the *free* pursuit of mission and the pursuit of mission which is *ordered*? How do you balance off the institutional and the charismatic?

In thesis five I said we should be careful about exaggerating the institutional to the point of suppressing the charismatic. Is that a hypothetical worry? Not at all. At the Second Vatican Council there were bishops who actually argued that the age of the charisms was over. You can understand why some would have been very slow to accept the ongoing presence of charismatic gifts. That introduces a certain surprise element in the life of the Church and for those who prefer a surprise-free environment charisms can be threatening. But at the Council the issue was resolved in favor of the view that the charismatic gifts are still given to the Church. The Spirit breathes where he wills, not only in certain institutionalized conduits but, in fact, “where he wills.” At the same time the opposite temptation is to say, “Well, the Spirit breathes where he wills. Let’s allow him to breathe where he wills and let’s not put any kind

of restraint or any kind of institutional restriction on the presence of the Spirit." And that is just as corrosive of the mystery of the Church in its mission as the other. Why? Back to a fundamental principle in the first part of my paper. Ministry is a means to the end of mission. Thinking only sociologically for the moment, how can a movement as widespread and as disparate and as historically deeply rooted as the Christian movement, the Church, expect to fulfill a specific mission if it has no way of bringing together its resources, its charisms, its talents, its personnel in order to work more effectively for that mission? What is sociologically sensible becomes theologically imperative. The sacrament of Holy Orders is precisely the gift to the Church, a ministry of order for the sake of facilitating, not suppressing, the charisms, for the sake of facilitating, not suppressing, the freedom that belongs to the whole People of God in the fulfillment of their task.

The eighth thesis: There are several components of effective leadership performance. Every leader must be able effectively to define and sharpen the goals of his organization or community or agency. Translating it into more theological language, this ministry of leadership that I am talking about is a ministry which carries with it the specific burden and the specific responsibility of constantly holding high the vision of the goals of the Christian movement which is the hastening of the coming of the Kingdom of God. What this distinctive ministry does is constantly keep before the attention of the community what its purpose is. Again, is that yawn provoking? I think that if you reflect on your own experience, reflect on the experience of the Catholic community

in this country, you will agree there is much polarization. I think we would have to admit that oftentimes the conflict is not simply old against young or liberal against conservative but the difference is much more basically between those with very different understandings of the purpose of the Church. So the first component of effective leadership is *goal emphasis*.

Another component of effective leadership is what is called in the socio-psychological trade *work facilitation*. I prefer to speak of it more simply as motivation or inspiration. Effective leadership must not only define and sharpen the goals or the mission of the Church but also and more importantly actively encourage people to pursue those goals. Oftentimes those having pastoral leadership will be damned with faint praise when persons will say about them, "Well, at least he doesn't bother us. He lets us do what we want." There is more to leadership than that. There is the positive element of encouragement. The ministry of encouragement is part of the distinctive ministry of the pastoral office. I am not saying we need an indiscriminate cheerleader who, no matter how far behind or how disoriented the team might be, has us still cheering, cheering, cheering. Nor do we need someone just to restrain and to restrict, to caution and to condemn. The pastoral leader must seek out those areas of the apostolate, those functionings of ministry which are really facilitating the mission of the Church and positively and actively encourage those ministries.

If there is any failure in contemporary leadership in the Church it would seem to me that it is on these two counts, a failure to define and sharpen the goals and then,

even more practically, a failure to provide encouragement.

The ninth thesis: The various ministries of human and social service are not to be subsumed under the heading of pre-evangelization but rather are part of the essential ministry of the whole Church. See *Gaudium et Spes*, article 43, for example. This thesis is very much like the one on Catholic Action. We tended to domesticate the lay apostolate under the heading of Catholic Action and so too we have tended theologically to domesticate the social apostolate under the heading of pre-evangelization, to push it beyond the perimeter of the essential mission of the Church. To say that it is 'pre' means it is something you do before you do the real work of preaching the gospel. And again I need only point to the synodal documents to show the contrast. My bias is certainly on the side of the document on world justice, at least on this issue when it says that the

Church's pursuit of justice and her involvement in the transformation of the earth are a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.

And, finally, the tenth thesis: Every ministry is a form of Church life serving the essential function of the Church. This is very similar to thesis two. Form follows function, according to a basic architectural principle. Indeed form serves function and not vice versa. The freedom to abolish old forms, to create new forms and to adopt and modify existing forms of ministry is essential in order to facilitate the function of the community within which the particular ministry exists.

This, it seems to me, is the special, although not exclusive, responsibility of the Canon Law Society of America. As an outsider, but a friendly one, I should like to congratulate you for what you have already accomplished in this very area.