

The doctrine of the rites and prayers of priestly ordination

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1. Introduction

The recent publication of the Roman Instruction *On Some Questions Concerning the Collaboration of the Lay Faithful in the Ministry of Priests* has been the subject of discussion and even controversy for some. For others, such as the organisers of this symposium, it is above all an invitation to study and deepen the distinction between the hierarchical priesthood and the common priesthood. The aim of my presentation is to contribute to this reflection by introducing our audience to the ritual of priestly ordination in the Roman Pontifical. I do not claim to present a doctrinal synthesis, but more simply, following the liturgical order, to offer some historical and doctrinal notes that may help us to better understand the nature and prerogatives of *the ordo presbyteratus*.

It is indeed *ad ordinem presbyteratus* that the archdeacon calls the young deacon at the very beginning of our ritual. However, in order to properly understand what we are about to describe, it is necessary that we pause for a moment to consider this terminology.²

We can see that as early as the time of Tertullian³, Christian vocabulary used the term *ordo* to refer generically to all the people who made up the sacred hierarchy. The term was derived from the institutional vocabulary of ancient Rome, where *ordo* was used to refer to particular colleges and social classes. Thus, the Senate was *the ordo amplissimus*, and outside the capital of the Empire, *ordo* referred to the body of those who held authority in the cities. *Ordo* was therefore distinct from *populus* or *plebs*. Similarly, in Christian Latin, *sacer ordo* is distinct from *plebs sancta* or *populus christianus*. *The ordo ecclesiasticus* itself was composed of various colleges, among which we can distinguish the order of bishops, the order of presbyters, and the order of deacons.

The deacon will be promoted to **the ordo presbyteratus**, which must be deliberately rendered here in English by a neologism: **the order of the "presbyterate"**. Although the archdeacon's call, in which we read *ad ordinem presbyteratus*, only appears at the end of the 13th century in Guillaume Durand's *Pontifical*, it nevertheless refers us to the most ancient vocabulary, that of the

¹ Lecture given at the 4th CIEL colloquium, Versailles, 1998.

² See P.M. Gy o.p.: "Remarques sur le vocabulaire antique du sacerdoce chrétien" (Remarks on the ancient vocabulary of the Christian priesthood), in *Etudes sur le sacrement de l'ordre* (Studies on the sacrament of Holy Orders), Lex Orandi 22 (Paris, 1957), p. 125 ff.

³ *De exhort. cast.* 7, ed. Oehler, I, 747.

Apostolic Tradition, attributed to Hippolytus. In the case that concerns us, that of the simple priest, the term priesthood would have already taken us forward a few centuries. However, it will be important for us to note the transition from presbyter – who is a member of *the presbyterium*, the college of "presbyters" with whom the bishop surrounds himself, following the example of Moses, for the guidance of the people of God – to *sacerdos* in the early Middle Ages.

After these semantic remarks, we must still define the scope of our investigation. The ceremony I am considering is contained in the *Roman Pontifical* published by Clement VIII in 1595.⁴ This was in fact only a slightly corrected, abridged and completed reissue of *the Pontificalis ordinis liber* published by Innocent VIII in 1485.⁵ These two books are so dependent on Guillaume Durand's *Pontifical* that the ritual I am going to analyse is none other than that of the book by the Bishop of Mende, apart from a few minor details.⁶ However, more than ten centuries had passed between the formulation of the Roman ordination rite in *the Apostolic Tradition*⁷, the oldest that has come down to us, dating from the third century, and that of William Durand, practised universally by the Roman Church until 1968. The former presented only the essential rites of the laying on of hands and the episcopal epiclesis, while the post-Tridentine pontifical rite was the culmination of a long evolution. Therefore, long before a new rite of priestly ordination was developed, many liturgists had taken the liberty of criticising the so-called Tridentine rite of ordination, regretting that the essential rites were obscured by the abundance of ceremonies intended to express the content of the sacrament in a tangible way.⁸

That is why I think it is worthwhile to try to understand the plan, the richness and, let us say, the complexity of the pontifical rite of 1595, in order to be able to trace its historical and doctrinal profile. To do this, it is necessary not only to search for sources, but also to be able to highlight the articulation of these various sources in a single ritual. I will describe the ordination ceremony as it appears in the Roman pontifical. Hence the interest, without ever losing sight of what constitutes the essence of the sacramental act, in establishing the role and meaning of the various formulas, gestures and ceremonies that were added to this essence over the centuries. For let us make no mistake, the Bishop of Mende was the author of only a very small number of the rites

⁴ *Pontificale romanum*, anastatic edition of the first edition 1595-1596, ed. M. Sodi and A. M. Traccia, "Monumenta liturgica Concilii Tridentini," (Città del Vaticano, 1997).

⁵ Cf. M. Dykmans, S.J., *Le pontifical romain révisé au XVI^e siècle*, coll. "Studi e Testi" 311 (Vatican City, 1985), pp. 149-157.

⁶ Mgr. M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical romain au Moyen-Age*, T. III, *Le Pontifical de Guillaume Durand*, coll. "Studi e Testi" 88 (Vatican City, 1940), pp. 364-373.

⁷ Cf. *La Tradition apostolique*, ed. Dom B. Botte, o. s. b., coll. "Sources chrétiennes" 11bis (Paris, 1968). See also J. M. Hanssens, s. j.: *La Liturgie d'Hippolyte* (Rome, 1970).

⁸ Such criticisms can be found, for example, in the works of Blessed Cardinal I. Schuster, O.S.B. (Brussels, 1939), Vol. I, p. 155 ff., Dom P. de Puniet, O.S.B. (*Le Pontifical romain, histoire et commentaire* (Paris, 1930), Vol. I, p. 234 ff.), Mgr M. Righetti (*Manuale di storia liturgica* (Milan, 1959), Vol. IV, p. 405 ff.). Dom B. Botte o. s. b. takes a much more nuanced view in "L'Ordre d'après les prières d'ordination" [The Order according to the prayers of ordination], in *Etudes sur le sacrement de l'ordre* [Studies on the sacrament of Holy Orders], Les Orandi 22 (Paris, 1957), pp. 13-35.

and prayers in his pontifical. Far from innovating, he merely grouped together texts and rubrics. We will identify some very ancient prayers, taken from the Sacramentary of Verona⁹, the ancient Gelasian¹⁰, and the Frankish Gelasian of the 8th century¹¹. The *ordines romani* of the early Middle Ages¹², whether pure or hybrid, provide us with the first descriptions of the rites that we see developing in the 10th century in the Roman-Germanic Pontifical¹³, and from there passing into the Roman pontificals of the 12th and 13th centuries¹⁴, the immediate ancestors of the book of the Bishop of Mende.

But let us open the first book of the Roman Pontifical without further delay. In the cathedral church, during a pontifical Mass, at specific and distinct moments of *the ordinarius missae*, the bishop initiated clerics by conferring the tonsure, conferred the four minor orders, and then the subdiaconate. These first five ordinations have so far followed the same pattern: monition, *traditio instrumentorum*, prayers. But after the epistle, for the diaconate, and after the gradual, for the priesthood, a completely different plan emerges: in both cases, there is the laying on of hands and the consecratory prayer. Sacramental formulas and gestures bear witness to a deliberate unity, because of the one priesthood shared in two different degrees.¹⁵

Let us now focus our attention on the sequence of rites and the text of the prayers.

2. Preparatory rites

The election of candidates

The ritual of priestly ordination begins with the election of the candidates. The bishop sits on the *faldistorium*, in front of the altar, facing the choir. The archdeacon, whose role is now fulfilled by the assistant priest, pronounces: "Accedant qui ordinandi sunt ad ordinem presbyterati." The

⁹ Mohlberg - Eizenhöfer - Siffrin, *Sacramentarium Veronense*, coll. "Rer. eccl. documenta", Fontes I (Rome, 1956).

¹⁰ Mohlberg - Eizenhöfer - Siffrin, *Liber sacramentorum romanae ecclesiae ordinis anni circuli (Sacramentarium gelasianum)*, coll. "Rer. eccl. documenta", Fontes IV (Rome, 1960).

¹¹ For the 8th-century Gelasian Sacramentary, we cite the witness of Gellone: A. Dumas and J. Deshusses: *Liber Sacramentorum gellonensis*, CCSL 159-159 A (Turnhout, 1981).

¹² Mgr M. Andrieu, *Les ordines romani du haut Moyen-Age*, coll. "Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense" (Louvain, 1974). Cf. OR XXXIV, vol. III, Spic. 24, ed. 1974, pp. 603-613; OO RR XXXV and XXXVI, vol IV, Spic. 28, ed. 1965, pp. 33-47, pp. 195-205.

¹³ C. Vogel- R. Elze, *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du Xe siècle*, coll. "Studi e Testi" 226, 227, 269 (Vatican City, 1963-1972).

¹⁴ Mgr M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical romain au Moyen-Age*, Op. et loc. cit.: Cf. Vol. I, *Le Pontifical romain du XIIe siècle*, "Stud. e Test." 86, 1938, pp. 134-137; T. II, *The Roman Pontifical of the Roman Curia in the 13th Century*, "Stud. e Test." 87, 1940, pp. 341-350.

¹⁵ Cf. P. de Puniet, Op. cit.: "There is a clear and absolutely certain unity of intention; there was even anointing for deacons, because there is unity in the effect produced and expressed by the consecration of the deacon and that of the priest. This is what constitutes the unity of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which means that the deacon already participates in a lesser degree in the one priesthood; he already bears within him the character of Holy Orders, which is not essentially different, but only more perfect in the priest and the bishop. Just as the unity of the sacrament of Holy Orders required that there be parity in the external rites, so too does this very parity of rites express and symbolise the unity of the sacrament. (p. 235)

ordinands step forward. The archdeacon exchanges a brief dialogue with the pontiff, asking him, on behalf of the whole Church, clergy and people, to ordain these deacons *ad onus presbyterii*. He attests to their dignity. This dialogue, which comes from the 10th-century Roman-Germanic Pontifical, was incorporated into the Roman Pontifical in the 12th century: it is merely a stylised presentation of the ordinands which, as can be seen from a letter by St Jerome¹⁶, was already being performed by a deacon at the end of the 4th century.

The bishop then addresses the clergy and the people, – "annuntiat clero, et populo" –, asking for everyone's support for the serious matter of public interest that is the elevation to the office and dignity of the priesthood. The priesthood is referred to here as *ecclesiastici honoris augmentum*. The text chosen, "Quoniam, fratres carissimi", from the Sacramentary of Gellone, replaced in William Durand's Pontifical the ancient Gelasius formula "auxiliante Domino Deo", now reserved solely for diaconal ordination. However, in the wake of the older Roman formula, the text establishes a traditional practice. But, unlike the Gallican usage which required acclamation, the bishop asks the people only for tacit agreement, inviting those present to speak freely, "pro Deo, et propter Deum", if they know that the candidates are unworthy of the priesthood.

The admonition to the ordinands

After a brief silence, the pontiff now exhorts the ordinands: "Consecrandi, filii dilectissimi..." We owe this text to Guillaume Durand, who undoubtedly deemed it necessary to compose a monition, a *sermo*, as the rubric states, for the use of his colleagues in the episcopate, and whose highly elevated language would quickly become proverbial. Summarising here the substance of the teaching of the various prayers he is about to pronounce, the bishop explains to those who are about to be consecrated the biblical figures and divine origin of the Christian priesthood, the functions, prerogatives, and moral and spiritual obligations of *the presbyteratus officium*.

Although the text was written at the end of the 13th century, it includes a phrase that had been in use here and there for over a century¹⁷: "Sacerdotem etenim oportet offerre, benedicere, praeesse, praedicare, et baptizare". However, as Dom de Puniet noted: "The privileges of the priest listed here can only be fully understood if we consider the case of priests appointed to govern parishes, whether urban or rural, as was the case everywhere at the time this decree was issued. Originally, in Rome in particular, such categorical and absolute language would not have been used. Originally, all the powers of the simple priest were essentially subordinate to those of the bishop."¹⁸

¹⁶ *Epist.* 146 *ad Evangelium*, P.L., XXII, 1194.

¹⁷ It is found in the 13th-century Roman Pontifical, but also in certain recensions of the 12th-century version. Cf. M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical romain au Moyen-Age*, loc cit., TT. II and III.

¹⁸ P. de Puniet, *Op. cit.*, T. I, pp. 240-241.

We will soon understand this when we analyse the ancient Roman prayers for the transmission of the priesthood and the rites that accompany them.

The litany prayer

If they have not already been sung during the ordination of the subdeacons, it is here that Durand has the litanies sung. *The Ordo Romanus XXXIV*, written at the Lateran around 750, the first description of the Roman ordination ritual that we have¹⁹, already mentions the singing of litanies. This must have been a peculiarity of Roman ordinations, as Gallican sources, both the 5th-century *Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua* and the 8th-century *Missale francorum*, make no mention of it. The litanies express the solemn and insistent prayer of the whole Church, clergy and people, who have just given their assent to the ordination of the candidates. They are sung over the ordinands prostrated on the ground behind the pontiff. The 12th-century Roman Pontifical already contains a rubric prescribing that, towards the end of the invocations, the following be added and repeated twice: "Ut hos electos benedicere et consecrare digneris".

3. The transmission of the priesthood

The cheirotonia

We have now reached the essential rites of priestly ordination. First comes the *cheirotonia*, the laying on of hands by the bishop on the heads of the ordinands. This rite is repeated by the priests present. Such was already the ordinance of *Apostolic Tradition*, which seems to indicate that originally the gesture was accompanied by the consecratory formula.²⁰ Nowadays, the laying on of hands is performed in silence: no doubt the growing number of candidates, as well as the rapid development of the formula – a development already attested to by Veronensis – made it necessary to separate the gesture from the formula.

It should also be noted, when reading the text of the *Apostolic Tradition*, that originally priests were probably only supposed to touch the chosen one while the bishop pronounced the consecratory prayer. This imposition could therefore only be performed by a few. The subsequent introduction of individual imposition of hands by priests, with contact with the heads of the ordinands, could only have contributed to establishing the disjunction. Clearly mentioned in *the Ordo romanus XXXV*, a Romano-Gallican ceremonial from the early 10th century²¹, required by Durand's Pontifical, and from there passed into the Pontificale romanum of 1595, it was to be

¹⁹ "The Ancient Roman Ritual of Ordinations in the Early Middle Ages," C. Vogel, *Introduction to the Sources of the History of Christian Worship in the Middle Ages* (Spoleto, 1981), p. 152. Text in M. Andrieu: *Les ordines romani...*, Op. et loc. citt., nn. 8 and 9.

²⁰ "Cum autem presbyter ordinatur, imponat manum super caput ejus episcopus, contingentib(us) etiam praesbyteris, et dicat...orans et dicens..." (ed. Botte, c. 7, p. 56).

²¹ *OR XXXV*, ed. M. Andrieu, 1956, T.IV, p. 38: "...Nam ceteri episcopi, quando consecrant presbiterum, alii presbiteri astantes duo vel tres cardonales manus super caput ipsius qui consecratur imponunt" (n. 38).

performed by the priests present. It is specified that there must be at least three of them²², dressed in chasubles – for we must not forget that we are in a cathedral where the chapter attends in full regalia, or concelebrates ceremonially at the *missa solemnis* of the local ordinary.²³ Failing that, some priests, or even all those present, will take the stole.

After laying their hands on the candidate's head, the bishop and priests hold out their right hands towards the chosen one. Then, using the very words of *the Sacramentary* of Verona, the bishop invites the clergy and the people to pray that God may pour out abundant heavenly gifts and the assistance of His grace upon those He has chosen for the office of the priesthood, *ad presbyterii munus*, in the fulfilment of the ministry that God has deigned to entrust to them. There is therefore a twofold request here: the request for the purely gratuitous elevation to the dignity and character of the priesthood, and at the same time the request for sacramental grace conferring on the chosen one the ability to perform ministerial functions.

An insistent prayer will now respond to the invitation. It is introduced by the short dialogue *Flectamus genua*, a dialogue that we often find in the pontifical before an epiclesis formula to which a gesture of blessing is attached. Here, before the consecratory prayer, by which the candidates will actually be elevated to the *munus presbyterii*, the formula asks for the candidates "the blessing of the Holy Spirit and the virtue of priestly grace" – "et super hos famulos tuos benedictionem Sancti Spiritus, et gratiae sacerdotalis virtutem". While asking for the grace of ordination, the prayer also specifies the intention of the Church's rite: the Church presents these candidates to God so that they may be "consecrated". The place of this prayer, its solemn and supplicatory tone, the accompanying gesture of blessing, and the strength and precision of the words allow us to draw a parallel, in terms of the nature of this prayer, with the *Quam oblationem* prayer of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which the Church, immediately before the consecration, asks for Eucharistic conversion and manifests the intention of the rite.

Then the priests, who until then had remained around the bishop, forming a kind of circle, returned to their places in the choir. The *Flectamus genua* had already interrupted the gesture of raising the right hand by both the pontiff and the other priests. However, it may seem surprising that they did not remain with the bishop in order to hold their hands outstretched with him and at the same time as him during the consecratory preface that was about to begin. At first glance, this might seem logical, and one might see it as a vestige of the rite of the *Apostolic Tradition*. But it is precisely the text attributed to Hippolytus, long before the speculations of scholastic sacramental

²² "Numerus sacerdotum a rubricis non determinatur; duodecim dicimus, et non plus, est enim antiquum presbyterium in memoriam duodecim apostolorum, quod etiamnum a Pontificale romano pro oleorum consecratione praecipitur. Tres tamen semper requiruntur; ait enim rubrica, tres aut plures, duo enim non faciunt capitulum neque presbyterium constituunt." J. Nabuco: *Pontificalis Romani expositio iuridico-practica*, (Paris, 1962), p. 104, note 2.

²³ "The number of priests is not determined by the rubrics; we say twelve, and no more, for it is an ancient presbytery in memory of the twelve apostles, which is still prescribed by the Roman Pontifical for the consecration of oils. Tres tamen semper requiruntur; ait enim rubrica, tres aut plures, duo enim non faciunt capitulum neque presbyterium constituunt." J. Nabuco: *Pontificalis Romani expositio iuridico-practica* (Paris, 1962), p. 104, note 2.

theology and their ritual transcriptions, that seems to offer us the key to the evolution that was to come. Indeed, according to the text of the *Apostolic Tradition*²⁴, the *cheirotonia* performed by ordinary priests does not signify a conferral of the Holy Spirit, which priests can only receive and cannot give, but signifies that the same Spirit they possess is the one transmitted to the new priest. Their gesture therefore has no sacramental value, but they lay their hands on him "propter communem et similem cleri spiritum", "because of the common and similar spirit of their office", as Dom Bernard Botte translates it. By the gesture of laying on of hands, the priests show that they are one with the pontiff: "They are not isolated individuals, each with his own particular mission; they are a college that shares the bishop's concern."²⁵ It is in the common spirit of *the ordo presbyterii*, or *presbyterium*, that the new priests will now share.

However, as we have said, entry into *the Ordo* can only be achieved through the gift of the character and grace of the priesthood, a sacrament that only the bishop, priest of the first order or *ordo episcoporum*, has the power to perform. It is now the consecratory prayer or preface that will develop the reasons for the divine institution of the priesthood and confer priestly dignity.

The *oratio consecrationis*

The consecratory epiclesis of the Apostolic Tradition asked for the spirit of counsel and strength for the chosen one so that he might participate in the government of the Church. In doing so, it referred to the figure of Moses, whom the Lord had instructed to appoint elders, or "presbyters," filled with the same spirit that God had given him.²⁶ The reference to Moses allows us to understand that priests share in the same spirit as the bishop. The prayer ended with a request for the entire *presbyterate* to which the new priest was now attached, a prayer articulated in two parts: that the spirit of the grace received be preserved in us, and that we be worthy to serve God in faith ("Et dignos effice ut, credentes, tibi ministremus) with a sincere heart").²⁷

As Gregory Dix wrote, "the presbyter, according to apostolic tradition, is certainly not a 'church counsellor' or even an 'assessor' to the bishop in the administration of the Church. He is truly part of the *klêros* and has liturgical prerogatives."²⁸ However, the text of the prayer gives no indication of the presbyter's liturgical prerogatives, unlike that of episcopal ordination, which

²⁴ *The Apostolic Tradition*, ed. B. Botte, c. 8, p. 61.

²⁵ Dom B. Botte: "Caractère collégial du presbytérat et de l'épiscopat" [The collegial nature of the presbyterate and the episcopate], in *Etudes sur le sacrement de l'ordre* [*Studies on the sacrament of Holy Orders*], loc. cit., p. 100.

²⁶ cf. c. 7, ed. Botte, p. 56: "Deus meus, Pater Domini nostri et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, respice super hunc servum tuum et impertire ei spiritum gratiae et consilium presbyterii ut sustineat et gubernet plebem tuam in corde mundo, as you looked upon your chosen people and commanded Moses to choose presbyters whom you filled with the spirit you gave to your servant and your servant Moses."

²⁷ "And now, Lord, grant that the spirit of your grace may be preserved in us without fail, and make us worthy to serve you in simplicity of heart, praising you through your son Christ Jesus, through whom glory and power be to you..." (Ibid., p. 58).

²⁸ Gregory Dix, *Ministry in the Early Church* (Neuchâtel, 1955), p. 58.

clearly enumerated them.²⁹ The liturgical prerogatives of the presbyter are obviously not ignored, but they appear in their participatory dependence, their link and their subordination to the prerogatives of the one whom the ancient vocabulary, around the year 200, as noted by Father Pierre-Marie Gy³⁰, designated alone by the name of *sacerdos*, namely the bishop, the hierarch, the first liturgist. Presbyters are, in fact, according to the expression of Saint Cyprian, "associated with the bishop in the honour of the priesthood" – "cum episcopo presbyteri sacerdotali honore conjuncti".³¹ The presbyter is a co-consecrating or co-celebrating minister with the bishop. He therefore has, as Gregory Dix emphasised, no particular liturgical office in the presence of the bishop, who is the ordinary sacramental officiant of his particular church, with the assistance of the deacons. However, in his absence, the presbyter may officiate as the bishop's delegate and, assisted by the deacons, perform the episcopal liturgical functions."³²

This is what we learn from the text of the Apostolic Tradition, the oldest of all ordination rituals. In our search for documents, we must now go back to the 7th century, when the *Sacramentary* of Verona, followed by the ancient Gelasian, provide us not with a ritual but with prayers, which most likely date back to the 5th century, and whose text we find almost unchanged in the Pontifical of 1595. There are three such prayers. We have barely mentioned the first two: the invitation *Oremus, fratres dilectissimi* and the prayer *Exaudi nos*. In our pontifical, these are placed between the laying on of hands in silence and the third of these prayers, which is *the Oratio consecrationis*, the one that will now hold our attention.

Medieval pontificals preferred the title *praefatio* to *oratio*. They introduced it with the same dialogue as that of the preface to the Mass, followed by the words "Vere dignum et justum est", which during the Eucharistic sacrifice express with such solemnity the Church's thanksgiving at the moment of performing the sacramental act.

The pontiff sings the consecratory preface, standing with his head uncovered, facing the kneeling ordinands. He holds his hands outstretched: through this gesture, the *cheirotomia* seems to be restored and linked to the sacramental words. First, he affirms that God Himself is the "author and organiser of all hierarchy and honour" – "honorum auctor et distributor omnium dignitatum" –

²⁹ "...May he shepherd your holy flock and exercise his high priesthood towards you without reproach, serving you night and day; may he make your face favourable without ceasing and offer the gifts of your holy Church; may he have, by virtue of the spirit of the high priesthood, the power to forgive sins according to your command; may he distribute (ecclesiastical) offices according to your order and loose all bonds by virtue of the power you have given to the apostles..." (*Apostolic Tradition*, c. 3, ed. Botte, pp. 45-47). "The bishop," wrote G. Dix, "represents God before the Church and the Church before God; or, as Hippolytus puts it more concretely, the bishop exercises the very functions of Our Lord, that of Good Shepherd of God's 'holy flock' and high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, 'seeking to obtain' from God through the 'offering' of the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church." (Op. cit., pp. 32-33)

³⁰ P.M. Gy, o. p., *Remarks on ancient vocabulary...*, loc. cit., pp. 141-144.

³¹ Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 61, 3 (ed. Hartel II, pp. 696-697)

³² G. Dix, Op. cit., p. 59. "However," added the author, "he does not share in the 'creative' power of the bishop, who dispenses the 'Spirit' in his Church. Only the bishop, through the dispensation of the Spirit, creates lay people (i.e. members of the laos, the people of God) through confirmation, and 'clerics' through ordination."

and, in a particular way, of the priestly hierarchy. At the head of this hierarchy are the bishops, referred to here as *summi pontifices*, who are responsible for governing the people. But God chose to elect "men of a lower order and secondary dignity" – "sequenti ordinis viros et secundae dignitatis" – to assist the pontiffs and cooperate with them in the same work. Is this not the very doctrine of the *Apostolic Tradition* prayer? Like the old text attributed to Hippolytus, the *praefatio* then applies the principle set forth in the Old Testament: Moses surrounded himself with the council of seventy presbyters, while Eleazar and Ithamar, sons of Aaron, received the abundance of graces given to their father. This same Providence was then manifested and confirmed and elevated in the new covenant by the addition of disciples to the apostles.

So the bishop humbly begs God to grant him the collaborators he so desperately needs. "The action of divine grace," wrote Dom P. de Puniet, "is absolutely predominant in priestly ordination: there is nothing that does not come from it, in the preparation of souls called to the priesthood and in the accomplishment of sacramental work ." ³³ God will now accomplish this work freely as the bishop pronounces the essential words of the form that determine the application of the matter—the laying on of hands: "Almighty Father, we pray you, give your servants here present the dignity of the priesthood (*presbyterii dignitatem*); renew in their souls the spirit of holiness, so that they may possess this office of second rank (*secundi meriti munus*) received from you, O God, and that the example of their lives may bring about the reform of morals." These words signify the effects of the sacrament, stating what they actually produce and in an effective manner together with the laying on of hands: namely, on the one hand, the character of Christ's priesthood, with the prerogatives attached to it; and, on the other hand, the renewal and increase of the spirit of sanctification proper to the sacrament of Holy Orders, and necessary for the proper fulfilment of the functions of the priesthood. It speaks of renewal or increase of the spirit of priestly sanctification, because grace has already been conferred on the chosen one through the diaconate, albeit to a lesser degree.

However, it should be noted that *the oratio consecrationis* of the Veronese *Sacramentary*, that is, our *praefatio* from the Pontifical of 1595, is silent—as is the consecratory prayer of the *Apostolic Tradition*—on the functions of the second order of the priesthood. In the 5th and 6th centuries in Rome, priestly functions were still essentially understood in terms of their subordination to the priestly function of the bishop, which the latter expressed quite imploringly: "Sint providi cooperatores ordinis nostri" – "May they be worthy co-workers of our order". However, we shall see that the later complementary rites offered new developments, essentially justified by the need to express the powers received with the character and grace of the sacrament.

4. The complementary rites

The prayer-blessing *Deus, omnium sanctificationum auctor...*

³³ P. de Puniet, Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 271.

In the ancient Gelasian *Sacramentary*, compiled only a few decades after the Veronensis, other rites had been added: priestly ordination ended with a *consummatio presbyteri*, followed by a *benedictio*, both of which came from the Gallican liturgy. There is no trace of the *consummatio* in the *ordines romani*, and although it was included in the Roman-Germanic Pontifical, it was not incorporated into the medieval Roman pontificals. The *benedictio* is also unknown in *the ordines*; however, the entire text can be found in the 12th-century Roman Pontifical, and from there in the Pontifical of 1595.

The *benedictio* of the ancient Gelasian, which later passed into the *Sacramentary* of Gellone, is in fact a deprecatory formula which, in the Gallican liturgy, as attested by the *Missale Francorum* (8th century), took the place of *the oratio consecrationis* of priests. Was it inserted into the Roman books, even if only originally, as Monsignor Righetti believed³⁴, as a simple, useless but very beautiful duplicate of the Roman consecration prayer, then transformed into a blessing intended to conclude the first part of the rite? Or did the liturgy of the early Middle Ages receive this prayer in order to explain the priestly prerogatives pertaining to the character and grace of the priesthood?

Allow me to quote two passages from our *benedictio* that I find particularly evocative: "May they meditate on your law night and day, believe what they read, teach what they believe, and practise what they teach... May they, for the sake of your people, perform the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of your Son through their holy blessing... It seems clear to me that the *benedictio*, like most of the other rites that follow and which I will only briefly analyse, serves to express priestly powers both over the real Body of Christ through the consecration of the Eucharist, and over the mystical Body of Christ through the administration of the sacraments, the presidency of the Christian assembly (*praeesse*), and the ministry of preaching: "Sacerdotem etenim oportet offerre, benedicere, praeesse, praedicare et baptizare". We said earlier that this sentence from the monition allows us to consider an evolution in relation to the conception of the priesthood that is found in both the *Apostolic Tradition* of the early third century and *the strictly Roman oratio consecrationis* of the fifth and sixth centuries.

The *benedictio* of the ancient Gelasian *Sacramentary* bears witness to this evolution. Indeed, from the 4th century onwards, the increase in the number of the faithful and, consequently, in places of worship, the spread of Christianity in rural areas and what we might call "pastoral necessities" required the delegation of the bishop's liturgical functions to members of *the presbyterate*. Admittedly, in Rome, through the great station office, which underwent a new development at the end of the 6th century, the old concept was maintained as much as possible; However, almost everywhere, "we begin," said Gregory Dix, "to encounter the 'parish priest', a presbyter who teaches and administers the sacraments to a detached congregation, which the bishop, although he remains

³⁴ M. Righetti, Op. cit., p. 416.

nominally the 'high priest', as in pre-Nicene times, visits only occasionally".³⁵ As Father Gy noted, *sacerdos*, which initially referred only to the bishop, began to be used occasionally to refer to the presbyter towards the end of the 4th century. In the Carolingian period, it was used more often to refer to the priest, and by the 11th century, it had come to be reserved almost exclusively for him.³⁶ The Middle Ages perceived the priestly function as essentially oriented towards the exercise of a ministry or service, which is *utilitas et caritas*, embracing sacramental life, the teaching of the faith and the government of the community of the faithful.³⁷

However, unlike the Anglican Gregory Dix, the Catholic understanding of Tradition forbids us from describing this evolution as a "radical change" or even an alteration. As Dom Botte remarked, referring to the ordination of the Pontifical of 1595: "The liturgical texts are still there to affirm that priests are co-workers with the order of bishops... What we find in the first four centuries therefore remains valid when it comes to determining what the priesthood is. The *presbyterate* remains a priestly body that assists the bishop and supplants him in his mission to govern the people of God."³⁸

Vestment and anointing of the hands

At the *benedictio*, the 8th-century Gelasius followed with two other rites: the clothing of priestly vestments and the anointing of hands.

The first mention of vestments is found in *the Ordo Romanus XXXIV*, the ancient Roman ritual of ordinations contemporary with *the Ordo Romanus I*, and therefore a witness to the period of pure Roman liturgy. After the litanies, before *the oratio consecrationis*, outside the choir, in front of the chancel, the archdeacon vest the future deacons in the dalmatic and the future priests in the chasuble, without pronouncing any formula.³⁹ Towards the end of the 9th century, with the *Ordo XXXVI*, then around 925 with the *Ordo XXXV*, both Roman-Frankish rituals, the original plan was modified: as in the 8th-century Gelasian, but without receiving the *benedictio*, it was now after the consecratory prayer that the pontiff imposed the vestments on the new priests.

In the Roman ritual, and later in the hybrid *ordines*, the main purpose was to express a function by dressing the ordinand in the vestments appropriate to his ministry. But around 950, in

³⁵ G. Dix, *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

³⁶ P.M. Gy, *Op. cit.*, pp. 141-144.

³⁷ R. Gregoire, "L'Ordine ed il suo significato: utilitas e caritas," in *Segni e riti nella Chiesa altomedievale occidentale*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo XXXIII (Spoleto, 1987), Vol. II, pp. 639-697. Based on his study of Carolingian sources, Father R. Gregoire was able to say that the priestly ministry at that time presented "the vital variety of an ecclesial and social, spiritual and charitable, cultural and political commitment" (p. 695).

³⁸ B. Botte: *Caractère collégial...*, loc. cit., pp. 106-107.

³⁹ OR XXXIV, ed. M. Andrieu, *Les ordines romani...*, *Op. cit.*, T. III: "Si vero voluerit eum consecrare presbyterum, tenens eum archidiaconus ducit foras rugas altaris, exiit eum dalmatica et sic eum induit planeta et ducit iterum ad episcopum". (p. 606, n. 11).

the Roman-Germanic Pontifical, the rite acquired greater solemnity with the addition of allegorical formulas. From there, the rite passed into the Roman Pontifical of the 12th century, at the time when the old Gallican *benedictio* was received. However, a change was made with respect to the 8th-century Gelasian ordinance: whereas in the latter the vesting followed the blessing, it now preceded it, because the old Gallican formula, as we have noted, no longer had a consecratory function: it became a complementary prayer. In this new place, after the rite of clothing, replacing another formula of blessing relegated since the Romano-Germanic period to the very end of the rites of ordination, it manifests the blessing that descends and clothes the chosen one charged with the yoke of the Lord with priestly grace. This is the meaning that should be given to it in the Roman Pontifical of 1595.

It was again the *Sacramentary* of Gellone which, towards the end of the 8th century, first combined the Gallican rite of the anointing of the hands with the Roman ritual. Ordo XXXV (n. 29) prescribes this rite with the same formula as that of the *Missale francorum*. The Roman-Germanic Pontifical accepts it but introduces it with the deprecatory formula: "Consecrare et sanctificare digneris, Domine". From there, it passed into the Roman Pontifical of the 12th century. In the 13th century, the pontifical of the Roman Curia immediately followed the vesting with the singing of the hymn to the Holy Spirit *Veni Creator* with *the Pater noster* and verse, then, as a prayer, the *benedictio* of Gelasius. Durand restored the *benedictio* to its place, then had the *Veni Creator* sung, without *the Pater* or verse. From the second stanza of the hymn onwards, the pontiff, who had knelt for the intonation, rose and proceeded to the anointing of the hands, so that this expressive rite was as if encompassed in the invocation of the whole Church to the life-giving Spirit.

As he anoints the hands of the new priest by forming a cross, then spreading the oil of catechumens over the entire surface of the palms, the bishop pronounces these words: "Deign, Lord, to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this anointing and our blessing." He then makes the sign of the cross with his right hand on the hands of the new priest and adds: "So that everything they bless may be blessed, and everything they consecrate may be consecrated and sanctified in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ." The anointing of the hands therefore refers to the powers of the priesthood, in this case the power to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice and the power to bless. In the Carolingian period, Amalarius of Metz, an authoritative interpreter of the Romano-Frankish liturgy, explained the symbolism of a rite whose precedent he pointed out in the Levitical priesthood: "It is fitting that the hands of priests receive holy anointing, so that they may be pure to offer the holy sacrifice to God and fit for the exercise of certain works of religion. Two things are signified by the oil: the grace of healing and the charity of love."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See *Amalarii Episcopi opera liturgica omnia*, ed. J.M. Hanssens S.J., Vatican City, coll. "Studi e Testi" no. 139, Vol. II, Liber officialis, L.II, c. 13, n. 1, p. 227: "Ut mundae sint hostias Deo ad offerendum, et largae ad cetera officia pietatis; utrumque designatur per oleum, et gratia curationis, et caritas dilectionis."

The *traditio instrumentorum*

In the lengthy introduction to *De ordinibus conferendis* in the Pontifical of 1595, we read: "Let the pontiff be attentive that the ordinands touch the instruments by which the character is received." When giving the bread and wine to the new priest, the bishop pronounces the following words: "Accipe potestatem offerre sacrificium Deo" – "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Mass for both the living and the dead, in the name of the Lord."

It was in the 10th century, in the Roman-Germanic Pontifical, that the rite of *traditio instrumentorum* appeared for the first time in priestly ordination. Undoubtedly, in continuity with the vesting and anointing, it was thought that the entry into the priestly function could be better expressed by the handing over of the instruments proper to the priestly state. However, although this rite was in fact a novelty in priestly ordination, it was not an innovation in itself. Indeed, there are references to the *traditio instrumentorum* in the 5th century in the Gallican minor ordinations of *the Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua*⁴¹, and even in *the Ordo XXXIV*, a purely Roman ritual, during the ordination of the acolyte. As Angelo Lameri has demonstrated in a recent study, this does not seem to allow us to trace the creation of the *traditio instrumentorum* back to feudal society, even if it is undeniable that the rites of vassalage contributed to the development of its ritual.⁴²

However, according to Angelo Lameri, the introduction in the 10th century of the *traditio instrumentorum* in the conferral of major orders seems to indicate that at that time the gesture of the laying on of hands "was no longer considered sufficiently capable of expressing, or even conferring, the sacrament."⁴³ Indeed, the formula that accompanied the gesture was itself such as to give the gesture a decisive role. "In fact," Angelo Lameri notes, "the imperative *Accipe* does not refer to the instruments actually handed over, but to the priestly *potestas* to offer sacrifice and celebrate Mass. It is therefore no longer a simple exhortation, derived from the handing over of the instruments, but the transmission of a priestly power which, in a reductive manner (sic), is identified with the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice..."⁴⁴ We know that in medieval times, and almost throughout the Baroque period and beyond, the *traditio instrumentorum*, in this case the handing over of the chalice with wine and the paten with the host to the ordinand, was long considered an essential rite for imparting sacramental character.⁴⁵ However, the study of the sources of Roman liturgy linked to theological reflection has gradually led to a renewed emphasis on the

⁴¹ Text of *the Statuta in Concilia Galliae A. 314 - A. 506*, ed. Munier, CCSL 148 (Tournai, 1963), pp. 163-188.

⁴² A. Lameri, *La traditio instrumentorum e delle insegne nei riti di ordinazione*, Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia" 96 (Rome, 1998), pp. 171-177.

⁴³ A. Lameri, Op. cit., p. 167.

⁴⁴ A. Lameri, Op. cit., p. 158.

⁴⁵ This opinion was based on Eugene IV's Decree for the Armenians, published on 22 November 1439 during the Council of Florence. For the theological note on this decree, see A. Piolanti, *I Sacramenti* (Città del Vaticano, 1990), pp. 494-495.

gesture of the laying on of hands and the consecratory epiclesis.⁴⁶ It was on this basis that Leo XIII determined the invalidity of Anglican ordinations⁴⁷, before Pius XII made a definitive pronouncement in the apostolic constitution *Sacramentum ordinis*.⁴⁸

The fact of the *traditio instrumentorum* deserves to be studied with greater attention in order to clarify the circumstances which, in the opinion of theologians and liturgists, allowed for the transition from the expression of power to the conferral of that power. Here we must content ourselves with noting, from a simple examination of the rite and its formula, that the sign introduced by the *Roman-Germanic Pontifical* expresses what is the essential and primary power of the Christian priesthood, namely, to communicate the benefits and merits of Redemption through the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the sacramental continuation of Christ's saving gesture. This, as we know, is the primary function of the priesthood, by which the Church is constituted and to which the whole sacramental life and the whole order of worship is oriented. Perhaps, from the 10th century onwards, that is, following the first Eucharistic controversy between the abbot of Corbie, Pascale Radbert, at a time when systematic reflection on the Eucharistic mystery was beginning to develop and the Eucharistic devotion of the Christian people was growing, there was a temptation to see in the rite of *traditio* more than an explanation of what had been conferred by the *cheirotonia* and the consecratory prayer. No doubt the history of the rites of ordination had also been lost sight of. From this perspective, we can understand why St Thomas Aquin⁴⁹, following the common opinion of scholasticism, opted in favour of the *traditio instrumentorum*, rite and formula, matter and form, in order to account for the moment when the priestly character was imprinted on the soul of the chosen one.

However, Pius XII, basing himself on what had always been done everywhere – for the *traditio instrumentorum* had never existed in any Eastern rite – decided infallibly on the matter and form of both the priesthood and the episcopate and diaconate. Consequently, this pope ordered that the sacramental words be highlighted in the new editions of the pontifical, that they be recited without singing, and that the rubric of the pontifical that we have quoted regarding the imprinting of the character by the touch of the instruments be removed. Thus, the *traditio instrumentorum* should no longer appear as anything more than the ceremonial explanation of the essential power received to consecrate the Body and Blood of the Lord.

⁴⁶ Writing at the beginning of the 20th century, Blessed Ildefonso Schuster stated: "The laying on of hands and the episcopal epiclesis are therefore the essential sign of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which must be kept intact in all rites and in all centuries." (in *Liber sacramentorum*, loc. cit., T. I, p. 155)

⁴⁷ Leo XIII: Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae curae*, 13 Sept. 1896, in AAS 29 (1896/97), p. 198 ff.

⁴⁸ Pius XII: Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum ordinis*, 30 November 1947, in AAS 40 (1948), 5-7.

⁴⁹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *IV Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 2. See also Suppl., q. 37, a. 5. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, L. IV, c. 74, St. Thomas writes: "Given this twofold fact: that spiritual power derives from Christ upon the ministers of the Church, and that the spiritual effects that come to us from Him are realised through certain sensible signs, we must conclude that the spiritual power in question must also be transmitted by means of sensible signs. Among these are certain words, certain acts, such as the laying on of hands, anointing, the porrection of the book or chalice or some object of this kind, used in the exercise of this spiritual power."

Sacramental concelebration

After the singing of the Gospel and the offering of their candles to the pontiff, it is this power to consecrate that the new priests will immediately exercise through the rite of sacramental concelebration. This presents some difficulties for our analysis, and would require a much more detailed discussion than time allows here. I will therefore only outline the issues that arise from examining the sources of priestly ordination.

The text of the *Apostolic Tradition* on the ordination of priests gives us no clue; it ends with the consecratory epiclesis. *The Ordo Romanus XXXIV* concludes the priestly ordination with the kiss that the new priest exchanges with the bishops and priests, then indicates that he "stat in ordine presbiterii...et completur missa ordine suo" (n. 12). *The Ordo Romanus XXXV* does not change this order. The 12th-century Pontifical maintains it, then follows it with the offering. There is therefore no trace of sacramental concelebration. I do not mean to deny it, but it must be noted that there is no indication of it. On the contrary, these texts seem to indicate more of a ceremonial type of concelebration consisting of a celebration performed by the pontiff surrounded by the clergy hierarchically organised by "orders".

However, in the 13th century, the pontifical of the Roman Curia completely changed the previous order. It no longer stated that new priests had to be in *ordine presbiterii*, but after the offering, they went up to the altar, where they stood on either side of the pontiff. Reading from their missal, they said *totum* in a low voice, as if they were celebrating – "sicut si celebrarent". There was sacramental concelebration. If the Pope is performing the ordination, priests and deacons receive Communion under both kinds: the Pope administers the Body of the Lord to them with a kiss on the hand before and on the cheek after, while the deacon of the Gospel presents them with the Precious Blood. If a bishop is ordaining, Communion will take place under one kind only.

The sacramental concelebration during priestly ordination therefore seems to be an innovation of the pontifical of the Roman Curia. Saint Thomas Aquinas refers to it in the *Summa Theologica* as a "custom of certain churches".⁵⁰ Durand leaves it up to the discretion of those who have been ordained: "ordinati, si velint, habeant libros coram se dicentes tacite canonem et quaecumque de missa dixerit ordinator".⁵¹ In the Pontifical of 1595, new priests celebrate with the bishop. However, they no longer ascend to the altar, but kneel with the book in front of them, from which they read the prayers of the Mass beginning with *Suscipe sancte Pater*. The bishop will take care to say the canon "morose et aliquantum alte" since they must "secum omnia dicere et praesertim verba consecrationis quae dici debent eodem momento ". It is because they are

⁵⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, q. 82, a. 2: "Secundum consuetudinem quarundam ecclesiarum, sicut Apostoli Christo cenanti concenaverunt, ita novi ordinanti concelebrant."

⁵¹ The Pontifical of William Durand, ed. M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical romain...*, Op. cit., T. III, pp. 370-371, n. 20.

concelebrating, as Luzzi and Burckard had already noted in the 1497 edition of Innocent VIII's Pontifical, that the priests do not have to say the Confiteor before receiving Communion.⁵² They do not receive Communion from the Precious Blood.

In medieval times and beyond, as Catalani attests around 1738 in his *Commentary on the Pontifical*, it seems that sacramental concelebration was already the subject of rather heated debate.⁵³ It therefore seems significant that the post-Tridentine pontifical assigned it exclusively to priestly ordination and episcopal consecration. Why? We have seen, according to the sources, that the rite of sacramental concelebration does not seem to have entered priestly ordination until the 13th century, at a time when, as I pointed out above, the priesthood was perceived essentially in its Eucharistic function, and when it was believed that it was conferred by the *traditio* of the matter of the sacrifice. Perhaps it was this same conception, despite the lack of popularity of sacramental concelebration at the time, that was at the origin of the change attested to by the pontifical of the Roman Curia in the 13th century?

While waiting for greater clarity, and regardless of the search for documents, the actual or presumed antiquity of the practice of sacramental concelebration, the way in which it is practised today, and even the ill-considered favour with which it seems to be regarded, we can draw a conclusion from examining the Pontifical of 1595. Sacramental concelebration does not consist in simply assisting the celebrating bishop; it is something else, it goes beyond the simple expression of the unity of the *presbyterate* around the bishop. It consists in a true celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice on the part of the one who celebrates with the bishop, and this in the celebration of the liturgical rite in which he is co-minister.

5. Final rites after communion

We owe the arrangement of the second complementary rites that take place after communion entirely to Guillaume Durand. These rites do not come from the old Roman ritual, nor even from the Gallican ritual. They are probably medieval diocesan customs from France and Germany that the Bishop of Mende considered to be suitable for highlighting certain aspects of the priestly ministry.

After the ablutions, the bishop intones the hymn *Jam non dicam* at the corner of the epistle, evoking, by juxtaposing the very words of the Saviour, the state of friendship between the elect and their Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit. After intoning the hymn, the pontiff turns to the new

⁵² Cf. M. Dykmans, *Le Pontifical romain révisé...*, Op. cit., p. 129.

⁵³ I. Catalani, *Pontificale romanum in tres partes distributum...et commentariis illustratum*, Rome, 1738, T. I: "Cum ipse ritus,...amplissima fuerit doctoribus scholasticis innumerarum difficultatum seges; nonnullis afferentibus, hoc fieri posse, aliis negantibus, aliis certos quosdam possibilitatis modos, ac terminos excogitantibus; omnibus deinde, ut se se ab adversariorum telis tuerentur, novas, et involutas reculas cudentibus, et recudentibus". (p. 141).

priests who, standing before the altar and facing him, recite the Apostles' Creed. It is easy to understand that this is a proclamation of the faith they will have to teach.

The bishop sits on the *falderium*. The new priests then kneel before him. He lays his hands on the head of each one, saying: "Accipe Spiritum Sanctum" - "Receive the Holy Spirit: sins will be forgiven to those to whom you forgive them, and they will be retained to those to whom you retain them". Once again, we understand the meaning of the rite as an expression of another power of the priest, the power to absolve.

However, this rite requires further examination. For Durand and his contemporaries, the sacramental character was conferred by the *traditio instrumentorum*, which was essentially Eucharistic in nature. Thus, this gesture renewed the Saviour's commandment by which, at the institution of the Eucharistic sacrifice, He instituted the priesthood: "Hoc facite in meam commemorationem". "Since," says St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, "the purpose of the power of Holy Orders is to consecrate the body of Christ and distribute it to the faithful, this power must also extend to making them worthy and capable of receiving this sacrament. But this dignity, this aptitude, is given by the absence of sin... Therefore, the power of Holy Orders must extend to the remission of sins: it does so through the administration of the sacraments that remit sins, baptism and penance. That is why the Lord, having entrusted the consecration of his body to his disciples, gave them at the same time the power to remit sins..."⁵⁴ It is easy to see that this is the power expressed by the rite of the second laying on of hands. If one is sensitive to symbolism, even the placement of this rite after Communion evokes the appearance of the Lord to his apostles after his Passion and Resurrection, when he breathed on them and spoke the words repeated here by the pontiff.⁵⁵

However, while most medieval theologians believed that this power had already been conferred on new priests during the *traditio instrumentorum*, and that it was merely a matter of expressing it, others, basing their argument on the unambiguous nature of the formulas used in both the porrection and the second laying on of hands, believed that the latter gesture had a completely different meaning. This was the position taken in the 16th century by Robert Bellarmine⁵⁶, and an authoritative commentator such as Catalani continued to support it in the 18th century. Since, according to this thesis, two powers are conferred in priestly ordination, one over the Eucharistic Body of the Lord through the power to consecrate, the other over the Mystical Body through the power to absolve, there must therefore be two ceremonies to be observed: the porrection of the instruments and the laying on of hands with the words: "Accipe Spiritum Sanctum...". To those who

⁵⁴ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, L. IV, c. 74

⁵⁵ Jn, XX, 22-23.

⁵⁶ Saint Robert Bellarmine: *De Sacramento ordinis*. In our presentation of the problem, we follow I. Catalani: *Pontificale romanum...*, Op. cit., p. 131, which refers, among others, to Bellarmine.

refute this thesis, such as Morin⁵⁷, on the basis of the first and more ancient laying on of hands, Catalani replies that the second laying on of hands is just as essential as the first. He refutes the moderate opinion of those who see in this rite only an *explicatio* of the power received. To hear him speak, one gets the impression that the true laying on of hands is that which follows communion, as it is accompanied by a formula. *The oratio consecrationis* has therefore taken a back seat.

It does not appear that Guillaume Durand ever supported this opinion⁵⁸, but it is likely that, in his view, this rite was *the explanation* of a power that had been received but was still bound, like the chasuble that had been rolled up behind him and which the bishop then unfolded. It is interesting to note that this rite was inserted between the profession of faith and the promise of obedience made to the bishop. This was followed by the kiss that had concluded the ordination ritual since *Ordo romanus XXXIV*, but now exchanged with the pontiff alone, and accompanied by the formula of *the Roman-Germanic Pontifical*. In an original and very sensitive way, these late ceremonies once again highlight the priest's subordination to the bishop.

We owe the Bishop of Mende another brief instruction: that new priests should learn the ceremonies of the Mass well, especially the order of consecration, fraction and communion. A blessing finally concludes the ordination ritual. Coming from the Roman-Germanic Pontifical, already present in the Roman pontificals of the 12th and 13th centuries, Guillaume Durand had placed it after *the Ite missa est*, in place of the blessing of *the ordinarium missae*. But the Pontifical of 1595 distinguishes it from the blessing given to the whole assembly. The pontiff pronounces it at the end of the complementary rites, at the end of the ordination ritual: he implores God that the new priests be blessed *in ordine sacerdotali*.

Conclusion

The analysis I have had the honour of presenting to you allows us to distinguish, in conclusion, three major stages in the formation of the ritual of priestly ordination as delivered to us by the Roman Pontifical of 1595.

The first stage, that of the period of pure Roman liturgy in the early Middle Ages, consists of the prayers of the Veronese *Sacramentary* and the rites described in *the Ordo romanus XXXIV*. We have seen that the link with *Apostolic Tradition* remains close. The priest, elected and consecrated by divine grace, participates in the bishop's priesthood to a lesser degree. He is a member of the second order, *the ordo presbyterii*, which assists the bishop in his functions of governing, teaching and sanctifying the community of the faithful. Delegated by the bishop, in whom resides the

⁵⁷ J. Morin, *Commentarius de sacris Ecclesiae ordinationibus*, Paris, 1655.

⁵⁸ I refer to what the Bishop of Mende wrote in his *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*: "Sane ei qui in presbyterum ordinatur traduntur sub certis verbis stola et casula, calix cum patena, et etiam inungitur, que res et verba sunt hujus sacramenti substantia, cetera vero precedentia et sequentia de sollempnitate sunt." (II, c. 10, n. 14, ed. A. Davril- T.M. Thibodeau, CCCM 140 (Tournai, 1995), p. 170). The second laying on of hands is therefore not essential for conferring the sacrament.

fullness of the priesthood, he exercises the powers of the Christian priesthood, and the primary and principal power of celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Secondly, as contemporaries or witnesses to the transition from the ancient corporate conception of the priesthood to the more individual conception of the Carolingian era, the texts and rites of the sacramentaries and hybrid *ordines*, followed by those of the 10th-century Roman-Germanic Pontifical, "legitimately explained what was implicitly contained in the simpler rituals of Antiquity".⁵⁹ Through tangible rites such as the vesting, the anointing, and then the *traditio instrumentorum*, they highlighted the transmission of liturgical powers linked to the reception of sacramental character and emphasised the orientation of the priesthood towards the Eucharist. At the same time, the texts insist on the spiritual and moral obligations inherent in the priestly character.

Finally, with the medieval Roman pontificals, at the time of the development of sacramental theology, we see a kind of organisation, or codification before the term existed, of rites and prayers. At the end of the 13th century, Guillaume Durand **demonstrated** a rigorous desire for systematisation: he clarified the rubrics, composed monitions, organised and completed the text. His book soon became the standard work of the Roman Church.

The ordination ritual of Clement VIII's Roman Pontifical thus appears in this continuity, as the liturgical transcription of a slow historical and doctrinal evolution. In this sense, knowledge of it, and even more so its practice, can serve as a bulwark of orthodoxy in the crisis that is shaking the identity of the ministerial priesthood. For, from our traditional or classical perspective, there can be no place for opposition between a kind of golden age, which would be the primitive liturgy, reputedly Roman, and an era of alterations and additions attributable to foreign influences: two different eras corresponding to two almost antagonistic conceptions of the Christian priesthood.

In the field of liturgy, as in that of theology, because of the link between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*, evolution can **only** ever be homogeneous. This was proven by Pius XII in the constitution *Sacramentum ordinis* when, deciding to relegate the rite of *traditio instrumentorum* to the background, he did not, however, consider it necessary to abolish the rite, or even the formula. It was again guided by the same concept that the revisers of the old Tridentine books, under the orders of Pius XII and then John XXIII, on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, worked on a new edition of the Roman Pontifical.

⁵⁹ Dom B. Botte, *L'Ordre d'après les prières d'ordination*, loc. cit., p. 30.