

"IN PERSONA CHRISTI"
ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE THEOLOGY OF MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD
IN THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School, Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

April, 1987

Preface

It was in my service as Coordinator of Hispanic Affairs for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee that I felt the need to formally work toward a degree in theology at Marquette University. The Hispanic community and the staff of the Apostolate inspired and encouraged me to undertake the task. A lot of years and a lot of work have intervened since this work was first begun.

I wish to express my thanks to the Hispanic community and staff in Milwaukee for their continued personal and academic support. I am grateful to the members of the theology department of Marquette, especially Rev. William Kelly SJ and Rev. Philip J. Rossi SJ in their assistance as chairs of the department, to Rev. Richard Roach SJ, my first advisor, and Rev. Donald Keefe SJ, my final advisor, for their patience and guidance, and to Rev. Joseph Lienhard SJ and Rev. Joseph Murphy SJ who served on the reading and approval committee.

I wish also to express my thanks to the officers and staff of the National Organization for the Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC) for whom I have worked these past five years for nudging me on and enduring my research and writing. Catholic Theological Union in Chicago provided a great support to me especially through its fine library resources. The technical and detailed work of my nephew, David Thompson, in organizing the final product was a tremendous help.

The development of this thesis was a great learning and research experience for me. It taxed me many times, but I am grateful that I am bringing it to completion. I hope it can be a help to others - to researchers who might find the data helpful in other projects, but especially to those in ordained priestly ministry who seek to clarify their identity and role.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER I.	THE PHRASE <u>IN PERSONA CHRISTI</u> IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL	4
	A. <u>Lumen Gentium</u>	4
	B. <u>Presbyterorum Ordinis</u>	16
	C. <u>Sacrosanctum Concilium</u>	24
	Footnotes	27
CHAPTER II.	THE PHRASE <u>IN PERSONA CHRISTI</u> IN OFFICIAL CHURCH SOURCES BEFORE VATICAN II	31
	A. Pre-Vatican II Twentieth Century Papal Encyclicals	31
	B. The Documents of the Council of Trent	49
	C. The Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas	56
	D. Appropriate Patristic Resources	61
	E. Biblical Roots	72
	F. Conclusion	77
	Footnotes	81
CHAPTER III.	AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE <u>IN PERSONA CHRISTI</u> AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR A THEOLOGY OF ORDAINED PRIESTHOOD	87
	A. The Biblical Context	87
	B. The Patristic Context	91
	C. Thomistic Context and Meaning	94
	D. The Council of Trent	113
	E. The Pre-Vatican II Encyclicals of Pius XII, Pius XI, and Pius X	115
	F. The Use of <u>In Persona Christi</u> in the Documents of Vatican II	117
	Footnotes	132
CHAPTER IV.	<u>IN PERSONA CHRISTI</u> IN POST-VATICAN II DOCUMENTS	138
	A. <u>Mysterium Fidei</u>	138
	B. <u>Eucharisticum Mysterium</u>	139
	C. On Priestly Celibacy	139
	D. Credo of the People of God	140
	E. General Instruction on the Roman Missal	141
	F. The Ministerial Priesthood	141
	G. <u>Mysterium Ecclesiae</u>	143
	H. <u>Evangelii Nuntiandi</u>	145
	I. <u>Inter Insigniores</u>	145

CHAPTER IV.	<u>IN PERSONA CHRISTI</u> IN POST-VATICAN II DOCUMENTS (cont.)	
	J. <u>Mutuae Relationes</u>	150
	K. <u>Novo Incipiente Nostro</u>	152
	L. Catechesis in Our Time	153
	M. <u>Dominicae Cenaee</u>	154
	N. The Minister of the Eucharist	156
	O. Meaning of Priesthood	157
	P. Address to Priests and Religious in San Salvador	157
	Q. Holy Thursday Message	158
	R. Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance	158
	Footnotes	160
CHAPTER V.	CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	163
	Footnotes	178
BIBLIOGRAPHY		180

INTRODUCTION

Proclaiming Christ as the light of humanity, and the Church in Christ as a kind of sacrament to bring that light to all, the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church set about the task of stating the nature and mission of the Church within the tradition of its past, but for the benefit of the present day faithful of the Church and for all the world.¹ The documents developed and approved by all the bishops and confirmed by the Pope during the Second Vatican Council now serve as a foundation for theological reflection and pastoral renewal in the Church.

Practically all aspects of the life of the Church have been affected by the work of the Council. It is difficult to measure its impact. Its teachings have led to tension and disagreement in the Church as well as to development.

The area of ecclesiology has been a particular point of theological reflection and pastoral development. In reviewing the documents of the Council concerned with ecclesiology, the roles of the bishop and laity are seen to have been the most developed. The role of the ordained ministerial priest was treated briefly in Lumen Gentium and eventually in a more developed way in Presbyterorum Ordinis. But the extensive presentations on the role of bishops, the importance of baptism and the role of the laity, along with the development of the permanent diaconate, tended to obscure the role and mission of the ordained ministerial priest.

The Church has experienced the impact of this situation. A sizeable number of priests have left the active ministry. The number of those preparing for ordained ministry has greatly decreased. Baptism is being emphasized as the basis of ministry. A variety of non-ordained ministries continues to develop. Ordained ministerial priesthood is being looked at as one of many options in ministry. The approaches of some theologians downplay both the nature and mission of the ordained priesthood. Some see it as possessing only a functional status.

Within this perspective, there is a need to study the documents of the Second Vatican Council in order to develop a clearer approach to the theology of ordained ministerial priesthood. One of the points which becomes obvious in studying these documents is that the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood cannot be studied in isolation from the theology of the Church. All ministerial roles are seen within this context. Lumen Gentium sets out this perspective and all the other documents follow this view.

A study of the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood in the documents of the Second Vatican Council could be approached from a variety of perspectives. It is not my intent in this thesis to review the whole history and development of ordained ministry or to do a comprehensive study of the ordained ministerial priesthood from the documents of Vatican II. It is not possible to cover all this material in a master's thesis. Therefore, I have chosen to focus this study on one particular phrase or theological formula which is used regularly to describe the ordained ministerial priest in the documents of Vatican II - in persona Christi, in the person of Christ. I realize

the limits of this perspective. A fuller treatment of the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood would include the relation between baptismal and ordained priesthood, the relationship between the bishop and priests, the priest as member of the presbyterium, the priest and the munera, plus other appropriate themes. However, the phrase - in persona Christi - has its own particular importance in relationship to this theological topic. A. G. Martimort, in an article in L'Osservatore Romano, observes that "one must not be surprised to find often, in the texts of the Second Vatican Council, the formula 'in persona Christi' used to characterize the specific way of acting of the ministerial priesthood."²

In the first chapter of this thesis, I will review and analyze the use of this phrase in some of the documents of the Second Vatican Council. In the second chapter, I will study the historical origins of the use of this theological formula in resources from the Second Vatican Council. In the third chapter, I will analyze the use and significance of the phrase in light of the resources studied. In the fourth chapter, I will look at the use of this formula in the documents of the Church after Vatican II. In the final chapter, I will draw some conclusions from this material and look at some implications for the future.

Chapter I

THE PHRASE IN PERSONA CHRISTI IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL.

The specific use of the Latin phrase in persona Christi is found in three key documents of the Second Vatican Council. In Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), it is used five times directly or in a very close equivalent. It is used three times in Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) and once formally along with a closely supporting text in Sacrosanctum Concilium (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). The use of the phrase itself along with its context within the documents will be studied individually.

A. LUMEN GENTIUM

The first chapter of Lumen Gentium entitled "The Mystery of the Church" sets the context for the entire document. There is a need to seek a deeper understanding of the nature and mission of the Church.³ The roots of the mystery of the Church are to be found in the wondrous design of the eternal Father,⁴ in the salvific action of the Son,⁵ and in the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit.⁶ This Trinitarian context is fundamental to understanding the inauguration of the kingdom of God and the foundational activity of Christ through the proclaiming of the Good News.

The initial use of the phrase in Lumen Gentium is found in article 5 of this first chapter. "But principally the kingdom is revealed in

the person of Christ himself, Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk. 10:45)."⁷

Before coming to this text, article five refers to three ways in which the kingdom of God begins to shine forth: "in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ."⁸ Some Scriptural references are given to show how Christ worked to establish the kingdom through his word and through his works or miracles. The principal way in which the kingdom is revealed, however, is in the person of Christ himself, Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk. 10:45)."⁹

In the initial reading of this text, the focus seems to be limited to the historical activity of Jesus in the founding of the Church and proclaiming the kingdom. But in studying the Latin text and a variety of English and French translations, it becomes clear that the manifestation of the kingdom in persona Christi continues in his glorified presence in the ongoing life of the Church.¹⁰ This is confirmed by the following paragraph which speaks of Christ endowing the Church with His gifts and mission.

The two modifying phrases which follow the reference to the person of Christ are important. The titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are used. No Scriptural references are given. But the titles are used especially in the gospels to relate to the uniqueness of Christ. The title "Son of God" denotes the special relationship of Christ to the Father.¹¹ The title "Son of Man" denotes Jesus' authority within the human community.¹²

The second modifying phrase from the gospel of Mark highlights the mission of Christ. He has come to serve others. The principal

revelation of the kingdom of God is in the service and redeeming death of the person of Christ.

The use of the formula in persona Christi in this text is not explicitly related to ordained ministry, but refers to Christ himself. However, it sets an important serving and sacrificial context for the use of this phrase in reference to ordained ministry in the other sections of the document.

Article five is the heart of the first chapter on the mystery of the Church. It sets the context of the intimate union of Christ and the Church. It is followed by a series of rich Scriptural images of the Church,¹³ with a particular focus on the church as the body of which Christ is the head.¹⁴ This image of Christ as head is connected with the role of the ordained priest acting in the person of Christ the head.¹⁵

It is in article 10 of the second chapter on the People of God that the phrase in persona Christi is used the second time in Lumen Gentium. The Church is the new People of God with Christ as its head, saved through the blood of the new covenant.¹⁶ It is a "kingdom of priests to God, his Father."¹⁷ The Council Fathers begin this chapter clearly accepting the priesthood of all the baptized. However, there is an essential distinction between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood. All share in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priesthood, however, is a special way of sharing in Christ's priesthood, which is distinct from, but in service to, the common priesthood.¹⁸

It is at this point that the following statement is made: "The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people."¹⁷ This is the first attempt by the Council Fathers to describe the uniqueness of the ministerial priesthood.

The first paragraph of article 10 focuses on the priestly people of God. Many scriptural references are given to show the basis of this teaching.²⁰ The second paragraph, which describes the ministerial priesthood, shifts in style and language. References are given to the writings of Pius XI and Pius XII which strongly affirm the essential distinction between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood.²¹ This question of the distinction, yet also the relationship, between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood has been the source of much theological discussion and debate.

Following the statement of this distinction, the text quoted above is given as a theological description of the ministerial priesthood. The ministerial priest shares in all three munera. The ministerial priest "forms and rules the priestly people."²² The word "forms" (efformat) is clearly a reference to the ministry of the Word through which the priestly people are "formed."²³ The ministry of ruling or pastoring is combined with the ministry of the Word. Both are in service to the priestly people. The ministerial priest forms and rules "by the sacred power that he has."²⁴ No clarification is made of the meaning of this potestas sacra, although later in the document it is described as that "which they exercise personally in the name of Christ."²⁵

The formula in persona Christi is used in relation to the action of the ministerial priest in effecting the eucharistic sacrifice and the offering of it to God in the name of the people. No references are given for the use of the phrase. This first use of the phrase in specific relationship to the ministerial priesthood focuses on Eucharistic worship. It follows the usage of Mediator Dei of Pius XII which also connects the phrase with the concept of potestas sacra.²⁶ This could indicate a close relationship between the meaning of the phrase potestas sacra and in persona Christi. Potestas sacra as referred to in Lumen Gentium 27 is interpreted as referring to a participation in the authority of Christ.²⁷ All three munera need to be seen then as interrelated. The phrase in persona Christi would also be referring to the priest as sharing in the power and authority of Christ to offer sacrifice.²⁸

This article and particularly the second paragraph are central for this entire chapter, for the document Lumen Gentium, and for the development of the theology of the ordained priesthood contained within all the documents. The Council Fathers are consistent in always focusing upon the ministry of the ordained as in service to the common priesthood, but distinct from it.

The third chapter of Lumen Gentium is entitled "On the Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate."²⁹ It is in this chapter that the phrase in persona Christi is used for the third and fourth times.

The first paragraph of this chapter sets the tone. It is Christ who institutes a variety of ministries for the nurturing and growth of the People of God.³⁰ The "ministers who are endowed with sacred

power" are to serve the People of God so that all may work toward and arrive at salvation freely and in an orderly way. No explanation is given about this potestas sacra nor is there a listing of the offices the Council Fathers include under this title of ministers with sacred power. From the content of the chapter, one would conclude that these ministers are the pope, the bishops, the ordained priests, and deacons. These ministries are calls of service from Christ on behalf of the Christian community.

The following paragraphs speak of Christ sending forth the apostles and Peter as He had been sent by the Father. These apostles and Peter handed on their mission to their successors, the bishops and the pope.³¹

It is in section 21 that the third reference to in persona Christi is made. This section deals with the nature of the office of the individual bishops, its sacramental basis, and its threefold office.³² The first sentence clearly expresses the close interrelationship between Christ, bishops and priests. "In the bishops, therefore, for whom priests are assistants, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Supreme High Priest, is present in the midst of those who believe."³³ Christ remains visibly and tangibly present to His Church through the bishop and his presbyters. He is the Risen Lord who is not replaced by the bishop or whose work is not continued by the bishop, but who continues His mission represented by the bishop and his priests. Christ remains present in this Church through the bishop and priests, but this is not His only way of being present.³⁴ Christ's "active presence in the bishops, though 'sui generis', is not to be understood as exclusive to them: it is only primarily through their ministry that he acts."³⁵

In Lumen Gentium 21, the Council explicitly teaches that episcopal consecration confers the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders. It involves all three offices of sanctifying, teaching, and governing which are to be exercised in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the episcopal college. Making reference to the liturgical rites and the practice of the Church of the East and the West, it affirms that "by means of the imposition of hands and the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is so conferred, and the sacred character so impressed, that bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person (in Eius persona agant)."³⁶

In this extended, but carefully worded sentence, the history, method, effect and responsibility of episcopal consecration are summarized. The history of the tradition is found in the liturgical rites and practice of the church of the East and the West. The method of consecration has involved the imposition of the hands and the words of consecration. The effect of the Sacrament is, first of all, the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Council Fathers make the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus a resource for the doctrine of the grace of episcopal consecration.³⁷ The second element of the effect is the sacred character which is impressed. The textual reference here is to the twenty-third session of the Council of Trent which teaches that the Sacrament of Orders imprints an indelible character. The responsibility of the bishop is then expressed as, first of all, sustaining or carrying on the role of Christ in its threefold dimensions as Teacher, Shepherd, and High Priest. No footnote reference is given here, but it connects very clearly with the first

paragraph of section 21. The bishop sustains the role of Christ in an eminent and visible way. The adjective "eminent" brings out the unique role of the bishop in relation to Christ, but does not say that it is the only way in which Christ is present. The adjective "visible" clearly brings out the ongoing presence of Christ through the bishop.

The final phrase "they act in His person" summarizes the responsibility of the bishop. It seems to restate the previous phrase and yet have its own importance. The footnote references to this passage are the fullest that are found in the Vatican documents in relation to the phrase in persona Christi. The references are not to the Scriptures or to the Council of Trent, but to the Fathers of the Church.³⁰ There is a reference to the 63rd letter of St. Cyprian, including a quotation of the words "the priest truly acts in the place of Christ." All the references to the Fathers which will be studied in the next chapter were related to the ordained priesthood in general and specifically to the bishops. This is in accord with the opening sentence of this section which refers to the bishops and their assistants, the priests. Both are considered under the generic term - ministerial priesthood.

In this context, the use of the phrase "in Eius persona" is not limited to the liturgical action of the priest. It clearly includes all three of the munera. The development of the use of the phrase in persona Christi can be seen in its progressive use in Lumen Gentium.

Articles 22 through 27 in the third chapter of Lumen Gentium bear on the role of the bishop as a member of the episcopal college and as one who carries out the threefold office of priest, teacher, and

pastor. Articles 28 and 29 on the priesthood and diaconate complete this chapter on the hierarchical ministries.

The fourth use of the phrase in persona Christi is found in Article 28, which considers the nature and mission of the ordained ministerial priests as cooperators with the episcopal order.³⁹ This article, as the entire document, begins with Christ as the one sent by the Father for the salvation of the world. Through His Apostles and their successors, Christ's consecration and mission continues. These apostles and their successors, the bishops, share Christ's mission and consecration with other individuals in varying degrees. The Council Fathers then state that the different levels of hierarchical ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons have been established from antiquity. They avoid the debate on scriptural evidence at this point. There is a reference to the Anathema of Canon 6 of Session 23 of the Council of Trent.

Article 28 continues to speak of presbyters as lacking the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders and being dependent on the bishop in their ministry, but united with the bishop in priestly dignity. Pope Innocent I speaks of presbyters as priests of the second rank. Cyprian reminds us that "priests were joined with the bishop in the sacerdotal honor."⁴¹ The bishop and the priest are united in Christ, but are not the same. The formula in persona Christi, however, is applied to both.

The priest is consecrated by the power of the Sacrament of Orders in the image of Christ the Eternal Priest. The use of the phrase "in the image of Christ" is close to, but weaker than, "in the person of Christ." However, it establishes the foundation of the priesthood of

the second rank in the priesthood of Christ and not in the priesthood or image of the bishop.

Christ is referred to as "the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15)." This means that "Christ is the visible representation and manifestation of God to created beings."⁴² The priest, through his consecration, then becomes the visible representation and manifestation of Christ.

This consecration into the threefold mission of preaching, shepherding, and celebrating worship enables them to be "true priests (sacerdotes) of the New Testament."⁴³ This language of consecration and mission with its biblical roots is preferred by the Council Fathers to the Scholastic language of the power of Orders and jurisdiction.⁴⁴

The text then applies the threefold munera to the presbyter within his particular level of participation in the priesthood of Christ, the sole Mediator. After a brief reference to the office of preaching the Word, there is the following statement:

"They exercise their sacred function especially in the eucharistic worship or the celebration of the Mass by which acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming His Mystery they unite the prayers of the faithful with the sacrifice of their Head and renew and apply in the sacrifice of the Mass until the coming of the Lord the only sacrifice of the New Testament namely that of Christ offering Himself once for all, a spotless Victim to the Father."⁴⁵

This fourth use of the phrase in persona Christi is within a Eucharistic context as it was in Lumen Gentium 10. Two references are given in a footnote to this use of the phrase. The first one is to the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent which states that "the victim

is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different."⁴⁶ The oneness of Christ with the priest is emphasized. It does not use the direct wording in persona Christi, but it has the same meaning.

The second reference is to the encyclical Mediator Dei of Pope Pius XII. In the section referred to, Pius XII is specifically rejecting a false concept of the priesthood of the faithful which would make them the real offerers of the Sacrifice of the Mass. "The priest acts for the people only because he represents Jesus Christ, who is Head of all His members and offers Himself in their stead. Hence, he goes to the altar as the minister; minister of Christ, inferior to Christ but superior to the people."⁴⁷ In section 86, Pius XII goes on to quote one of the statements of St. Robert Bellarmine: "The sacrifice is principally offered in the person of Christ."⁴⁸

The phrase in this context is used as a modifying phrase, "acting in the person of Christ." It expresses an inner quality of the action which includes a visible element. It is complemented by another modifying phrase: "proclaiming His Mystery," which relates to an external action. The concluding part of the sentence expresses the role of the ordained priest in uniting the prayers of the faithful with the Sacrifice of Christ. In this limited sense, the priest can be said to represent the faithful.

It is interesting to note that, in relation to the announcing of the Word, priests function on their own level of ministry. In relation to the exercise of the function of shepherd, priests function

"within the limits of their authority." But no limitation is expressed in relation to their function in Eucharistic worship. In this context, priests as well as bishops "act in the person of Christ."

Article 28 is completed with paragraphs on the relationship of the priest to the bishop, to other priests, to the faithful, and to the world. The interrelationship of all in ministry with one another and with the faithful is emphasized. The final article of this chapter is on the participation of deacons in the hierarchy, but it clearly excludes them from the sacrificial priesthood.

The fifth use of the concept of in persona Christi is found in the fourth chapter of Lumen Gentium on the Laity. One commentator calls this chapter "the first specific statement by an ecumenical council on the role of the laity in the Church."⁴⁷ The chapter begins by connecting it with the two previous chapters on the hierarchy and the people of God. It recognizes the unity of laity, religious, and clergy in the People of God and the need to examine the important role and mission of the laity and their relation with the hierarchy.

Article 31 describes the meaning of the term laity. "They may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity."⁴⁸ In article 32, the relationship of the laity to Christ and to those in sacred ministry is expressed as a brotherhood.

"Therefore, from divine choice the laity have Christ for their brother, who though He is the Lord of all, came not to be served, but to serve. They also have for their brothers those in the sacred ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying, and by ruling with the authority of Christ feed the family of God so that the new commandment of charity may be fulfilled by all."⁴⁹

No references are given for this sentence, but the phrase "with the authority of Christ" seems close to the phrase "in the person of Christ," especially as used in Lumen Gentium 21.

Article 33 speaks of the mission of the laity as sharing in the saving mission of the church.⁸² Articles 34 to 36 express more specifically the laity's role in the priestly, prophetic and kingly role of Christ.

The use of the phrase in persona Christi is found in article 37. Laity have the right to receive the spiritual goods of the church from their pastors and the responsibility to openly express their opinions for the good of the Church. "Let it always be done in truth, in courage and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ (qui ratione sacri sui muneris personam Christi gerunt)."⁸³ There are no footnotes given for this text. The phrase in this context applies to the full ministry of the ministerial priest.

The final article of Chapter IV speaks of the important witness of each individual lay person before the world "as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the Living God."⁸⁴ Christ is present to the world through the lay person, but the lay person does not act in the person of Christ.

B. PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS

The second key document of the Second Vatican Council for a study of the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood is Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests). It is an expansion of article 28 of Lumen Gentium. There are three

places within this decree in which the phrase "in the person of Christ" is used. The decree went through a great amount of revision and was the final document approved by the Council in December, 1965.

The introduction to this Decree affirms with other documents of the Council the importance of the order of priesthood in and for the church and the difficult challenge of the presbyteral ministry today.²⁵ It sets the context for the Decree by placing the priest in the whole Church and in a special relation to Christ and the bishops. Their ministry is a service for the building up of the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

The most important article of the Decree for the theology of the priesthood is article 2. It begins by focusing on Christ "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world (John 10:36)."²⁶ This same Scriptural reference was used to open article 28 in Lumen Gentium. This is followed by a statement on the priesthood of all who share in the consecration and mission of Jesus.

Within the perspective of the priesthood of all the faithful, the second paragraph of this article speaks of the appointment of certain men as ministers with the body who are "to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of Order, that of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins, and were to exercise the priestly office publicly on behalf of men in the name of Christ."²⁷ The sacred power of Order is described as that of the offering of sacrifice and forgiving sins. The textual reference is to the 23rd Session of the Council of Trent.²⁸ This seems to limit the sacred power to sacramental activity. It is difficult to tell whether the closing phrase about exercising the priestly office publicly is limited to the sacramental

ministry or whether it could include all the munera. The language in this part seems to focus on the perspective of Trent. The word "publicly" is used to distinguish the ministerial priesthood from the common priesthood.⁵⁷ The phrase "on behalf of men" indicates the service aspect of the public ministry. It is not for personal status. The phrase "in the name of Christ," as mentioned before, contains within it the notion of participating in the authority of Christ. It is close to the phrases "in the place of Christ" or "in the person of Christ."

Christ hands on His consecration and mission first to the apostles, who then hand it on to their successors, the bishops. The bishops share this apostolic consecration and mission with their co-workers, the priests.

It is in the third paragraph of article 2 that the specific phrase in persona Christi is used. This paragraph is the most important statement in the document on the nature of the priesthood.

The first sentence reaffirms the intimate relationship between the episcopal order and the office of priests. Mutually they share "in the authority by which Christ himself builds up and sanctifies and rules his Body."⁵⁸ There is a reference to the participation of the priest in the authority of Christ within certain limits in article 28 of Lumen Gentium. Article 27 of Lumen Gentium speaks of the sacred power and authority of the bishops as that which "they exercise exclusively for the spiritual development of their flock in truth and holiness, keeping in mind that he who is greater should become as the lesser, and he who is the leader as the servant (cf. Lk. 22: 26-27)."⁵⁹ The authority of Christ could be summarized in the words

of Mark 10:45 which were used in article 5 of Lumen Gentium: he came "to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The second sentence states that the priesthood of priests is conferred by a special sacrament, but only upon one who has already shared in the sacraments of initiation. Only one who has shared in the common priesthood can be called to the ministerial priesthood. This statement once again affirms the intimate connection between these distinct participations in Christ's priesthood.

The third sentence is a crucial description of the ministerial priesthood of priests. "Through that sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."⁴²

This sentence seems to be an application of the scriptural reference at the beginning of article 2 (John 10:36) as specifically applied to the ordained priesthood. As Jesus was consecrated by the Father and anointed by the Spirit, so priests are signed with a special character by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and are consecrated or configured to Christ the priest. As Jesus was sent into the world by the Father to be the sign of the love of the Father to the world, ordained priests are sent or missioned with the capability of acting in the person of Christ the head. The mission of the priest is to act in the person of Christ the head. The sacrament effects consecration and mission in the person. This consecration and mission are in and from Christ, and not in and from the bishop.

The use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in this situation is modified by the image of Christ as "head." This is the only occasion where this specific connection is made. The phrase is not used with a specific reference to the ministry of worship or to the threefold office of the priest. There is a textual footnote which refers back to Lumen Gentium 10 which uses the phrase in relationship to the Eucharistic sacrifice and does not have any specific reference to Christ as Head. However, in Lumen Gentium 28, which also uses the phrase in specific reference to the Eucharist, priests are to "unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ their head."⁶³ Later in the same article, it states that priests exercise "within the limits of the authority which is theirs, the office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head."⁶⁴ The reference to Christ as Head is most regularly used in relationship to the office of pastoring, shepherding, or ruling. Article 6 of Presbyterorum Ordinis states: "Priests exercise the function of Christ as Pastor and Head in proportion to their share of authority. In the name of the bishop they gather the family of God as a brotherhood endowed with the spirit of unity and lead it in Christ through the Spirit to God the Father."⁶⁵ The pastoral mission of Jesus is to be exemplified through the pastoral mission of the priest. Although the image of Christ as Head is usually connected to His function as shepherd, it is not limited to it.⁶⁶ Bonaventure Kloppenburg, OFM, in an article on the theology of the priesthood, comments that "his role as the one who presides in the person of Christ extends to this whole mission and activity. In all that he does as a priest he is and ought to be a sign (a living instrument) of Christ the Head for Christ's Church."⁶⁷

The final two paragraphs of this article speak of the function of priests as sharers in the apostolic mission in their own degree and of the object of the life and ministry of the priest which is the glory of God the Father in Christ.

Article 3 considers the place of priests in the world. Articles 4, 5, and 6 discuss the role of priests as ministers of God's Word, ministers of the Sacraments and the Eucharist, and rulers of God's people. Articles 7, 8, and 9 expand the comments from article 28 of Lumen Gentium on the relationship of priests with the bishop, other priests and the laity. Articles 10 and 11 relate to the topics of the distribution of priests and the recruitment of priestly vocations.

It is in Chapter III on the Life of Priests that the second and third use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" is found in Presbyterorum Ordinis. They are in articles 12 and 13 on the priest's call to holiness.

In article 12, the Council Fathers first reiterate the nature of the priesthood as received through the sacrament of Order. Priests are configured or consecrated to Christ the Priest so that, in communion with the bishops, they may build up the body of Christ, the Church. Secondly, priests are reminded that the call to perfection already began at the consecration of baptism.

But the priest is obliged to acquire perfection by the special reason of his consecration in a new way through ordination. Having been made "living instruments of Christ the eternal priest," they can accomplish the work of redemption. The image of the priest as a "living instrument of Christ" is closely related to, but not as dynamic as, the priest acting in the person of Christ.⁶⁸

The following two sentences are central to our consideration.

"Since every priest in his own way assumes the person of Christ, he is endowed with a special grace. By this grace the priest through his service of the people committed to his care and all the People of God, is able the better to pursue the perfection of Christ whose place he takes."⁶⁷

The use of the phrase "personam Christi" in this context is different from the others.

These sentences apply the theological perspective of the nature of priesthood as consecration and mission in Christ to the world to the call to holiness of each individual priest. Every priest acts in the person of Christ. The text adds the interesting phrase "suo modo,"⁷⁰ "in his own way." This clearly indicates that the "acting in the person of Christ" is not to be done in a rigid or formalistic fashion. Each priest manifests the person of Christ within the context of his own personality and ability. But each one shares in the grace of Christ's presence. It is a special grace, a special gift of presence through the sacrament of order. This grace, however, does not dwell in isolation, but interrelates with the mission of the priest in service to the people he specifically is asked to serve and to all the People of God. It is in the interaction of grace and service, consecration and mission, that the priest is more effectively able to grow in the perfection in Christ whose place he takes. The use of the phrase in this context takes on a more dynamic and life-developing perspective. Ministry is integral to the spirituality of the priest. The remaining paragraphs of article 12 point out the interaction of the spirituality of Christ and the priest and the interrelationship between the ministry of the priest and the holiness of the priest.

This leads to article 13 which talks about how the threefold priestly functions both demand and foster holiness. It is in this section that the third use of in persona Christi is found in this document.⁷¹

The first brief paragraph explains that priests will acquire holiness in their own particular way through their sincere and tireless exercise of their functions in the Spirit of Christ. Their holiness and their ministry are interrelated.

It is in the ministry of official worship that "priests as ministers of the sacred mysteries, especially in the sacrifice of the Mass, act in a special way in the person of Christ who gave himself as a victim to sanctify men."⁷² The use of the formula in this context is very similar to its use in Lumen Gentium 28. It has a sacrificial context. There are two broadening elements, however, in this situation. The phrase is not limited to the sacrifice of the Mass. It refers to all the "sacred mysteries," but with a special reference to the Mass. Secondly, the Latin word specialiter is added. This brings a more personal element to the use of the phrase which was also true in article 12. This is quite natural because in this chapter we are considering the life of the priest within the context of his ministry.

The paragraph continues on to speak of the importance of the liturgy for the holiness of the priest. The last paragraph shows how the shepherding ministry of the priest is connected with his spirituality.

This completes the study of the three uses of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the Decree on the Ministry and Life of the Priest. The final two references to be studied are in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

C. SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM

The document on the Sacred Liturgy preceded in time the other two documents of this study. But since it focused less directly on the sacred ministry, it has seemed better to leave the study of these two references until now.

Following an introduction which expressed the purpose of the council and explained why the Sacred Liturgy was chosen as the initial consideration of the Council Fathers, Chapter I begins to set some general principles for the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Liturgy. It first considers the nature of the Sacred Liturgy and its importance in the life of the Church.⁷³

After speaking of the salvific work of Christ in articles 5 and 6 and how the early Christians continued in the Spirit the word of Christ, the Council Fathers describe how Christ continues to be present in the Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations.

He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross," but especially in the eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised "where two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them" (Mt.18:20).⁷⁴

This reference does not make a specific use of the words "in the person of Christ." However, it sets a background for the consideration of the presence of the person of Christ in the priest much as did Lumen Gentium 5. The glorified Christ continues to be present in His Church in a variety of ways. Since this document

centers on the Sacred Liturgy, it is only appropriate that it should emphasize the presence of Christ in the liturgical celebrations of the Church.

The second sentence of article 7 is the most pertinent to this study. "He (Christ) is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, 'the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,' but especially in the eucharistic species."⁷⁵ Christ is present through the person of the minister as is stated in the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent. Lumen Gentium 28 used this same reference. The stress is on Christ who offers himself through the ministry of the priest, rather than on the priest who acts in the person of Christ in offering the sacrifice to the Father. Following the perspective of Trent and the intent of this document, the use of the phrase in persona Christi is related to the priest as minister of the Eucharist.

The second reference to the phrase in persona Christi in this document is found in article 33. This article is an introduction to a series of norms based on the educative and pastoral nature of the liturgy. The opening sentence states that, although the primary intent of sacred liturgy is the worship of God, it also contains instructions for the faithful. In the liturgy, Christ proclaims and the people respond.

At this point, we find the first specific use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in a Vatican II document, although for this study, it is the last. "The prayers addressed to God by the priest who, in the person of Christ, presides over the assembly, are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present."⁷⁶

The focus of this article is on the relationship between Christ and the people. The priest here is recognized as the one who presides over the assembly "in the person of Christ," and who addresses prayers to God "in the name of the people." This complex role of the priest in the liturgy ("in the person of Christ" and "in the name of the people") is also brought out in Lumen Gentium 28. The context here is liturgical because of the nature and intent of the document.

These ten texts in which the phrase in persona Christi or its near equivalent is used present a diversity of textual situations. In none of these texts is the meaning of the term actually explained. In the next chapter, I will explore the use of this phrase or its close equivalents in documents that preceded the documents of the Second Vatican Council and that were used as references in the Vatican II documents for these texts or are referred to in other documents.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER I

¹Lumen Gentium n. 21 in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northpost, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Company, 1981 edition), p. 350. Note: All references to the Vatican II documents are from this edition of Austin Flannery, O.P. unless otherwise noted.

²A.B. Martimort, "The Value of a Theological Formula 'In Persona Christi'," L'Osservatore Romano, March 10, 1977, p. 6.

³Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 1, p. 350.

⁴L.G. n. 2, pp. 350-351.

⁵L.G. n. 3, p. 351.

⁶L.G. n. 4, pp. 351-352.

⁷L.G. n. 5, pp. 352-353. The Latin for the specific phrase studied is: "in ipsa Persona Christi," (Xaverius Ochoa, Index Verborum cum Documentis Concilii Vaticani Secundi, Roma, Via Giacomo Medici 3-5, 1967, p. 566).

⁸L.G. n. 5, p. 352.

⁹L.G. n. 5, p. 352.

¹⁰Cf. Mgr. Phillips, L'Eglise et Son Mystère au Deuxième Concile du Vatican (Paris, Desclée et Cie., Tome I, 1967), p. 96.

¹¹Cf. W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zedaveran, 1982), Vol. 4, pp. 48-50.

¹²Cf. Edward J. Mally S.J., "The Gospel According to Mark," in Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, SS., (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968), p. 46.

¹³Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 6, pp. 353-354.

¹⁴Cf. L.G. n. 7, pp. 355-356.

¹⁵Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 2, p. 865.

¹⁶Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 9, p. 359.

¹⁷Cf. L.G. n. 10, p. 360.

¹⁸Cf. L.G. n. 10.2, p. 361.

¹⁹Cf. L.G. n. 10, p. 361.

²⁰Cf. Heb. 5:1-5; Aposc. 1:6; 5:9-10; I Pet. 2:4-10; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:1; I Pet. 3:15.

²¹Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 10, footnote 2, p. 361.

²²L.G. n. 10, p. 361.

²³Cf. Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 4.1, p. 868.

²⁴Lumen Gentium n. 10, p. 361.

²⁵L.G. n. 27.1, p. 383.

²⁶Cf. Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, ed. by Claudia Carlen IHM (New York, McGrath Publishing Co., 1981) n. 83, p. 133.

²⁷Mgr. Philips, op. cit., p. 163.

²⁸Cf. Kevin McNamara, Vatican II: The Constitution on the Church (A Theological and Pastoral Commentary) (Chicago, Ill., Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 120.

²⁹Lumen Gentium, Chapter III, in NCWC translation (Boston, Daughters of St. Paul), p. 128. Note: For the third chapter of Lumen Gentium I have chosen to use the NCWC translation because it seems more accurate in its translation from the Latin. For other footnotes I will identify this translation with the letters NCWC plus the pages referred to.

³⁰Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 18 (NCWC), p. 128.

³¹Cf. L.G. n. 18.2, 19, 20 (NCWC), pp. 129-130.

³²Cf. Herbert Vorgrimler, Commentary on the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, Vol. 1 (New York, Herder and Herder, 1967), p. 192.

³³Lumen Gentium n. 21 (NCWC), p. 130.

³⁴Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 7 (Flannery), pp. 4-5.

³⁵Herbert Vorgrimler, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 192.

³⁶L.G. n. 21.2 (NCWC), p. 131.

³⁷L.G. n. 21, footnote 19 (Flannery), p. 373.

³⁸Cf. L.G. n. 21, footnote 22 (Flannery), p. 374.

³⁹Cf. L.G. n. 28 (NCWC), pp. 138-140.

⁴⁰Cf. L.G. n. 28, footnote 66 (Flannery), p. 384.

⁴¹Saint Cyprian, Letters (1-81) (Washington D.C., The Catholic University Press, 1964: The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 51), p. 198.

⁴²W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), p. 247.

⁴³Lumen Gentium n. 28 (NCWC), p.139.

⁴⁴Mgr. Philips, op. cit., p. 360.

⁴⁵Lumen Gentium n. 28 (NCWC), p. 139.

⁴⁶Rev. J. Waterworth, trans., The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent (London: Burns and Oates, Ltd., 1848), p. 155.

⁴⁷Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, ed. Claudia Carlen, IHM (New York, McGrath Publishing Company, 1981) n. 84, p. 134.

⁴⁸Robert Bellarmine as quoted in Mediator Dei, n. 86 (Carlen), p. 134.

⁴⁹McNamara, op. cit., p. 235.

⁵⁰Lumen Gentium n. 31 (NCWC), p. 143.

⁵¹L.G. n. 32 (NCWC), p. 144.

⁵²L.G. n. 33 (NCWC), pp. 144-145.

⁵³L.G. n. 37 (NCWC), p. 149. The Latin text is from Ochoa, op. cit., p. 591.

⁵⁴L.G. n. 38 (NCWC), p. 150.

⁵⁵Cf. Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 1 (NCWC), p. 417.

⁵⁶Cf. P.O. n. 2 (Flannery), p. 864.

⁵⁷Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 2, p. 864.

⁵⁸Cf. Waterworth, Trent, op. cit., p. 171.

⁵⁹Cf. Unam Sanctam (68), Les Pretres (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1968), footnote 25, p. 139.

⁶⁰P.O. n. 2, p. 865.

⁶¹L.G. n. 27, p. 383.

⁶²P.O. n. 2, p. 865.

⁶³L.G. n. 28, p. 385.

⁶⁴L.G., p. 385.

⁶⁵P.O. n. 6, p. 872.

⁶⁶"According to J. Ratzinger, the pastoral office is the all-embracing and fundamental office, from which the other two (the ministry of the word and the priestly ministry) emerge as two modes of the articulation of its execution; and these two are always contained within the pastoral office." (Footnote 57 in Herbert Vorgrimler, Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. 4, p. 233).

⁶⁷Bonaventure Kloppenburg, OFM, Ecclesiology of Vatican II (Chicago, Ill.; Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), p. 275.

⁶⁸"Vatican II has a preference for the word 'instrument.'" Kloppenburg, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 292.

⁶⁹Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 12, pp. 885-886.

⁷⁰Ochoa, op. cit., p. 767.

⁷¹P.O. n. 13, p. 887.

⁷²P.O., p. 887.

⁷³Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 5, p. 3.

⁷⁴S.C. n. 7, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁵S.C., pp. 4-5.

⁷⁶S.C. n. 33, p. 12.

Chapter II

THE PHRASE IN PERSONA CHRISTI IN OFFICIAL CHURCH SOURCES BEFORE VATICAN II

In order to understand the formula in persona Christi in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, it is necessary to study the use of the phrase or its close equivalents in the official and accepted documentation of the Church before this Council. It is impossible to consider all of this literature. I will concentrate on material that was referred to in footnotes of the sections of the Vatican II documents studied in the first chapter. These references were intended to assist in the clarification of the meaning of the original texts. Some additional material which seemed appropriate will also be considered. This study will examine documentation from five periods: (A) Pre-Vatican II twentieth century encyclicals or decrees relating to the ordained priesthood; (B) documents of the Council of Trent; (C) the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas; (D) appropriate patristic resources; and (E) biblical roots. In order to trace the roots of the use of this phrase, it seemed most appropriate to move from the present century back to the biblical roots rather than to go directly to the biblical perspective. The process probes back through history and then returns to the present.

A. PRE-VATICAN II TWENTIETH CENTURY PAPAL ENCYCLICALS

On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII made the first and completely

unexpected announcement of his plan to convoke the Church's Twenty-First Ecumenical Council. On August 1 of that same year, he issued an encyclical letter on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of St. Jean Marie Vianney entitled Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia. The encyclical was intended as a pastoral and ascetical reflection on priestly life rather than as a theological document on the ordained ministry. The Pope never used the phrase in persona Christi in this encyclical. He suggests that the Church's traditional doctrine about the priesthood and the Eucharist has been dealt with adequately in the writings of Pius XI and Pius XII. He also recommends the consideration of Pius X's exhortation Haerent Animo.¹ His comments on the priesthood during the first year of his papal ministry were to influence later conciliar documents. Accepting John XXIII's recommendation, in this section I will consider five twentieth century papal encyclicals: (1) Menti Nostrae by Pius XII, September 23, 1950; (2) Mediator Dei by Pius XII, November 20, 1947; (3) Mystici Corporis Christi by Pius XII, June 29, 1943; (4) Ad Catholici Sacerdotii by Pius XI; and (5) Haerent Animo by Pius X, August 8, 1908.

(1) MENTI NOSTRAE by Pius XII, September 23, 1950.

In his introduction to this Apostolic Exhortation, Pius XII sets the context in which he is writing this letter to the clergy of the world in communion with the Apostolic See. The theme is the development of holiness in priestly life. He wants to assist priests to be more effective in their important task of encouraging the faithful "to avoid evil, to overcome dangers and to acquire perfection."² He is conscious of the tensions in the world

following the Second World War and realizes that priests are most important instruments for assisting people to keep within the perspective of the gospel. Two other occasions influence this letter: the recent celebration of his golden jubilee as a priest and the fact that he had designated 1950 as a Jubilee Year for the renewal of the spiritual life of the faithful.

In section 7 of Menti Nostrae Pius XII places the doctrinal teaching of this exhortation within the previous writings of Pius X in Haerent Animo, Pius XI in Ad Catholici Sacerdotii, and his encyclicals Mystici Corporis and Mediator Dei. He then goes on to describe the priest as "like 'another Christ' because he is marked with an indelible character making him, as it were, a living image of our Savior. The priest represents Christ Who said, 'As the Father has sent me, I also send you'; 'he who hears you, hears me.'"³

In this section, he does not use the phrase "in the person of Christ," but the phrase "another Christ." This phrase seems to have a close relation to "in the person of Christ." It has tended to be used rather in discussions of the spirituality of the priesthood, than from a doctrinal perspective. The phrase "another Christ" is placed in quotation marks in the text probably because of its common use as a special phrase in relationship to the ordained priesthood. It is introduced by the word "like" which avoids the danger of physicalism in identifying the priest with Christ. The priest is like "another Christ" because of the indelible character which he receives in ordination which makes him "as it were, a living image of our Savior." The phrase "as it were" seems to have the same effect here as the word "like" did before the phrase "another Christ."

The following sentence refers to the priest as representing Christ and makes a special reference to two Scriptural phrases: John 20:21 and Luke 10:21. No comments are made in order to clarify how this "representation" takes place. There is a special relationship, but not a complete identity, between the priest and Christ. This relationship of the priest in Christ must become manifest in the sanctity of life of the priest.⁴

In section 31 of Menti Nostrae, after comments on the importance of grace and the Sacrifice of the Eucharist for all Christians and in a special way the priest, Pius XII speaks of priests as "ministers of Christ, principally in order to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice." He goes on to say: "And precisely in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, when 'in the person of Christ,' he consecrates bread and wine, which become the Body and Blood of Christ, the priest can draw from the same fountain of the supernatural life, the inexhaustible treasures of salvation, and all those helps which he needs for himself personally and for the fulfillment of his mission."⁵

This is the only place in Menti Nostrae where the specific phrase in persona Christi is found. No references are given in the text to other documentation for the use of the phrase, even though quotation marks are used. This seems to indicate that at the time of this writing it is a phrase in such common use that it does not need supporting references. The context in which the phrase is used is Eucharistic. The priest is "principally" a minister of Christ in the Eucharist, but it does not say that he is a minister of Christ only in this situation. The focus of this section is on the sanctity of the priest and the importance of the Eucharist for the priest's sanctity.

Although the phrase is used within the Eucharistic context, this does not eliminate the possible use of the phrase to express a broader meaning.

In a later section which speaks of the relationship of the priest's union with Christ and his ministry, Pius XII reminds priests that by "reproducing in his habits and his life a living image of Christ, all those who turn to him as a master will recognize, thanks to some inward conviction, that the words he speaks are not his but God's and that he does not act of his own accord but by the virtue of God." He continues: "In striving towards holiness and in exercising his ministry with the greatest diligence, the priest must spend himself to represent Christ so perfectly as, in all modesty, to be able to repeat the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.'"⁴ The phrases "a living image of Christ" and "to represent Christ" relate back to section 7. Both seem to relate to an inner quality of life which is manifested externally by the life and work of the priest.

(2) MEDIATOR DEI by Pius XII, November 20, 1947.

This encyclical, more than any of the others, seems to have had an impact on the writings on the theology of the ordained priesthood in the documents of Vatican II. Textual references to this encyclical were made twice in the limited sections which were studied in the previous chapter. Both of these references are in key doctrinal sections of Lumen Gentium. The first reference is in section 10 of Lumen Gentium which deals with the essential difference between the priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood. The second is in section 28, which sets the theological perspective for the

ordained priesthood of the second degree. Here the reference is in specific relationship with the phrase "acting in the person of Christ."

The Encyclical Mediator Dei is specifically focused on the Sacred Liturgy. In the introduction, Pius XII presents both a theological and pastoral context for the writing of this document. He begins with the theological context of the priesthood of Christ, mediator between God and men, who willed that His sacrifice be carried on through a visible priesthood and that this be done through the Sacred Liturgy. The pastoral context is twofold. First, important scholarly research had been developing especially through some of the important Benedictine monasteries (e.g. Mt. Cesar in Belgium, Maria Laach in Germany) which had been producing fruitful results in the life of the faithful. Secondly, he refers to some excesses that had developed in the liturgical movement which "sometimes even taint it with errors touching Catholic faith and ascetical doctrine."⁷ The intent of the letter is to give papal guidance to the developments of the liturgical movement so that it does not stray from the teaching of the church. Due to the large number of sections of this document which have a relationship to the focus of this paper, I will be selective in choosing texts and limited in my analysis of them.

In the first part of the encyclical on the "Nature, Source and Development of the Liturgy," in section 20, Pius XII discusses the different ways in which Christ is present in every liturgical function. "Christ is present at the august sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and above all under the eucharistic species."⁸ He then goes on to speak of Christ's presence in all the

sacraments and in prayer of praise and petition. This text does not speak of the priest "acting in the person of Christ," but approaches it from the perspective of Christ "acting in the person of the minister." It seems to be the basis for article 7 of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" which speaks of the different ways in which Christ is present in the liturgy, without however any specific reference to Mediator Dei.

In sections 38 to 48 of the encyclical, Pius XII sets down in very strong language the role of the hierarchy and the ordained priesthood within the liturgy. He is very clearly responding to some scholars and theologians who tended to diminish the importance of the ordained priesthood by making it dependent upon the community for its existence. He reaffirms the priestly role of the laity, but this role is very different from the role of the ordained priest which is given by Christ through the Apostles and their successors to those upon whom they impose hands. "Only to the apostles and thenceforth to those on whom their successors have imposed hands, is granted the power of the priesthood, in virtue of which they represent the person of Jesus Christ before their people, acting at the same time as representatives of their people before God....It is not a delegation from the people. Prior to acting as representative of the community before the throne of God, the priest is the ambassador of the divine Redeemer. He is God's vice-gerent in the midst of his flock precisely because Jesus Christ is Head of that body of which Christians are the members. The power entrusted to him, therefore, bears no natural resemblance to anything human. It is entirely supernatural. It comes from God."*

Although this section focuses more specifically on the distinction between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ordained ministerial priesthood which is the subject of reference in section 10 of Lumen Gentium, several phrases here give an insight into the use of the phrase in persona Christi. In virtue of their ordination, priests "represent the person of Jesus Christ before their people." The priest "is the ambassador of the divine Redeemer. He is God's vice-gerent in the midst of his flock precisely because Jesus Christ is Head of that Body of which Christians are the members." Although the priest is also seen as the representative of the people before God, he is first and foremost the one who acts "in the person of Christ." There is a relationship of this to article 2 of Presbyterorum Ordinis.

In part II of this encyclical on "Eucharistic Worship," Pius XII begins by emphasizing the nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In section 68, he reaffirms that the Mass is a true and proper act of sacrifice and not an empty commemoration. He concludes this paragraph by quoting from the Council of Trent (Session 22, c. 1): "It is one and the same victim; the same person now offers it by the ministry of His priest, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner of offering alone being different."¹⁰ This same quote from the Council of Trent was used in article 7 on the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy when it referred to the different modes of the presence of Christ in the liturgy.

In section 69, Pius XII goes on to state: "The priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person His minister represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has

received, is made like to the High Priest and possesses the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person. Wherefore in his priestly activity he in a certain manner 'lends his tongue, and gives his hand' to Christ."¹¹

In the quotation from the Council of Trent and the opening sentence of section 69, Christ is said to be represented by the priest. The second and third sentences state that the priest is able to act in Christ's person because of his sacerdotal consecration or ordination, in which he is "made like to the High Priest" and therefore has the "power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person." The text makes a reference to the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas (III, Q. 22, A. 4) which will be treated later and concludes with a reference to St. John Chrysostom (In Joann. Hom 86:4).¹²

This is the first place in which Mediator Dei gives some indication of the sources for its use of the phrase in persona Christi. In this one section, Pius XII combines references to the documents of the Council of Trent, to the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas, and to one of the Church Fathers. These references will be studied in later sections of this chapter.

Following the presentation on the nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice (66 to 79), Pius XII considers the importance of the participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice (80 to 111). After reaffirming the importance of the participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, he indicates that some are returning to an error which was condemned by the Council of Trent and which states that the priesthood of the New Testament is only the priesthood of the faithful and that the hierarchical priesthood is a creation of the

Church. Responding to this error, Pius XII states that "the priest acts for the people only because he represents Jesus Christ, who is Head of all His members and offers Himself in their stead. Hence, he goes to the altar as the minister of Christ, inferior to Christ but superior to the people. The people, on the other hand, since they in no sense represent the divine Redeemer and are not mediator between themselves and God, can in no way possess the sacerdotal power. All this has the certitude of faith. However, it must also be said that the faithful do offer the divine Victim, though in a different sense."¹³

This statement, including the sentence affirming that all this has the certitude of faith, is crucial to understanding the importance of the theological expression that the ordained priest acts "in the person of Christ." Although the expression itself is not used here, the relationship between what is said here and the expression is evident. There is a textual reference here to St. Robert Bellarmine's treatise De Missa (2, c. 4). There is no reference to the works of Robert Bellarmine in the discussion of the priesthood in the documents of Vatican II. In section 86, Pius XII goes on to quote Bellarmine: "the sacrifice is principally offered in the person of Christ. Thus the oblation that follows the consecration is a sort of attestation that the whole Church consents in the oblation made by Christ, and offers it along with Him."¹⁴

In the second book on the Sacrifice of the Mass, chapter 4, Bellarmine is seeking to explain the proper efficient power of the sacrifice of the Mass. His first statement is that the sacrifice of the Mass is offered by three: by Christ, by the Church, and by the

minister; but not in the same way. "Christ offers as the primary priest, and offers through the human priest, as through his proper minister. The Church does not offer, as a priest through its minister, but as a people through the priest. Therefore Christ offers through an inferior, the Church through a superior: for the priest as such is greater than the rest of the people, who intercedes as a type of (quidam) mediator, for the people with God, and is not properly in this situation a minister of the Church, but of Christ, the principal mediator.¹⁵ This statement clearly affirms the priest's primary relationship to be that of the minister of Christ, "acting in the person of Christ."

The second reference to Robert Bellarmine by Pius XII is a direct quotation. Bellarmine specifically refers to the sacrifice of the Mass as principally offered in the person of Christ. In the words of the consecration, the priest is acting totally "in the person of Christ," but in the oblation after the consecration, the Church joins itself with Christ through the priest to offer the sacrifice to the Father. Pius XII is using the quotation in this context to show that the people do participate together with the priest. Later on in the same chapter, Bellarmine states that "the sacrifice of the Mass is offered in the person of Christ; nothing however makes the priest as clearly (perspicue) in the person of Christ as the consecration in which he says: This is my body etc."¹⁶ In presenting his arguments about the Sacrifice of the Mass, Bellarmine makes many references both to Thomas Aquinas and to the Fathers of the Church.

In paragraph 92 of this same section on participation with the priest, Pius XII reaffirms this teaching on the role of the priest. "The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative of Christ and not as the representative of the faithful."¹⁷ In speaking of the social character of the Mass, in paragraph 96, he states that "this sacrifice, necessarily and of its very nature, has always and everywhere the character of a public and social act, inasmuch as he who offers it acts in the name of Christ and of the faithful, whose Head is the divine Redeemer, and he offers it to God for the holy Catholic Church, and for the living and the dead."¹⁸

Pius XII, in this important encyclical, sees the action of the priest in persona Christi as essential especially in the liturgy, but is also clear that when the priest acts with and on behalf of the people within the Sacrifice of the Mass, he does so as in the person of their Head.

(3) MYSTICI CORPORIS CHRISTI by Pius XII, June 29, 1943.

In paragraph 11 of the introduction to this encyclical, Pius XII explains his purpose in writing this letter to the Church. He wants, first of all, to explain the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and the union of this body of the faithful with the divine Redeemer. From this doctrinal teaching, he wants to draw certain lessons that will bear fruit in the holiness of the faithful. He wants to show in a clearer way the beauty of the Church; to bring out the importance of the faithful united with their Head; and to exclude the errors that seem to be developing about this matter.

The introduction also sets the social context in which this encyclical was written. The devastating effects of the Second World War continue to be seen from all parts of the world. Yet he noted that the Catholic faith was a uniting factor among all who shared it and all respected and looked to the Vicar of Jesus Christ as to the loving Father of them all. He sees the generosity of all the faithful in contributing to the building of a Church in honor of Eugene II, his patron, as a sign of this unity.

He notes that much is being written about the subject of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. He sees this as both aiding popular piety and causing conflicts because "grave errors with regard to this doctrine are being spread among those outside the true Church, and that among the faithful, also, inaccurate or thoroughly false ideas are being disseminated which turn minds aside from the straight path of truth."¹⁷ Three errors he particularly mentions are a false rationalism, a so-called popular naturalism, and a false mysticism.

The encyclical is composed of three major parts. In the first part, Pius XII seeks to explain the concept of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Beginning with a scriptural perspective, he reaffirms the importance of the hierarchy of the Church, but insists that the mystical body of Christ is not limited to them, but includes all the faithful. A mention of Holy Orders is made in paragraph 20,²⁰ but no reference is made to the phrase "in the person of Christ."

After dealing with the concept of Body, he goes into a detailed explanation of the fact that our Lord is the Founder, the Head, the Support, and the Saviour of this Mystical Body. In the section on

Christ as Head of the Body (34 to 51), Pius XII speaks briefly about the role of Peter and his successors as Vicars of Christ. "For Peter in virtue of his primacy is only Christ's Vicar; so that there is only one chief Head of this Body, namely Christ, who never ceases Himself to guide the Church invisible, though at the same time He rules it visibly, through him who is His representative on earth."²¹ In paragraph 42, he speaks of the bishops having a special bond in relation to the divine Head. In the same part, bishops are called "principal parts of the members of the Lord," which is a quotation from Gregory the Great,²² and are called upon to rule in their dioceses "in the name of Christ." A reference is given to the First Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church, Chapter 3. No mention of priests is made in this section on Christ as Head, even though the document Presbyterorum Ordinis uses this word "head" specifically as an addition to the phrase "in the person of Christ" in article 2. "Priests...are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."²³ The meaning of the participation of the ordained priest or bishop in the Headship of Christ is really not discussed.

In paragraph 42, Pius XII states that "the person of Jesus Christ is represented by the Supreme Pontiff, who in turn must call on others to share much of his solicitude."²⁴ Indirectly, priests could be included here.

In the second part of this encyclical on the union of the faithful with Christ, paragraph 69, Pius XII mentions that Christ "commissioned Peter and his successors to be His personal representatives on earth and to assume the visible government of the Christian community."²⁵

Once again, no reference is made to priests or to the phrase "in the person of Christ," but there is the related phrase "His personal representatives."

In paragraph 82, Pius XII speaks directly of the Holy Eucharist. Here he comes closest to making a reference to priests.

"For in this Sacrifice the sacred minister acts as the vicegerent not only of our Saviour but of the whole Mystical Body and of each one of the faithful. In this act of Sacrifice through the hands of the priest, by whose word alone the Immaculate Lamb is present on the altar, the faithful themselves, unites with him in prayer and desire, offer to the Eternal Father a most acceptable victim of praise and propitiation for the needs of the whole Church."²⁶

In this whole document, the emphasis has been upon the whole body of the faithful as the Mystical Body of Christ. The first sentence above seems to presume that all are aware that the sacred minister is the vicegerent or representative of Christ, but that there is a need to be aware that he is also the representative of the faithful. The second sentence clarifies how the priest serves as both. In the consecration, the priest serves "in the person of Christ" alone; in the oblatio he is joined by the prayers and desires of the faithful. This is consistent with tradition and with Mediator Dei. However, the emphasis in the two documents is different.

In this letter, very little is said about the nature and role of the ordained ministry and the phrase "in the person of Christ" is never actually used. This is not surprising because of the nature and intent of the encyclical.

(4) AD CATHOLICI SACERDOTII by Pius XI, December 20, 1935.

This encyclical letter of Pius XI was addressed to the bishops as indicated by its introductory title. Several previous writings and events led Pius XI to prepare this document. He recalls his concern for the education of future priests as he began his Pontificate, and his work to build and further the work of seminaries. He refers to the celebration of his sacerdotal Jubilee, and the recent Jubilee of the Redemption, celebrating the nineteenth century of the institution of the priesthood, and its extension into an extraordinary Jubilee at Lourdes after this, as celebrations of the priesthood. He sees the priest as crucial in responding to the demands of modern life which he has outlined in various other encyclicals.²⁷

The first part of this encyclical is about the office and power of the priest. The key scriptural phrase which Pius XI uses to develop this section is 1 Cor. 4:1: "Let a man so account of us as of the servants of Christ and the stewards of the mysteries of God." Nowhere in this encyclical is the specific phrase "in the person of Christ" used, but there are some phrases which are closely associated to it to which I will refer.

In his initial summary on the Christian priesthood, Pius XI speaks of the priest as "the minister of Christ, an instrument, that is to say, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer. He continues the work of the redemption in all its world-embracing universality and divine efficacy, that work that wrought so marvelous a transformation in the world. Thus the priest, as is said with good reason, is indeed 'another Christ'; for, in some way, he is himself a continuation of Christ."²⁸ Here we find the phrases "the minister of Christ," "an instrument in the hands of the Divine Redeemer," and "another Christ"

referring to the priest. Each one of these phrases has its own history and its own implications for the theology of the ordained priesthood. The terms are used in a broad context of the ministry of the priest rather than as limited to the Eucharist.

After two brief references to Session 22, chapter 2, of the documents of the Council of Trent, Pius XI finds the greatness of the priesthood shown forth most splendidly in the fact that the priest "has power over the body of Jesus Christ, and makes it present upon our altars. In the name of Christ Himself he offers it a victim infinitely pleasing to the Divine Majesty."²⁷ In this case, Pius XI seems to use the phrase "in the name of Christ" where Pius XII would use the phrase "in the person of Christ."

Following this, Pius XI speaks about the priest also having powers over the Mystical Body of Christ. The priest, as the "steward of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1)," is called upon to serve the members of the Mystical Body as ordinary minister of nearly all the Sacraments and in the ministry of the word which is a duty imposed by Christ.

The second part of the encyclical is on virtue and learning in the priesthood. In a section on the personal sanctification of the priest, Pius XI states that "since the priest is an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), he should so live as to be able with truth to make his own the words of the Apostle: 'Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1); he ought to live as another Christ, who by the splendor of His virtue enlightened and still enlightens the world."³⁰ Here the phrases "ambassador for Christ" and "another Christ" are used. They seem to be related more to an inner quality of life than to a theological quality.

The final part of this encyclical is on training for the priesthood. No specific references seem appropriate for our discussion. It is interesting to note that this encyclical speaks of the Catholic priesthood, for the most part, outside of the context of the Eucharist. However, it seems that in the majority of the pre-conciliar papal references, the phrase in persona Christi is used almost exclusively for the act of the priest at the time of consecration of the bread and wine to become the body and blood of Christ.

(5) HAERENT ANIMO by Pius X, August 4, 1908.

Pius X wrote this Apostolic Exhortation specifically to priests on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Its intent is to exhort priests to the sanctity of life which the dignity of their office demands. It hopes to move those who have been lax to Christ-like conduct and ministry.³¹

This papal exhortation does not specifically use the phrase "in the person of Christ," but some related phrases are used. Pius X strongly emphasizes that "we exercise the priestly office not in our own name, but in Christ's."³² He goes on to use a variety of scriptural quotations: "Let a man so account us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1);" "on behalf of Christ, therefore, we are acting as ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20);" "I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit (Jn. 15:15-16)." "Therefore," he says, "we are to act the part of Christ and the ministry given by Him is to be carried on in such a way that we accomplish precisely what He intends."³³ Particularly the phrase "to act the part of Christ" appears close to the phrase "act in the person of Christ."

A little later in this same section, Pius X applies the scriptural phrase "the Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup. It is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me (Ps. 15:5)" to the priest and quotes St. Jerome as saying that by these words "the cleric is warned in order that he, who is the portion of the Lord, or has the Lord for his portion, should so conduct himself that he may possess the Lord and be in turn possessed by Him."³⁴ In another place he states that "if a priest is called another Christ and is recipient of His power, should he not both become and be considered so, even by the imitation of His deeds?"³⁵ Here we find the related phrases "portion of the Lord" and "another Christ," but no specific use of the phrase "in the person of Christ."

This completes the review of five papal writings of the twentieth century on the ordained ministry. Following our stated process of moving back through history, the documents of the Council of Trent are considered next.

B. THE DOCUMENTS OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

The official "Bull of Indiction of the Sacred Decumenical and General Council of Trent" was promulgated by Pope Paul III on May 22, 1542. In this Decree, Pope Paul III expresses the difficulties and changes affecting the Church since he first sought to call a general council at the city of Mantua in May of 1537. War was raging among some of the Christian countries. The Turks were attacking from the East, and even attacked parts of Italy itself. The two Christian princes of the West, Charles and Francis, were in conflict with each other. These political contentions, more than the religious divisions, made the calling of the Council difficult. After another

attempt to have the Council meet at Vicenza, Paul III acceded to the wishes of the troubled German nation to convene the Council in Trent which seemed accessible to all the European countries which were mainly involved. Pope Paul III described the purpose of the Council in the following words: "That thus, - with God going before us in our deliberations, holding before our minds the light of His own wisdom and truth, - we may, in the said sacred oecumenical council, in a better and more commodious manner, treat of, and, with the charity of all conspiring to one end, deliberate and discuss, execute and bring to the desired issue, speedily and happily, whatsoever appertains to the integrity and truth of the Christian religion; the restoration of good and the correction of evil manners; the peace, unity, and concord both of Christian princes and peoples; and whatsoever is needful for repelling those assaults of barbarians and infidels, with which they seek the overthrow of all Christendom."³⁶

In this "Bull of Indiction," Pope Paul III asks for the presence of "the aforementioned emperor, and the most Christian king, as also the other kings, dukes, and princes at the Council. If they are unable to come, they should send "with an authoritative commission, as their ambassadors, men of weight, who may each in the council represent the person of his prince with prudence and dignity."³⁷ We find here the expression "represent the person of" used in terms of the political situation of the Christian leaders of the time. But there is no specific use of the term "in the person of Christ" in the documents of the Council of Trent.

In Lumen Gentium 28, there is a specific textual reference to Session 22 of the Council of Trent immediately following the words "acting in the person of Christ." In Lumen Gentium 21, there is also a reference to Session 23 of the Council of Trent. The Vatican II context here is the sacred character impressed by the Sacrament of Orders which enables the priest to act as Christ's representative. There is also a reference to Session 22, chapter 2 of the documents of the Council of Trent in Article 7 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. It speaks of Christ working through the ministry of the priest. Some sections of the documents of the Council of Trent thus are keyed to the Vatican II understanding of the phrase "in the person of Christ" even though the phrase itself is not used. In this section on the Council of Trent, I will consider the texts mentioned above as well as a few others which are related to this topic.

A Decree on the Sacraments, dated March 3, 1547, was developed at the Seventh Session of the Council of Trent. The Decree contains 13 canons on the sacraments in general as well as 14 on Baptism and 3 on Confirmation. Canon IX on the sacraments in general anathematizes anyone who denies that a character is received in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Orders. Canon X condemns anyone who says that all Christians have "power to administer the word and all the sacraments."³⁶ Particularly Canon X makes clear that the power to administer the word and the sacraments is limited to some members of the Christian community.

At the fourteenth session of the Council, the Council Fathers completed a decree, "On the most Holy Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction," dated November 25, 1551. In Chapter V, On

Confession, after stating that the entire confession of sins was instituted by the Lord, it goes on to say that "our Lord Jesus Christ, when about to ascend from earth to heaven left priests His own vicars, as presidents and judges, unto whom all the mortal crimes, into which the faithful of Christ may have fallen, should be carried, in order that, in accordance with the power of the keys, they may pronounce the sentence of forgiveness or retention of sins."³⁹ Here priests are called "His own vicars." This term "vicar" of Christ has been used in other writings and is close to the meaning of the term "in the person of Christ." In this case, priests are asked to act clearly as the representatives of Christ, not the community. The "power of the keys" is also referred to here. Scripturally this phrase is used only in relation to Peter who is given "the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19)" by Christ.

It was at the Twenty-Second Session of the Council of Trent that the Decree on the "Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass" was approved (September 17, 1562). Chapter I of this decree is on the Institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is this chapter which is specifically referred to in article 28 of Lumen Gentium after the words "acting in the person of Christ." Since this passage is so important to our consideration here, it is appropriate to quote it at length:

He, then, our Lord and our God, was once and for all to offer himself by his death on the altar of the the cross to God the Father, to accomplish for them an everlasting redemption. But death was not to end his priesthood (see Heb. 7:24,27). And so, at the Last Supper, on the night on which he was betrayed, in order to leave for his beloved spouse, the Church, a sacrifice that was visible, as the nature of man demands, declaring himself constituted a priest forever according to the order of

Melchisedech, he offered his body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father and he gave his body and blood under the same species to the apostles to receive, making them priests of the New Testament at that time. This sacrifice was to represent the bloody sacrifice which he accomplished on the cross once and for all. It was to perpetuate his memory until the end of the world (see I Cor. 11:23ff). Its salutary strength was to be applied for the remission of the sins that we daily commit. He ordered the apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer this sacrifice when he said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:24), as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught. For after he celebrated the old Pasch, which the assembly of the children of Israel offered in memory of his departure from this world to the Father when but the shedding of his blood he redeemed us from the power of darkness and transferred us into this kingdom (see Col. 1:13). ⁴⁰

Christ offered himself by his death to the Father for the redemption of all. But his priesthood was to continue for he was constituted "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." After offering his body and blood to the Father and giving it to the apostles, he made the apostles "priests of the New Testament," participants in His priesthood. In the statement "Do this in remembrance of Me," Christ ordered the apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer this sacrifice in His name, in His person. The new Pasch, which is Christ himself, is to be offered "by the Church through her priests." This last phrase is clarified through the words of Robert Bellarmine which were quoted before: "Christ offers as the primary priest, and offers through the human priest, as through his proper minister. The Church does not offer, as a priest through the minister, but as a people through the priest."⁴¹

Although this text does not specifically use the wording "in the person of Christ," it is clear why this particular passage can be interpreted in this light. This same passage was also used by Pius XII in Mediator Dei.

In the second chapter of this same decree on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass developed at the Twenty-Second Session of the Council of Trent, there is another passage that is related to our consideration. "For it is one and the same victim: he who now makes the offering through the ministry of priests and he who then offered himself on the cross; the only difference is in the manner of the offering."⁴² This passage is specifically quoted in article 7 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy when it speaks about the different ways in which Christ is present in the liturgy. It is used to describe how Christ is present "in the person of his minister." It is also quoted in Mediator Dei, no. 68, where it is used more according to its actual context in Trent which was to affirm that the Mass is a true sacrifice when offered by Christ, in person, or when offered by the ministry of His priests, who act in His person.

It was at the Twenty-Third Session under Pius IV that the teaching on the Sacrament of Order was decreed and promulgated (July 15, 1563). In Chapter I, On the Institution of the Priesthood of the New Law, the Council Fathers connect sacrifice and priesthood by the ordinance of God. The institution by Christ of the holy visible sacrifice of the Eucharist makes necessary the existence of a visible and external and new priesthood. "And the Sacred Scriptures show, and the tradition of the Catholic Church has always taught, that this priesthood was instituted by the same Lord our Saviour, and that to

the Apostles, and their successors in the priesthood, was the power delivered of consecrating, offering, and administering His Body and Blood, as also of forgiving and of retaining sins."⁴³ From this teaching, it becomes clear that the teaching of the Church is that the priesthood is not something instituted by the Church, but by Christ. Christ is the source of the priesthood and, as such, the priest acts in the person of Christ. The power comes from Christ and not from the Church to consecrate, offer and administer the Eucharist and forgive sins.

In the fourth chapter of this decree, On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, and On Ordination, which is referred to in Lumen Gentium 21 as relating to the sacred character, the Council Fathers affirm the permanent character imprinted by the Sacrament of Order, condemn those who say this power is temporary or can be lost; condemn those who say that the priesthood of all is equal in spiritual power; declare that ordination of bishops, priests and of the other orders do not demand the consent of the people or magistrates for validity, but that those who act as ministers only with the consent of the people or magistrates are not really ministers. These same teachings are reiterated in the Canons of Anathema I, IV, VI, and VII.⁴⁴

In this Decree on the Sacrament of Order, there is no specific mention of the phrase "in the person of Christ." But from a reverse position, as implied in this fourth chapter, if the members of the hierarchy do not depend upon the people for their ministry, their ministry has its origin in Christ, and they "act in the person of Christ," not in the person of the Church only. This is clear in all the documents of the Council of Trent.

Having considered papal encyclicals of the twentieth century on the priesthood and the documents of the Council of Trent, we continue to move back into history and study the use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

C. THE WRITINGS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

Thomas Aquinas, born around 1224-25 in Roccasecca, Sicily, joined the Dominicans at Naples in 1244 and was ordained priest at Cologne in 1250 or 51. He served as Sententiarius at the University of Paris from 1252 to 1256, at which time he produced his Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum. He became regent master in theology at Paris in 1256 and began to write his Summa contra Gentiles there in 1259. This work was completed in 1264 with some work being done in Paris, Naples, and Orvieto. The Summa Theologica, "Thomas's longest and most important contribution to the science of theology,"⁴⁸ was begun by Thomas in 1266, was stopped suddenly on December 6, 1273, and remained unfinished at the time of his death on March 7, 1274. This work of St. Thomas has had a powerful influence on the theological thought and training of the Church through the centuries.

This study of the use of the phrase in persona Christi in the work of St. Thomas will concentrate on the "Third Part" which considers the profound mysteries of Christ's Incarnation and His continuing life in the Sacraments, the culmination of which is the Eucharist as both sacrament and sacrifice.

Question 8 of Part II treats of Christ's grace as Head of the Church. Article 6 asks the specific question: "Is being head of the Church exclusive to Christ?"⁴⁹ In the body of his reply to this question, Thomas states: "Christ is head of the Church in his own

right and power; others are called head because they take the place of Christ, as it is put in II Corinthians, 'What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake, in the person of Christ (II Cor. 2:10)' and 'So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us (II Cor. 5:20).' Christ is head of the Church in all places and times all interior grace flows only through him. Others participate externally in Christ's headship in particular places (bishops) or at particular times (popes)."⁴⁷ No specific mention of priests is made here, although the mention of bishops and the pope here are only examples, not limitations.

St. Thomas, in this statement, first affirms the uniqueness of the headship of Christ. Others can be identified with the headship of Christ only because they "take the place of Christ." He then gives two scriptural references to II Corinthians as the source and proof of this statement. The first quotation is from II Cor. 2:10 which, in the Latin used by Thomas, reads: "nam et ego, quod donavi, si quid donavi, propter vos, in persona Christi."⁴⁸ His use of this phrase today causes some difficulties because in persona Christi is often considered as a mistranslation of the Greek en prosopo Christou which many scripture scholars say more accurately means "in the presence of Christ" or "before Christ's eyes." This will be discussed in the section on Scriptural roots.

The second Scriptural quotation used by St. Thomas is II Cor. 5:20: "Pro Christo legatione fungimur tanquam Deo exhortante per nos."⁴⁹ This text also will be considered in a later section on Scripture.

Pius XII, in his encyclical letter Mediator Dei 69, makes a specific reference to St. Thomas's Summa Theologica, Part III, Q. 22, A. 4. (No specific Thomistic references are given in the texts of Vatican II which we have studied.) This is the only textual reference to Thomas in the portions of the encyclical letters which we have considered. The text referred to is most likely his reply to the question: "Did the effect of Christ's priesthood benefit Christ himself as well as others?" The reply Thomas gives is: "Now Christ is the source of all priesthood. For the priest of the Old Law was the type of Christ while the New-Law priest acts in his person, 'for what I have given, if I have given anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ (II Cor. 2:10)."⁸⁰ In this text, we have Thomas specifically using the phrase in persona ipsius and once again making a special reference to II Cor. 2:10 as his scriptural basis.

In question 64 on the causes of the sacraments, article 2, which questions whether the sacraments are of divine institution alone, in his third objection, Thomas once again refers to II Cor. 2:10 following the statement that "the apostles acted as vicars of God upon earth."⁸¹ He replies to this objection by agreeing that the apostles and their successors are the vicars of God, but they are bound to follow the rule of the Church and cannot establish a new Church or sacraments. In this case, to be a vicar of God as an apostle is to act as if Christ himself was acting.

In all of the texts used to this point, Thomas always has used the scriptural text II Cor. 2:10 when he used the phrase in persona Christi. In questions 73 to 83 of the Third Part, Thomas treats the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The phrase in persona Christi is used

often by Thomas, particularly in questions 78, 82, and 83, and almost always it is used to describe the priest in the act of consecration of the body and blood of Christ. In discussing wording for the consecration, Thomas argues that "it must be held that if the priest were to pronounce only the aforesaid words with the intention of consecrating this sacrament, this sacrament would be valid because the intention would cause these words to be understood as spoken in the person of Christ even though the words were pronounced without those that precede."⁵²

In article IV of question 78 on whether there is any created power which causes the consecration, Thomas responds "that there is in the words of the form of this sacrament a created power which causes the change to be wrought in it; instrumental, however, as in the other sacraments as stated above (Q 62, AA. 3,4), for since these words are uttered in the person of Christ, it is from His command that they receive their instrumental power from Him."⁵³

Question 82 treats the subject of the minister of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In response to the questions of almost all of the articles, Thomas used the phrase "in the person of Christ." In article 1, he states: "such is the dignity of this sacrament that it is performed only as in the person of Christ. Now whoever performs any act in another's stead, must do so by the power bestowed by such a one."⁵⁴ In article 2, "the priest does not consecrate except as in Christ's stead; and since many are 'one in Christ (Gal. iii, 28);' consequently it does not matter whether this sacrament be consecrated by one or by many."⁵⁵

In article 3, he answers that "the dispensing of Christ's body belongs to the priest for three reasons. First, because, as was said above (A. 1), he consecrates in the person of Christ."⁵⁶ In article 5, he responds: "The priest consecrates this sacrament not by his own power, but as the minister of Christ, in Whose person he consecrates this sacrament."⁵⁷ In article 6, "This sacrament is consecrated in the person of Christ."⁵⁸

Finally, in article 7, in response to the question whether heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated persons can consecrate, Thomas states that "the priest, in reciting the prayers of the Mass, speaks instead of the Church, in whose unity he remains; but in consecrating the sacrament he speaks as in the person of Christ, Whose place he holds by the power of his Orders. Consequently, if a priest severed from the unity of the Church celebrates Mass, not having lost the power of Order, he consecrates Christ's true body and blood; but because he is severed from the unity of the Church, his prayers have no efficacy."⁵⁹

In the first article of question 83 on the question of whether Christ is sacrificed in this sacrament, Thomas responds within the reply to the third objection: "the priest also bears Christ's image, in Whose person and by Whose power he pronounces the words of consecration."⁶⁰

Thomas in this section used the phrase "'in the person of Christ'" in reference to the role of the priest in the consecration and does so in light of his understanding of instrumental causality.

This completes the initial study of the use of the phrase in persona Christi in St. Thomas's Summa Theologica, especially Part III. The implications of the use of the phrase by Thomas will be studied in the next chapter. We now move to study the use of the phrase in some appropriate Patristic writings as we look further back into history.

D. APPROPRIATE PATRISTIC RESOURCES

In searching out the patristic resources related to the use of the formula in persona Christi in the documents of Vatican II, the only explicit textual references are found in a footnote to the following statement in Lumen Gentium 21: "In fact, from tradition, which is expressed especially in the liturgical rites and in the customs of both the Eastern and Western Church, it is abundantly clear that by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such wise that bishops, in a resplendent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representatives (in Eius persona)."⁶¹ The Latin phrase in Eius persona is included in parentheses in this translation. There probably was a question in the mind of the translator about whether the English "as His representatives" fully expressed what was intended in the Latin original.

The footnote to this text makes reference to six patristic sources: (1) the 63rd letter of St. Cyprian; (2) a homily of St. John Chrysostom on 2nd Timothy; (3) a commentary of St. Ambrose on Psalm 38; (4) a commentary of Ambrosiaster on the first letter of Timothy; (5) a commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Eucharist; (6) a commentary of Hesychius of Jerusalem on the book of Leviticus. I will

review these resources in order and also study some references in the (7) Epistle of Polycarp to the Philipians; (8) the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch; (9) the Didache; and (10) the letter of Demophilus from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

(1) THE 63RD LETTER OF CYPRIAN

Cyprian was born between 200 and 210, probably at Carthage, where he was converted to Christianity and baptized in c. 246. He became bishop of Carthage around 248-9. This particular letter, written around 253 to a brother bishop in Northern Africa, is directed against the abuse that was prevailing in some communities of celebrating the Eucharist with water instead of wine. "But know that we have been warned in offering the Chalice that the tradition of the Lord must be observed and that nothing should be done otherwise by us than what the Lord first did for us, that the Chalice which is offered in His Commemoration should be offered mixed with wine."⁶² After a series of Scriptural references to demonstrate this point in section 14, Cyprian states that if some errantly suggested that water alone should be offered in the chalice, we "ought to obey and to do what Christ did and what He commanded to be done."⁶³ After reiterating that we need to follow and obey Christ in something so important as offering the Sacrifice in commemoration of Him, he states that "certainly the priest who imitates that which Christ did and then offers the true and full Sacrifice in the Church of God the Father, if he thus begins to offer according to what he sees Christ Himself offered, performs truly in the place of Christ."⁶⁴ ("Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur.")⁶⁵

This phrase seems to be related more directly to the text of Lumen Gentium 21 which states that "bishops...take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd and priest."⁶⁶ But it can also show that the two phrases modify one another or say the same thing, but in varying words. The footnote could easily relate to both phrases. The context of Lumen Gentium 21 is in reference specifically to bishops. Cyprian's reference uses the word sacerdos which would include both bishops and priests. The phrase uses the action verb fungitur which could relate to the verbs in the text sustineant or agant, although it would be more closely related to agant. The Latin expression vice does have the meaning of "instead of" or "in the place of." Although in this particular context, Cyprian is not seeking to define the ordained priesthood, he is clear that in the consecration of the chalice, which is to contain a mix of wine and water, the priest follows and obeys Christ, and in fact truly (vere) "takes the place of Christ." He is a representative of Christ at this time and not of the community. The priest does as Christ did, and not as he or the community might desire.

(2) ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON 2ND TIMOTHY.

John was born in Antioch, Syria, sometime around 344-45 and was baptized before 372. He was ordained a deacon in 381 and a priest in 386. After 12 years of respected preaching at the principal church in Antioch, he became bishop for Constantinople in 397. The extant texts of the homilies of John Chrysostom on the Second Epistle to Timothy are normally dated to the period between 393 to 397 ⁶⁷ when John was a priest in Antioch. Lumen Gentium refers to Chrysostom's Second Homily on 2 Timothy 1:8-12. In the moral section of this homily, John

begins to talk about the honor that should be accorded to the priest. "He that honors the Priest, will honor God also; and he who has learnt to despise the Priest, will in process of time insult God."⁶⁹ After a lengthy section on the importance of honoring priests even if they seem unworthy or appear wicked, he states: "Is it the good life or the virtue of the Priest that confers so much on thee? The gifts which God bestows are not such as to be effects of the virtue of the Priest. All is of grace. His part is but to open his mouth, while God worketh all: the Priest only performs a symbol."⁷⁰ (Totum ex gratia est hujus tantum est os aperire, totum vero Deus operatur; symbolum hic solum implet.)⁷⁰ After some comments on the difference between John the Baptist and Jesus and that it was through John, but not because of John, that the Spirit descended on Jesus, Chrysostom concludes: "Why then is this done? That thou mayest learn that the Priest performs a symbol."⁷¹ A little later he states: "For as the words which God speaks are the same which the Priest now utters, so is the Offering the same, and the Baptism, that which He gave."⁷²

The reference in the footnote of Lumen Gentium 21 includes the words: "The priest is 'symbolon' of Christ"⁷³ Within the context of the homily, Chrysostom is making clear that the priest is not acting on his own power, but that God works through the priest. This is an earlier expression of the concept of instrumental causality which was expressed later by Thomas Aquinas.

The word "symbolon" in Greek has a variety of meanings in different contexts. In general, the word is given the basic definition of a "tally, i.e., each of two halves or corresponding pieces of an...object, which...any two contracting parties, broke

between them, each party keeping one piece, in order to have proof of the identity of the presenter of the other."⁷⁴ Other meanings given are: a token, guarantee, seal, treaty, receipt, secret code, or religious creed. The word is not used in the New Testament

In Patristic Greek, the word has the broad meaning of a "symbol representing a reality (freq. suprasensible) other than itself."⁷⁵ Other translations for the words as used in patristic writings include: a standard, portent, type, mark, token, indication, image, and symbol as opposite of reality. It can also be used for a pagan cult formula or a Christian rite, or as a thing united with that which it signifies. The context of the use of the word in John Chrysostom seems to indicate that the Priest performs something on behalf of or in the place of another. It is not possible in this paper to do a complete study of the use of this word, but its relationship to the phrase in persona Christi is evident.

(3) ST. AMBROSE'S COMMENTARY ON PSALM 38.

Ambrose, born of a noble Roman family around 339, was attempting to mediate a conflict between Arians and Catholics in Milan in his role as a civil official, when he was suddenly elected bishop by both parties. Although only a catechumen at the time of his election, he was consecrated bishop eight days after his baptism, probably on December 7, 374.⁷⁶

Exegetical writings, particularly on the Old Testament, form a major portion of the extant written works of Ambrose. In his commentary on Psalm 38:25-26, Ambrose, in his allegorical way, states: "We saw the Prince of Priests coming to us, we saw and heard Him

offering His blood for us. We follow, inasmuch as we are able, being priests; and we offer the sacrifice on behalf of the people. And even if Christ is not now seen as the one who offers the sacrifice, nevertheless it is He himself that is offered in sacrifice here on earth when the Body of Christ is offered. Indeed, to offer Himself He is made visible in us, He whose word makes holy the sacrifice that is offered."⁷⁷

In this context, Ambrose views the priest as one who makes Christ visible, who takes the place of or represents Christ. He does not use the phrase "in the person of Christ." But it is Christ who is manifested in the Eucharistic sacrifice through the priest.

(4) COMMENTARY OF AMBROSIASTER ON I TIMOTHY 5:19.

Ambrosiaster is the name given the unknown author of a "Commentary on Thirteen Pauline Epistles" which was formerly attributed to Ambrose. Although the author is unknown despite much speculation, the work, originating in Rome in the time of Pope Damasus (366-84), is considered as a valuable contribution to the life of the Church. I Timothy 5:19 reads: "Pay no attention to an accusation against a presbyter unless it is supported by two or three witnesses." Ambrosiaster's comment is that "because the honor of this order is sublime (of such a manner that they are vicars of Christ) therefore the accusation of this person should not easily be admitted."⁷⁸ In this particular reference in Lumen Gentium 21, the Council Fathers accept the phrase vicarii Christi to be equivalent to taking the place of Christ or acting in Eius persona. The Latin word vicarius signifies "one who takes the place of another." In this case the presbyter, in Ambrosiaster's interpretation, is a vicar of Christ.

(5) THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

Theodore was born in Antioch and was a friend of John Chrysostom. After being ordained a priest in Antioch, he became Bishop of Mopsuestia in 392 and died there in 428. More than a century after his death, he was condemned in the fifth General Council of Constantinople for being a source of the Nestorian heresy. Most contemporary Church historians exonerate him from this charge.

One of the works of Theodore which has only recently been found in its fuller form and made available is his sixteen Catechetical Sermons. Our specific reference is to the 15th sermon on the Holy Eucharist which was addressed to the recently baptized or neophytes. In his explanation of the Mass as a Sacrifice, he states: "Because Christ our Lord offered Himself in sacrifice for us and thus became our high priest in reality, we must think that the priest who draws nigh unto the altar is representing His image, not that He offers himself in sacrifice, any more than he is truly a high priest, but because he performs the figure of the service of the ineffable sacrifice (of Christ), and through this figure he dimly represents the image of the unspeakable heavenly things and of the supernatural and incorporeal hosts."⁷⁷ Later on he continues: "Through the priest we picture Christ our Lord in our mind, as through him we see the One who saved us and delivered us by the sacrifice of Himself; and through the deacons who serve the things that take place we picture in our mind the invisible hosts who served with that ineffable service."⁸⁰

In this particular passage, Theodore clearly sees the priest as the one who represents Christ, even though dimly, as he offers the Sacrifice. The priest represents Christ. He performs the figure of

the service of Christ. Through the priest we picture Christ and see the one who saved us. The deacon in Theodore is not given this representational quality, but is identified with the angels serving the Lord. Once again the specific phrase "in the person of Christ" is not used, but several phrases which can be considered close equivalents.

(6) COMMENTARY OF HESYCHIUS OF JERUSALEM ON THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

Little is known about Hesychius' life. He was first a monk; then became a presbyter in Jerusalem around 412 and died after 450. Hesychius is commenting on Leviticus 9:23: "Moses and Aaron went into the meeting tent. On coming out they again blessed the people." Recognizing that the power to bless on the part of Moses and Aaron comes only from heaven, he goes on to say that "priests do not extend the blessing by their own power, but because they bear the figure of Christ (*figuram ferunt Christi*), they are able, on account of him who in them (*propter eum qui in ipsis est*) extend the fullness of the blessing."¹

In this passage the priest is seen as bearing the figure of Christ. The priest is not able to bless, a much more general action, except in the power which they have in and through Christ. Christ blesses through them. This is another way of approaching the action of the priest in persona Christi. This is the last of the Patristic textual references found in Lumen Gentium. The following are some additional patristic references that are appropriate to this study.

(7) THE LETTER OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Polycarp was born in Asia Minor in 69 or 70. He is considered a disciple of the Apostle John who may have appointed him as bishop of

Smyrna. He died around 156. In his letter to the Philippians who had asked him for a copy of the letters which Ignatius of Antioch had sent to him, he makes this exhortation: "Our duty, therefore, is to give everything of this kind a very wide berth, and be as obedient to our clergy and deacons as we should be to God and Christ."⁸² This admonition of Polycarp includes obedience to clergy and deacons. There is no mention of a bishop here. But the leadership responsibility of the clergy and the deacons in Christ comes through clearly.

(8) LETTERS OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

Ignatius of Antioch was also considered a hearer of the Apostle John. He became the third bishop of Antioch, succeeding St. Evodius, who, according to a local tradition, was the immediate successor of St. Peter. He was condemned to death during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. It was during his trip to martyrdom in Rome from Antioch that Ignatius wrote his famous seven letters to churches along the land route. The letters are important and powerful exhortations to the people of these communities to remain united with their bishops and priests.

In his letter to the Ephesians (no.3) he says: "For we can have no life apart from Jesus Christ; and He represents the mind of the Father, so our bishops, even those who are stationed in the remotest parts of the world, represent the mind of Jesus Christ."⁸³ In his letter to the Magnesians, he exhorts the people, after earlier referring to Jesus Christ as the "Bishop of us all," "Let the bishop preside in the place of God, and his clergy in the place of the Apostolic conclave, and let my special friends the deacons be

entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from all eternity and in these last days has been made manifest."⁸⁴ In his letter to the Trallians, he states: "your obedience to your bishop, as though he were Jesus Christ, show me plainly enough that yours is no worldly manner of life, but that of Jesus Christ Himself."⁸⁵ A little later, he asks that they regard the clergy as "apostles of Jesus Christ our Hope." In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, encouraging the people to avoid factions and evil, he writes: "The sole Eucharist you should consider valid is one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him. Where the bishop is to be seen, there let all his people be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is present, we have the world-wide Church."⁸⁶

In the first letters, he speaks of the relation of the bishop and clergy to Jesus Christ in a general way, in all the areas of ministry, with a particular relation to the teaching and governing responsibilities. In the letter to the Smyrnaeans, he expresses the important role of the bishop or his delegates in celebrating the Eucharist.

In his letter to the Romans, Ignatius asks them to "remember the Church of Syria in your prayers; it has God for its pastor now, in place of myself, and Jesus Christ alone will have oversight of it - He, and your own love."⁸⁷ This interesting quotation indicates that Ignatius saw himself as acting in the place of God and Jesus Christ as bishop. But with his imprisonment, God and Jesus Christ no longer have him as their particular embodiment as bishop in this place.

(9) THE DIDACHE

In the Didache, which is considered to have been written in the

first half of the second century in Syria with parts as early as 80 AD, there are some passages which can be considered of importance as well. After writing about the "Way of Life" and the "Way of Death" in the first part of the Didache, the author gives guidelines for different activities and roles in the community. In Part II, no. 11:1, the author states: "In regard to apostles and prophets, act according to the doctrine of the gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord."⁶⁶ In no. 15, it reads: "Elect for yourselves, therefore, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord."⁶⁷

Although these phrases do not specifically use the formula "in the person of Christ," the leaders are identified with Christ.

(10) LETTER OF PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE TO DEMOPHILUS

The final patristic reference is one used in the supplement of the Summa Theologica, taken from St. Thomas's commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, in which he makes a reference to the letter of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to Demophilus. In response to the question "Whether a Man Who is in Sin Can without Sin exercise the Order He has Received?"⁷⁰ Thomas answers in the negative quoting Pseudo-Dionysius speaking about a priest celebrating the Eucharist in sin: "he thinks, by false pretense, to cheat Him Whom he falsely calls his Father; he dares to utter in the person of Christ (christiformiter enuntiare), words polluted by his infamy, I will not call them prayers, over the Divine symbols."⁷¹

Lampe's Patristic Greek Lexicon makes a special reference to this text under the Greek word christoeidos. It gives its meaning as "after the form of Christ, in a manner resembling Christ."⁷² Pseudo-Dionysius seems to be the only one who used this specific word

among the Patristic authors.

Altaner states that "the middle Ages knew Pseudo-Dionysius through the Latin translation made by Scotus Erigena, c. 850; his ideas had a profound influence on the philosophical and theological thought of the great Schoolmen."⁷³ However, later authors doubted the authenticity of Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts 17:34) as author of these works, although he identified himself in this way. Now it is considered that the writings originated as late as the end of the fifth century.

These ten patristic resources give some of the background to the phrase "in the person of Christ" as used in the Vatican II documents, although the phrase itself is not formally used. From these patristic sources, we now move to the biblical roots for the use of the phrase "in the person of Christ."

E. BIBLICAL ROOTS

The final concern of this chapter is the biblical roots for the use of the phrase in persona Christi. As in the patristic texts, we do not find the phrase expressly used in relation to the apostles and other ministers mentioned in the Sacred Scripture. But there are related expressions.⁷⁴

In the synoptic gospels, Jesus first of all calls his disciples (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11), and then later sends them forth with "authority to expel unclean spirits and to cure sickness and disease of every kind." (Matt. 10:1; cf. Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1). Here we find Jesus giving "authority" to the Twelve, authority to carry out actions that were specifically his actions through the power received from the Father. They did not possess this authority of themselves, but became the instruments through which Christ extended

his ministry and message to the people of Israel.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus appoints a further seventy-two disciples (Luke 10:1) and states: "He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me (Luke 10:16)." No direct comment is made about authority in this section, but the disciples rejoice that "even the demons are subject to us in your name (Luke 10:17)." It is clear that the action is because of Christ, not their own power.

Although there is an account of the institution of the Eucharist in all three of the synoptic gospels, it is in Luke that we find the words of Jesus to the apostles at the Last Supper: "Do this as a remembrance of Me (Luke 22:19)." Paul also used this mandate from the Lord in his first letter to the Corinthians (11:23-25).

At the end of Matthew's gospel, Jesus expresses the fact that he has "full authority" in heaven and on earth and that they are to make disciples of all nations, baptize and carry out all he has commanded (Matt. 28:16-20). At the close of Mark's gospel, the eleven were reprimanded, but also sent forth so that "the Lord continued to work with them throughout and confirm the message through the signs which accompanied them (Mark 16:20)." At the close of Luke's gospel, the eleven are to wait "until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:48)."

In John's gospel, there are many expressions of the close and ongoing union between Christ and the disciples through the power of the Spirit. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether passages relate specifically to the apostles and relate to all the disciples or believers.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus promises that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down upon them (Acts 1:8). After the experience of Pentecost, it is Peter with the Eleven who preaches (Acts 2:14). The miracles and cures of the apostles were always done "in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6; 4:10)." Following the blinding experience of Saul, Ananias is sent to Paul: "You must go! This man is the instrument I have chosen to bring my name to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15)." Paul retells the story of his conversion in Acts 26 and remembers the words of Jesus designating him as "my servant and as a witness to what you have seen of me and what you will see of me (Acts 26:16)."

In reviewing the letters of the New Testament, almost all of the initial salutations in which Paul greets the people to whom he is writing, he speaks of himself as "a servant of Christ Jesus (Rom. 1:1)" or "called by God's will to be an apostle of Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:1; cf. II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; I Tim. 1:1; II Tim. 1:1)." In the epistle of James, the author is called "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1)." In both letters of Peter, the writer is "an apostle of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:1)." Jude is called "a servant of Jesus Christ (Jude 1:1)."

Paul always sees his apostleship as coming from Christ, but always working in relationship to the Twelve and the Church (Rom. 1:5; 15:15-16; I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 1:21; 3:5; 5:18; Gal. 1:15; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25; I Tim. 1:12). He recognizes that all of his power and authority comes from the Lord (Rom. 13:1; 14:7; I Cor. 4:6; II Cor. 13:10). Paul also recognizes that the ministry of others is not an

extension of himself. To Archippus, he says, "Take care to discharge the ministry you have received in the Lord (Col. 4:17)." To Timothy, he says: "I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God bestowed when my hands were laid upon you (II Tim. 1:6)." On several occasions, Paul invites the people to imitate him as he imitates Christ (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17)."

A scriptural reference which is often used in the papal encyclicals, relating to the ordained priesthood is from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "Men should regard us as servants of Christ and administrators of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1)." The official minister of the church is designated by Christ as His servant and is not administering his own activity, but is a steward of what God seeks to reveal.

Earlier reference was made to particular scriptural phrases which Thomas Aquinas used - II Cor. 2:10 and II Cor. 5:20. Thomas used the Latin Vulgate translation of the Scriptures which read: "Nam et ego quod donavi, si quid donavi, propter vos in persona Christi (II Cor. 2:10)." The accepted Greek text for the final phrase here is en prosopo Christou.⁷⁵ This phrase was accepted literally as meaning "in the person of Christ" by Thomas. But the majority of scholars today seem to agree that to translate the phrase en prosopo as "in the person of" is inaccurate. "One may not assume that the word had this sense in the NT period or the age of the early Church."⁷⁶ Another author explains this phrase in this way: "by means of en prosopo Christou in 2 Cor. 2:10 Paul appeals to Christ as witness to the sincerity of his forgiveness."⁷⁷ In many translations, this phrase en prosopo is translated as "before Christ" or "in Christ's presence."

It is interesting to note, however, that the sense of "person" is granted to the use of the word in II Cor. 1:11. The Corinthians are to join the apostle in prayer so that thanks can be given "by many persons (ek pollon prosopon)."⁷⁶ However, in the explanation of the use of the word prosopon in the Septuagint, it is suggested that it is often used just to strengthen the preposition on which it depends as in its Hebrew equivalent.⁷⁷

This seems to bring into question the scriptural base upon which Thomas built his use of this phrase. However, Thomas uses not only this one passage or verse. He also used II Cor. 5:20, which does not contain the specific phrase, but brings across the meaning that the apostle Paul does not act on his own behalf, but as the "ambassador of Christ." "This makes us ambassadors for Christ, God as it were appealing through us. We implore you, in Christ's name: be reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20)."

Throughout this second letter to the Corinthians, Paul is clear that he is not acting on his own, but acting in Christ and carrying out the mission of Christ. In his greeting, he speaks of himself as "Paul, by God's will an apostle of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 1:1)." Including Timothy with him, Paul recognizes that he has shared in the suffering of Christ as well as in the consolation of Christ (II Cor. 1:5). It was God who established Paul and the Corinthians in Christ (II Cor. 1:21). It is "before Christ" (in persona Christi) that Paul joins in forgiving the "offender" in their community (II Cor. 2:10). Paul takes no credit for his ministry, but proclaims that it is God "who has made us qualified ministers of a new covenant (II Cor. 3:5-6)." Paul's ministry, possessed through God's mercy (II Cor. 4:1)

is to preach Christ Jesus as Lord, "and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake (II Cor. 4:5)." Their power is from God (II Cor. 4:7) who fashioned them and gave them the Spirit (II Cor. 5:5). It is the love of Christ which impels Paul (II Cor. 5:14) and in Christ that all are saved and called to live (II Cor. 5:15). It is "God who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18)." It was God who entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to Paul (II Cor. 5:19). Within this context, we find Paul referring to himself and Timothy as "ambassadors of Christ (II Cor. 5:20)." He explains his meaning of being ambassadors in the following phrase: "God as it were appealing through us (II Cor. 5:20)."

It is not possible to go into a lengthy biblical analysis of this term "ambassador," but it was used technically of the Roman Emperor's personal representative in the East.¹⁰⁰ "Thus, the Apostle, and by inference any evangelist (II Cor. 5:20), not merely speaks on behalf of Christ, but actually represents him and acts for him among men."¹⁰¹

Realizing the limitations of this review of the biblical roots, we can still easily recognize that the content of the concept of the phrase in persona Christi as applied to the ordained ministry can be found in the New Testament.

F. CONCLUSION

In this lengthy chapter, I have first of all reviewed five papal encyclicals of the first half of the 20th century as the major antecedents for the consideration of the ordained priesthood in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Only two of these

encyclicals (Menti Nostrae and Mediator Dei) use the phrase in persona Christi. But all five encyclicals give important background to the use of this phrase. Other phrases are used, such as "another Christ," "representative of Christ," "vice-gerent," "servant of Christ," "instrument," and "ambassador of Christ," which have a close relationship to the phrase "in the person of Christ." In these documents, the phrase "in the person of Christ" is mainly used in the context of the act of the consecration of the Mass, but is not necessarily restricted to this context. All are clear on the distinction between the priesthood of the faithful and the ordained priesthood. Pius XII is particularly clear that the ordained priesthood does not depend on the community for its establishment.

In the study of the documents of the Council of Trent, one does not find the specific use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in relation to ordained ministry. However, three of the sections studied from the Vatican documents in chapter I of this paper make specific references to the Council of Trent decrees. The Council clearly states that all Christians do not have the same sacramental powers; that in confession the priest acts as vicar of Christ; that in the consecration Christ acts through the priest; and that the validity of orders does not depend upon the consent of magistrates or the people.

It is in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas that one finds the clearest and most expressive use of the phrase "in the person of Christ," particularly in Part III. Thomas often uses references to two verses of the II Letter to the Corinthians (II Cor. 2:10 and 5:20). There is a controversy over the Vulgate translation of the first text. However, the spirit of the Scriptures, particularly the

writings of Paul, give credence to the use of this phrase by Thomas. The use of the phrase in Part III, Question 8, is related to participation in the headship of Christ. Pius XII refers to II, Q. 22, A. 4 in his encyclical Mediator Dei. This states that the New-Law priest acts in the person of Christ and gives a reference to II Cor. 2:10, dealing with forgiveness. In Part III, Qs. 78, 82, and 83, Thomas uses the phrase in persona Christi specifically in relation to the priest in the act of consecration, which is appropriate in this section which deals with the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is interesting to note, however, that the Vatican II document sections considered in this study made no reference to the work of Thomas.

In the section on patristic resources, ten references were studied. Six of them were found in a textual reference in Lumen Gentium 21. Cyprian speaks of the priest performing "in the place of Christ." John Chrysostom speaks of the priest as performing a symbol. St. Ambrose speaks of the priest as one who makes Christ visible. Ambrosiaster refers to priests as vicars of Christ. Theodore of Mopsuestia pictures the Priest as the one who represents the image of Christ. For Hesychius of Jerusalem, the priest bears the figure of Christ. In the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop represents the mind of Christ and presides in the place of God. In the Didache, the apostles are to be received as the Lord. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of the priest in sin daring to utter in the person of Christ the words of consecration. The Latin word used in Pseudo-Dionysius was christiformiter, not in persona Christi. However, it is clear from these texts, although they do not use the phrase directly, that the ordained minister is related in a special

way to Christ and represents Christ in his actions.

The final section in this chapter reviews the biblical roots for the use of this phrase. Once again, although the reference to II Cor. 2:10 used by Thomas is brought into question, the role of the apostles and appointed ministers was always one of representing Christ.

The study of this chapter moved from the more recent to the deeper roots of the tradition. This was done intentionally to use the process of tracing back the use of the phrase, rather than starting from the biblical roots. To ground this phrase, as used in the Vatican II Documents, in the tradition of the church, this reverse process was necessary, although at times it may have seemed confusing.

After looking at the use of this phrase in persona Christi in official Church resources before the development of the documents of the Vatican Council II, and realizing that the study is limited, we move now into an analysis of the meaning of the phrase and its significance for the theology of ordained priesthood.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

¹Pope John XXIII, "Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia" in The Popes and the Priesthood: A Symposium of Seven Papal Documents, ed. Grail (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1953) pp. 137 and 150.

²Pope Pius XII, "Menti Nostrae" in The Popes and the Priesthood: A Symposium of Seven Papal Documents, ed. Grail (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1953), n. 2, p. 78.

³Ibid., n. 7, p. 79.

⁴Ibid., n. 12ff, p. 80.

⁵Ibid., n. 31, p. 86.

⁶Ibid., n. 59, p. 95.

⁷Pope Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, ed. Claudia Carlen IHM (New York: McGrath Publishing Co., 1981), p. 120.

⁸Ibid., p. 122.

⁹Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴St. Robert Bellarmine, De Missa, 1, c. 27 as quoted in "Mediator Dei," Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁵St. Robert Bellarmine, Opera Omnia, Tomus Tertius, "De Missa, 2, c.4," trans. Rev. Jerome F. Thompson (Editio nova iusta Venetam anni MDCCXXI., Neapoli, C. Pedone Lauriel, ed., MDCCCLXXII.), p. 530.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 525.

¹⁷Pope Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, Carlen, p. 134.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁹Pope Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis Christi" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, ed. Claudia Carlen IHM (New York: McGrath Publishing Co., 1981), n. 9, p. 39.

²⁰Pope Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis Christi" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, ed. Claudia Carlen IHM (New York: McGrath Publishing Co., 1981), n. 20, p. 41.

²¹Ibid., n. 40, p. 45.

²²Gregory the Great as quoted in "Mediator Dei," ibid., p. 45.

²³Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 2, p. 865.

²⁴Pope Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" in The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, Carlen, n. 44, p. 45.

²⁵Ibid., n. 69, p. 51.

²⁶Ibid., n. 82, p. 54.

²⁷Pope Pius XI, "Ad Catholici Sacerdotii" in The Popes and the Priesthood: A Symposium of Seven Papal Documents, ed. Grail (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1953), pp. 39-41.

²⁸Ibid., p. 43.

²⁹Ibid., p. 44.

³⁰Ibid., p. 53.

³¹Pope Pius X, "Haerent Animo" in The Popes and the Priesthood: A Symposium of Seven Papal Documents, ed. Grail (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1953), p. 10.

³²Ibid., p. 11.

³³Ibid.

³⁴St. Jerome (Epist. 52, ad Nepotianum, n. 5), as quoted in Pope Pius X, "Haerent Animo," (Grail) p. 12.

³⁵Pope Pius X, "Haerent Animo," (Grail) p. 20.

³⁶Rev. J. Waterworth, The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent, (London: Burns and Oates, Ltd., 1848) pp. 10-11.

³⁷Ibid., p. 10.

³⁸Ibid., p. 55.

³⁹Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁰Trent, Session 22, Chapter 1, "Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass" in The Church Teaches, trans. Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co., 1955), pp. 291-292.

⁴¹St. Robert Bellarmine, Opera Omnia, Tomus Tertius, "De Missa, 2, c. 4," (Editio nova iusta Venetam), p. 530.

⁴²Trent, Session 22, Chapter 2, "Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass" in The Church Teaches, trans. the Jesuit Fathers (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co., 1955), p. 292.

⁴³Waterworth, Trent, op. cit., p. 171.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 172-174.

⁴⁵James A. Weisheipl, OP, Friar Thomas D'Aquino (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1974), p. 222.

⁴⁶St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Vol. 49 (3a. 7-15), "The Grace of Christ," trans. Liam G. Walsh, O.P. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1974), p. 73.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 74.

⁵⁰St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Vol. 50 (3a. 16-26), "The One Mediator," trans. Colman E. O'Neill, O.P. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 149.

⁵¹St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Vol. 56 (3a. 60-65), "The Sacraments," trans. David Bourke (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1975), p. 105.

⁵²St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, Q. 78, A. 1, (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947), Vol. 2, p. 2472.

⁵³Ibid., III, Q. 78, A. 4, p. 2476.

⁵⁴Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 1, p. 2504.

⁵⁵Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 2, Obj. 2, p. 2505.

⁵⁶Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 3, corp., p. 2505.

⁵⁷Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 5, corp., p. 2507.

⁵⁸Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 6, Obj. 2, p. 2508.

⁵⁹Ibid., III, Q. 82, A. 7, Reply obj. 3, p. 2509.

⁶⁰Ibid., III, Q. 83, A. 1, reply obj. 3, p. 2512.

⁶¹Lumen Gentium n. 21, pp. 373-374.

⁶²St. Cyprian, Letters (1-81), trans. Sister Rose Bernard Donna, C. SJ. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1964 - "The Fathers of the Church"), Letter 63, Sec. 2, p. 203.

⁶³Ibid., Letter 63, Sec. 14, p. 212.

⁶⁴Ibid., Letter 63, Sec. 14, pp. 212-213.

⁶⁵Ochoa, op. cit., p. 579.

⁶⁶Lumen Gentium n. 21, p. 374.

⁶⁷William A. Jurgens, The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1979), p. 122.

⁶⁸St. John Chrysostom, "II Tim., Hom. 4" in Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff, Vol. XIII (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 481.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 483.

⁷⁰Joannis Chrysostomi, Operum, Pars I. Homiliae in Scripturam, Classis II. Homiliae in Novum Testamentum (II ad Timotheum, ad Titum, ad Philemonem, ad Hebraeos), in Collectio Selecta SS. Ecclesiae Patrum, Tomus Octogesimus-Septimus. (Parisiis, Apud Parent-Desbarres, Editorum, MDCCCXXXVII), p. 23.

⁷¹St. John Chrysostom, Homilies, Vol. XIII (Schaff), p. 483.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Lumen Gentium n. 21, p. 374.

⁷⁴Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 1676.

⁷⁵G.W.H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 1282.

⁷⁶Cf. Berthold Altaner, Patrology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), pp. 443-444.

⁷⁷William A. Jurgens, The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. II (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1979), p. 150.

⁷⁸St. Ambrose, PL 17, trans. Rev. Jerome F. Thompson, p. 506B.

⁷⁹Theodore of Mopsuestia, Sermon 15 on the Eucharist, as quoted in Francis J. Reine, "The Eucharistic Doctrine and Liturgy of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia" (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1942), p. 59

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Hesychius Hieros, In Lev. Lib. II, 9:23: PG. 93, trans. Rev. Jerome F. Thompson, p. 894B.

⁸²Polycarp, Letter to the Philippians, n. 5, trans. Maxwell Staniworth, "Early Christian Writings: Apostolic Fathers" (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 146.

⁸³Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, trans. Maxwell Staniworth, "Early Christian Writings: Apostolic Fathers" (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 76.

⁸⁴Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians, trans. Maxwell Staniworth, "Early Christian Writings: Apostolic Fathers" (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 88.

⁸⁵Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Trallians, (Staniworth), p. 95.

⁸⁶Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans, (Staniworth), p. 121.

⁸⁷Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Romans, (Staniworth), p. 106.

⁸⁸"Didache," William A. Jurgen, The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. I (Collegetown, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1970), p. 3.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁰St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Suppl. Q. 36, Art. 5, Corp. Vol. III (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947), p. 2688.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²G.W.H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 1530.

⁹³Berthold Altaner, Patrology (New York: Herder and Herder Co., 1960), p. 605.

⁹⁴All Biblical translations are from the New American Bible unless otherwise indicated.

⁹⁵Gianfranco Nolli, ed., Biblica Sacra (Latin and Greek) (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1955), p. 555.

⁹⁴Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), Vol. VI, p. 770.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 777.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 778.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 771.

¹⁰⁰Cf. Deissman, Light from the Ancient East, as quoted in Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1950), p. 18.

¹⁰¹Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1950), p. 18.

Chapter III

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE

IN PERSONA CHRISTI

AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR A THEOLOGY OF ORDAINED PRIESTHOOD

Having reviewed the use of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the documents of Vatican II and the roots of the use of this phrase in documents before Vatican II, I now intend first to analyze its meaning and significance and then to examine its application to the theology of the ordained priesthood. In my analysis of the meaning of the phrase in persona Christi, I intend to move in the reverse manner of the previous chapter, starting from the biblical roots and returning to its use in the Vatican documents.

A. THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

As was mentioned in the biblical section of the previous chapter, there is manifest an awareness in the apostles, disciples, and Paul that their ministry is from Christ. The intent of this section, however, is not to analyze such evidence, but to study the roots of the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the Scriptural context. One way of doing this is to study the Greek and Latin words involved.

The Greek word prosopon occurs over 850 times in the Septuagint. Its most common meanings in English are "face, countenance, or front side."¹ It is used in relationship to people, animals, inanimate

objects, as well as, in an anthropomorphic way, for God whose face shines upon the Israelites (cf. Nu. 6:25). The word is also sometimes used to strengthen the prepositions upon which it depends, rather than having a specific meaning.² For example, in Proverbs 25:7, the particular phrase en prosopo is used with the meaning "before." "It is better that you be told 'Come up closer!' than that you be humbled before (underlining added) the prince."³

In the New Testament, the use of the word prosopon follows the use in the Septuagint. It is used about 76 times. Most commonly it means "face," but in some places it denotes "personal presence" or the features or appearance of someone or something. As in the Septuagint, it is used at times in combination with prepositions. It is in this sense that many Scripture scholars today tend to interpret the phrase en prosopo Christou in 2 Cor. 2:10. "Any forgiving I have done has been for your sakes and, before Christ (underlining added), to prevent Satan outwitting us."⁴ St. Jerome, in the Latin Vulgate, translates this Greek phrase as in persona Christi. It is this Vulgate translation that St. Thomas makes reference to as the Scriptural source for his use of this phrase. Modern Scriptural scholarship seems to have weakened the Scriptural ground of his usage.

Although there seems to be general agreement that the Greek word prosopon was not used in the technical or legal sense of "person" in the time of the New Testament and the primitive Church, there still remains debate about its relationship to the Latin word persona and about other aspects of its use.⁵ The word persona develops an important theological significance within the theological debates of the patristic period.

The word "Christ" is a title which Jesus never directly applies to himself within the gospel tradition, but it does appear on the lips of his disciples (Mk. 8:29; Mt. 16:16; Lk. 9:20). Its basic meaning is "the Anointed One" or the Messiah. At times it was used in the Old Testament of the anointed king of Israel. The primary meaning of the word christos or Messiah in Jesus' time seems to have been "the kingly ruler who would establish God's kingdom on earth, or who would prepare for God's own coming to rule over his Creation."⁶ Paul, after his conversion, clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the Risen Lord who has suffered and died for our salvation.

Commentaries on II Cor. 2:10 give an indication of how his verse was interpreted throughout the centuries. John Chrysostom, in his IV Homily on the Second Letter to the Corinthians, writes: "Did he for men's sake pardon? no; for on this account he added, 'in the person of Christ.' What is 'in the person of Christ?' Either he means according to (the will of) God, or unto the glory of Christ."⁷ John applies a fuller meaning than just "before" Christ.

Thomas Aquinas, in his Commentary on the II Letter to the Corinthians 2:10, specifically interprets the phrase in persona Christi as meaning "with the authority of Christ" and not on his own authority. Only Christ can forgive sins.⁸

Guilielmo Estio, a theological commentator of the 15th century, provides a description of the controversy on this passage between Greek and Latin authors, especially in relation to the phrase in persona Christi.⁹ He, along with Luther, prefer to render en prosopo Christou by the Latin in persona Christi. Philip Hughes notes this

view, but goes on to say that "the authoritarian note of such a rendering is out of harmony with the context. There is little to commend Chrysostom's hesitating suggestion that by this expression Paul means 'according to the will of God or unto the glory of Christ.' In our judgment, en prosopo Christou here is best explained as a semitism: en prosopo meaning simply 'in the presence of.'"¹⁰

We note here the controversy over this particular verse of Paul's letter. Most modern scholars seem to prefer the weaker translation.

Thomas also refers to II Cor. 5:20 in which Paul speaks of himself as an ambassador on behalf of Christ. On this verse, Hughes comments that "an ambassador acts and speaks not only on behalf of but also in the place of the sovereign from whom he has received his commission....Paul, however, is not proposing an analogy which only more or less fits the situation; what he says here is factual: Christ's messengers are really His ambassadors; God does actually entreat through them."¹¹ He grants a vicarious sense to the preposition hyper, agreeing with Chrysostom in this context that the meaning of hyper Christou means "in the place of Christ." The word for "ambassador" is acknowledged as a word used regularly for the legate of the emperor in the East.¹²

John Chrysostom comments on this passage: "Now then we are 'ambassadors for Christ,' that is instead of Christ; for we have succeeded to His function."¹³ Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on II Corinthians 5:20 follows the interpretation of John Chrysostom.¹⁴

It is not possible to give a complete analysis of the Scriptural roots of this phrase. We provide here a basic understanding of the roots of the phrase as used by Thomas and some others. It is

noteworthy that the two special Scriptural references (II Cor. 2:10 and 5:20) relate more to the forgiveness of sins than to the Eucharist.

B. THE PATRISTIC CONTEXT

The patristic references given in the documents of Vatican II for the phrase in persona Christi do not directly use the phrase in relationship to ordained ministry and the theology of Orders. Other phrases such as "in the place of Christ," "vicar of Christ," "image of Christ," and "in the figure of Christ," were used which are closely related. Because most of the Latin Scriptural commentaries after Jerome used the Vulgate, they are commentaries directly on Jerome's translation of II Cor. 2:10.

The theological focus and controversies of this early period in the life of the Church were centered on more fundamental theological issues such as the understanding of the concepts of God, Trinity and Christ. Theological treatises on Orders were rare, although there were descriptions of pastoral life and the activity of the Church with a special concern for the role of the hierarchy.

The third and fourth centuries were the time of the great theological debates and Councils of the Church relating to the Trinity. The fifth and sixth centuries were the time of the great theological debates and Councils on Christology. The Fathers of the Church and theologians of the time struggled with the use of four Greek terms (ousia, phusis, hypostasis, and prosopon) to try to come to grips with doctrinal clarity on these fundamental teachings. Generally it can be said that by the conclusion of this period, ousia referred to essence, phusis to nature, hypostasis to person and

prosopon also to person. However, throughout these four centuries, different theologians and Fathers used these words with different nuances and interpretations at different times. It is not possible to go into a full exposition of the use of these terms during this time of difficult but crucial theological debate, but one should be aware that the word prosopon was part of this theological debate and that this fact has implications for the shaping of its meaning.

St. Augustine summarizes the tension in the use of these words in De Trinitate:

They indeed also call it hypostasis, but I do not know what different meaning they wish to give to ousia and hypostasis. Certain of our writers, who discuss these questions in the Greek language, are wont to say mian ousian, tres hypostaseis, which in Latin means one essence, and three substances.

But because the usage of our language has already decided that the same thing is to be understood when we say essence, as when we say substance, we do not venture to use the formula one essence and three substances, but rather one essence or substance and three persons. Such is the way in which it is expressed by many Latin scholars, whose opinion carries great weight and who have discussed this subject, since they were unable to find a more suitable terminology for putting into words that which they understood without words....But when it is asked three what, then the great poverty from which our language suffers becomes apparent. But the formula three persons has been coined, not in order to give a complete explanation by means of it, but in order that we might not be obliged to remain silent.¹⁵

It is due to Augustine's genius that the Latin writers began to use the word persona, not for substance, but for the subsistent Trinitarian relation, and it was thereby differentiated from substance.

This struggle of terminology then continued in the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries. The Council of

Chalcedon in 451, in opposition to Eutyches and to Nestorius, declared

that the one selfsame Christ, only-begotten Son and Lord, must be acknowledged in two natures without any commingling or change or division or separation; that the distinction between the natures is in no way removed by their union but rather that the specific character of each nature is preserved and they are united in one person and one hypostasis. We declare that he is not split or divided into two persons, but that there is one selfsame only-begotten Son, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. This the prophets have taught about him from the beginning; this Jesus Christ himself taught us; this the creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.¹⁶

This Council took place in 451 after Augustine's death. However, the Christological controversies continued after the Council, with the ongoing resistance of the Monophysites. Leo I's Tome from Rome written on June 13, 449 summarizing the Christology of the West as it had developed through Tertullian (d. 224), Hilary (d. 367), Ambrose (d. 397), and especially St. Augustine (d. 430) emphasized two natures united in one person and had a great influence on the Council of Chalcedon. Here we find the clear use of persona as the equivalent of the Greek words hypostasis and prosopon.¹⁷

In the midst of the controversies and Councils, particularly in the East, seeking to clarify Christological questions, it is also important to note the contribution of Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boethius (c. 480-524), a layman of noble stock who had been educated in Greek philosophy and literature at Alexandria. He had a great impact on medieval scholarship, especially because of his translations and commentaries on some of the works of Aristotle.¹⁸ He is best known for his work De Consolatione Philosophiae which he wrote in prison before his execution in 524.

But Boethius also wrote several theological works, among them De Trinitate and Contra Eutychem. Eutyches was the founder of "an extreme and virtually Docetic form of monophysitism, teaching that the Lord's humanity was totally absorbed by His divinity."¹⁹ It is in his treatise "against Eutyches and Nestorius" written around 512 for John the Deacon that Boethius discusses the metaphysical meaning of the words natura and persona and comes to the definition of person as an "individual substance of a rational nature."²⁰ He goes on to say: "Now by this definition we Latins have described what the Greeks call hypostasis."²¹ This definition of persona developed by Boethius was adopted and used by Thomas Aquinas.²²

In this patristic period, the Fathers spoke of priests as "in the place of Christ" (St. Cyprian), "vicars of Christ" (Ambrosiaster), "the figure of the Saviour" (Hesychius of Jerusalem), "the seal of Christ" (St. Gregory Nazianzen). Severus of Antioch in a letter in the sixth century summarizes this teaching: "The priest who stands before the altar, while he plays a purely ministerial part, pronounces his words as holding the place of Christ and reproduces the rite which was accomplished when Christ instituted the sacrifice for his apostles."²³ With the changing and developing use of the word persona in the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of this time, it is not surprising that the expression in persona Christi was not clearly used for ordained ministry at this time. But it is clear from the Patristic writings that the key relationship of the ordained is to Christ.

C. THE THOMISTIC CONTEXT AND MEANING

In section C of the previous chapter, I reviewed the texts in Part III of the Summa Theologica where the phrase in persona Christi was used. Questions 8, 22, 64, and 73 to 83 were particularly considered. Thomas also uses the phrase in one of his earliest works, his Commentary on the Sentences: "For the words of the form of this sacrament are offered by the minister in persona Christi."²⁴ Thomas uses a related phrase in his section on the Sacrament of Orders in Summa Contra Gentiles: "since Christ was about to withdraw His bodily presence from the Church, it was necessary that Christ should establish other ministers in His place who would dispense the sacraments to the faithful."²⁵

Common today is the impression that St. Thomas was strongly influenced by the writings of Aristotle. However, no reading of Thomas can miss his constant references to the Sacred Scripture and to the Fathers of the Church as the main sources of authority for his opinions. Boethius and Pseudo-Dionysius also had a strong influence on much of his writing. His Scriptural commentaries are less well known, but give an insight into his understanding of the Biblical texts which he used in his theological arguments. Reference has already been made to his Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul, particularly the commentary on the II Letter to the Corinthians, in which he gives his interpretation of the two key biblical texts: II Cor. 2:10 and 5:20.

In analyzing the use of in persona Christi in the writings of Thomas, I intend to approach the issue from three different perspectives. The first approach will study the way he understands and uses II Cor. 2:10 and 5:20, particularly in the Summa Theologica.

The second approach will look at the way in which Thomas uses the words "person" and "Christ." The third approach will study the philosophical implications of instrumental causality for understanding the meaning of in persona Christi.

1. Thomas's Use of II Cor. 2:10 and 5:20.

Thomas's exposition on all the Letters of Paul is found in Volume XIII of the Omnia Opera.²⁶ There is debate about the time, the place and the extent to which some of these commentaries may be attributed to Thomas. But they are helpful in understanding how Thomas understood the texts which he used as arguments in his theological writings.

In his Prologue to his commentary on II Corinthians, Thomas writes that this letter is speaking directly about the ministers of the sacraments. Christ instituted the sacraments, but the Apostles and their successors dispense them under Christ's authority. Thomas comments on II Cor. 2:10 in a rather detailed way. Specifically in relation to the phrase in persona Christi, Thomas interprets the meaning as referring to the auctoritas of Christ by which Paul was carrying out the forgiveness of sin. Paul was not doing this by his own authority, but Christ was forgiving sins by His proper authority through His designated minister. Forgiveness of sins is always in persona Christi, by the authority of Christ, who alone can forgive.²⁷

The word auctoritas is used with a variety of meanings in Thomas - source; authorship; the statement of an important person or a passage from a distinguished book; authority or weight power or might.²⁸

Auctoritas in the sense of source in God signifies the "principle of origin."²⁹ The phrase per auctoritatem means "in the manner of

human nature. "Now God signifies one having the Godhead, and man signifies one having manhood. Yet one having manhood is differently signified by the word 'man' and by the word 'Jesus' or 'Peter.' For this word 'man' implies one having manhood indistinctly, even as the word 'God' implies indistinctly one having the Godhead: but the word 'Peter' or 'Jesus' implies one having manhood distinctly, i.e. with its determinate individual properties, as 'Son of God' implies one having the Godhead under a determinate personal property."⁴² Here we find also a clarification of how the term Christ is used by Thomas. He uses this title for the Son of God made Man in preference to the name Jesus.

In Part III, question 37, Thomas discusses the circumcision of Christ, and other legal observances. He quotes Luke 2:21 about the naming of Jesus at the circumcision. He explains that "a name should answer to the nature of a thing" ⁴³ and that Christ was appropriately named Jesus for all were to be saved through him.⁴⁴ It seems from these quotations that Thomas identified the title "Christ" more with the fullness of the person of the Son of God with an emphasis on divinity and the name "Jesus" more with the man Christ who mediates salvation.⁴⁵

Throughout the Summa Theologica, Thomas much more frequently and consistently uses the title "Christ" to identify the Person of the Son of God made man than the name Jesus.⁴⁶ He uses the term "person" within the philosophical perspective of Boethius with some nuances. His understanding of "in the person of Christ" seems clearly to be "by the authority of Christ." Having studied the use of "person" and "Christ" by Thomas, we will move into the third approach to Thomas

relating to the study of the phrase in persona Christi - the philosophical implications of instrumental causality.

3. Philosophical Implications of Instrumental Causality.

In order to study the philosophical implications of instrumental causality in Thomas in relation to the phrase in persona Christi, I will first review some of the many contexts in which Thomas applies his understanding of instrumental causality to the minister of the sacraments, particularly the ordained minister. Then I will briefly look at the theory of causality used by Thomas, with a particular concern for his understanding of principal and instrumental causes. Finally I will show the implications of the relationship between principal and instrumental causes to the phrase in persona Christi.

In order to understand instrumental causality in relation to the minister acting in persona Christi, I will first show how the terminology develops in the Summa Contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologica from the discussion of the Incarnation to the discussion of the cause of grace through the Sacraments to the role of the minister, particularly the ordained minister in the celebration of the Sacraments.

In the Summa Contra Gentiles, in the chapter on how to understand the Incarnation of the Son of God, Thomas states that "nothing prevents some things not united in nature from being united in hypostasis or person."⁴⁷ After describing some heretical positions and stating that some of the Fathers of the Church saw the human nature in Christ as a kind of organ of divinity, Thomas goes on to explain the relationship of the human nature to Christ: "The human nature in Christ is assumed with the result that instrumentally He

performs the things which are the proper operation of God alone: to wash away sins, for example, to enlighten minds by grace, to lead into the perfection of eternal life. The human nature of Christ, then, is compared to God as a proper and conjoined instrument is compared, as the hand is compared to the soul."⁴⁸ The human nature of Jesus is seen as an instrument of the Word of God, that through which God acts, conjoined in one person of Christ.

In Chapter 56 on "The Necessity of the Sacraments," Thomas speaks of the need for visible signs by which the salvific activity of Christ is handed on to the people in and through the Church. Because instruments must be proportioned to their first cause, they cannot operate on their own. The death of Christ is the first cause of salvation. Visible sacramental signs operate as instruments of divine power on behalf of spiritual salvation. "For visible things of this kind are the instruments, so to say, of a God who was made flesh and suffered. Now, an instrument does not operate by the power of its nature, but by the power of its principal agent who puts it into operation. Thus, also, then, do visible things of this kind work out a spiritual salvation - not by a property of their own nature, but by Christ's institution and from the latter they receive their instrumental power."⁴⁹

In Chapter 74 on "The Sacrament of Order," Thomas reaffirms his previous statements that a spiritual grace is conferred in all the sacraments in a mystery of visible things. Because every action needs to be proportioned to its agent, the sacraments "must be dispensed by visible men who have spiritual power."⁵⁰ The institution and power of the sacraments has its beginning in Christ. As Christ was about to

withdraw His bodily presence from the Church, He established other ministers in His place who would dispense the sacraments. They became "ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1)." "But a minister is compared to his lord as an instrument to its principal agent, for, as an instrument is moved by the agent for making something; so the minister is moved by his lord's command to accomplish something. Of course, the instrument must be proportionate to the agent."⁵¹ Thomas then applies this principle of conformity between the principal agent and the instrument to the relation between Himself and His ministers. "But Christ, as the Lord, by His very own authority and power wrought our salvation, in that He was God and man: so far as He was man, in order to suffer for our redemption; and, so far as He was God, to make His suffering salutary for us. Therefore, the ministers of Christ must not only be men, but must participate somehow in His divinity through some spiritual power, for an instrument shares in the power of its principal agent."⁵²

Thomas does not specifically use the phrase in persona Christi directly for the minister in Summa Contra Gentiles, but he comes very close to using this phrase in Chapter 77: "The ministers of the Church do not perform the sacraments in their own power, but in the power of Christ, of whom John (1:33) says: 'He it is that baptizeth.' Hence, also, ministers are said to act as instruments, for a minister is an 'animate tool.'⁵³

Having studied the development of instrumentality in Summa Contra Gentiles, we can see the same development of the sense of instrumentality in relation to the human nature of Christ, the sacraments and the ordained minister in the Summa Theologica. In

Part III, which begins with the study of the Incarnation, Thomas states that the human nature is united to the Word, not in the divine nature, but in the Person of the Word.⁵⁴ Following the lead of Damascene, he states that "the humanity of Christ is the instrument of the Godhead - not, indeed, an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon; but an instrument animated by a rational soul, which is so acted upon as to act."⁵⁵ In a later question, Thomas continues: "the Divine Nature makes use of the operation of the human nature, as of the operation of its instrument; and in the same way the human nature shares in the operation of the Divine Nature, as an instrument shares in the operation of the principal agent."⁵⁶ The instrumentality of the human nature of Christ in the person of Christ is brought up in many different places in this section of the Summa Theologica.

In his treatise on the Sacraments in Part III, Question 62, Thomas speaks of the sacraments of the New Law as causing grace in some way.⁵⁷ There are two types of efficient causes: principal and instrumental. Only God can cause grace as principal cause. The sacraments operate as instrumental causes. He explains that an instrument can operate in two ways. "One is instrumental, in respect of which it works not by its own power, but by the power of the principal agent: the other is its proper action, which belongs to it in respect of its proper form."⁵⁸ He uses the example of Baptism in which the water cleanses the body by its proper action and cleanses the soul as the instrument of Divine Power. Thomas refers to the common expression that the sacraments as instrumental causes "effect what they signify."⁵⁹ The sacraments receive spiritual power from Christ to be instruments of grace.

It is in Part III, question 64, on the Causes of the Sacraments, that Thomas talks about the instrumental role of the Minister of the Sacraments. He affirms that God alone works the interior sacramental effect as principal agent, but the minister as instrument through the power of the principal agent can also have an interior sacramental effect.⁶⁰ Christ produces the inward sacramental effect as God and as man.⁶¹ However, "the ministers of the Church do not by their own power cleanse from sin those who approach the sacraments, nor do they confer grace on them: it is Christ Who does this by His own power while He employs them as instruments. Consequently, those who approach the sacraments receive an effect whereby they are enlivened not to the ministers but to Christ."⁶²

It is in Part III, question 78, that Thomas brings together the notion of instrumentality and the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the context of discussing the form of the Eucharist. The role of the "minister of Christ" is implied in this quotation rather than explicitly referred to. "For since these words (of consecration) are uttered in the person of Christ, it is from His command that they receive their instrumental power from Him, just as His other deeds and sayings derive their salutary power instrumentally."

From this context, set by only a limited number of references to St. Thomas, we can see how important the notion of instrumental causality is to understand the role of Christ, the Sacraments, and the ordained minister.

Causality is an important concept in Thomas' theological writing. It is not possible to give a complete treatment of Thomas' understanding of causality, but only to give a brief background on how

Thomas uses causality, particularly in the Summa Theologica, with a special attention to the notions of principal and instrumental causality.

In a general sense, causa for Thomas means "that which contributes in a positive manner to the existence of another."⁶⁴ There are many different ways in which Thomas approaches the concept of causa. He uses the language of cause and effect as crucial to the question of whether it can be demonstrated that God exists and speaks of the five ways to prove the existence of God, the second of which is from the nature of the efficient cause.⁶⁵ He comes to the conclusion that "it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God."⁶⁶ The idea of cause and effect also comes up in his discussion of goodness,⁶⁷ the knowledge of God as cause of things,⁶⁸ and the will of God as cause of things.⁶⁹ God is considered the First Cause of all creation.

Thomas later states that although God works sufficiently as the First Agent or Cause, this does not make the operation of secondary agents superfluous. God alone is not the immediate cause of all that is done.⁷⁰

The concept of principal and instrumental agents or causes is described in the Summa. "The principal agent is that which acts through its form, and sometimes it does so through some instrument that acts by virtue not of its own form, but of the principal agent, and does no more than execute the action."⁷¹ In his discussion of grace, Thomas clearly states the distinction between an instrumental and principal cause: "Now an instrument does not bring forth the action of the principal agent by its own power, but in virtue of the

principal agent."⁷² He goes on to apply this statement to the humanity of Christ and grace in the Sacraments: "As in the person of Christ the humanity causes our salvation by grace, the Divine power being the principal agent, so likewise in the sacraments of the new Law, which are derived from Christ, grace is instrumentally caused by the sacraments, and principally by the power of the Holy Ghost working in the sacraments."⁷³

It is in his treatise on the Sacraments that Thomas succinctly states that an efficient cause can be considered in a twofold way, principal and instrumental: "The principal cause works by the power of its form, to which form the effect is likened; just as fire by its own heat makes something hot. In this way none but God can cause grace; since grace is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature... But the instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent: for instance, the couch is not like the axe, but like the art which is in the craftsman's mind. And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace."⁷⁴

A little later, Thomas connects the concept of the instrumental cause with the minister of the Sacrament: "There are two ways of producing an effect; first, as a principal agent; secondly, as an instrument. In the former way the interior sacramental effect is the work of God alone... In the second way, however, the interior sacramental effect can be the work of man, in so far as he works as a minister. For a minister is of the nature of an instrument, since the action of both is applied to something extrinsic, while the interior

effect is produced through the power of the principal agent, which is God."⁷⁵ The word "minister" in the works of Thomas has the meaning of "one who acts under the authority of another and carries out executive duties as the representative of such authority."⁷⁶

In dealing with the question of evil ministers of the Sacraments, Thomas states that "the ministers of the Church do not by their own power cleanse from sin those who approach the sacraments, nor do they confer grace on them; it is Christ Who does this by His own power while He employs them as instruments. Consequently, those who approach the sacraments receive an effect whereby they are enlivened not to the ministers, but to Christ."⁷⁷

Although the concept of instrumental causality is applied to several different situations and contexts in the theology of Thomas, our particular interest is how it pertains to Thomas' understanding of ordained ministry in persona Christi. It was to the person of the Word that human nature was conjoined to become the person of Christ, true God and true man. It is Christ as God through the instrumentality of his human nature that is the principal cause of all grace and salvation. "Divine wisdom, therefore, fittingly provides man with means of salvation, in the shape of corporeal and sensible signs that are called sacraments."⁷⁸ These sacraments are instituted by Christ for the conferring of grace, but as instrumental causes which are moved by the principal cause, God. Within the concept of instrumental causes, he distinguishes between those which are united and those which are separated. The separated instrument is said to be moved by the united instrument as a stick is moved by the hand. Christ's humanity is the united instrument and the sacrament is

considered as the separated instrument.⁷⁷ The humanity of Christ as an instrument united to the Godhead in unity of person, has a certain headship and efficiency in regard to extrinsic instruments, which are the ministers of the Church and the sacraments themselves.⁸⁰ It is Christ who acts by His own power in the sacraments while He employs the ministers as instruments. Christ works in the sacraments both through wicked men as lifeless instruments, as well as through good men as living instruments.⁸¹ It belongs to men, but not to angels to dispense the sacraments. Only men (homines) can be ordained ministers for the sacraments.⁸² The minister of the Sacraments is not an inanimate instrument which has no intention regarding the effect, but is an animate instrument which "in a sense moves itself, in so far as by his will he moves his bodily members to act. Consequently, his intention is required, whereby he subjects himself to the principal agent; that is, it is necessary that he intend to do that which Christ and the church do."⁸³ In six of the seven Sacraments, the form of the sacraments is spoken in the person of the minister by way of exercising an act (Baptism, Confirmation and Penance) giving a command (Holy Orders), or by way of entreating (Anointing). But in the Eucharist, "the form of this sacrament is pronounced as if Christ were speaking in person, so that it is given to be understood that the minister does nothing in perfecting this Sacrament, except to pronounce the words of Christ."⁸⁴ It is in his treatment of the sacrament of the Eucharist that the phrase in persona Christi is most applied by Thomas to the priest.⁸⁵

Thomas never completed the Summa Theologica and did not get to the Sacrament of Orders in this his final work. However, in writing on the

priesthood of Christ, he states that "Christ is the fountain-head of the entire priesthood; for the priest of the Old Law was a figure of Him; while the priest of the New Law works in His person according to 2 Cor. ii.10."⁶⁶

In his chapter on the sacrament of Orders in the Summa Contra Gentiles, Thomas states that "the minister is compared to his lord as an instrument to its principal agent... Of course, the instrument must be proportionate to the agent. Hence, the ministers of Christ must be in conformity with Him. But Christ, as the Lord, by His very own authority and power wrought our salvation, in that He was God and man: so far as He was man, in order to suffer for our redemption; and, so far as He was God, to make His suffering salutary for us. Therefore, the ministers of Christ must not only be men, but must participate somehow in His divinity through some spiritual power, for an instrument shares in the power of its principal agent."⁶⁷

To act in persona Christi, the priest as ordained minister of the Lord is the animate and intentional instrument through which the principal cause or agent, God, acting in the Word, through the instrument of His human nature which has saved through the passion, is made present to others through the sacraments and principally through the Eucharist.

John F. Gallagher, C. M., in his study of sacramental efficiency entitled "Significando Causant,"⁶⁸ provides a detailed analysis of Thomas' explanation of the causality of grace through the sacraments which helps to explain how the ordained minister acts as instrumental cause in persona Christi. He first reviews the Scriptures and the Fathers and finds that both are clear that the symbolic rites or

sacraments bring about the reality they signify - that they are efficacious. But there is no clear explanation of sacramental efficacy - of how the effect is brought about. In studying the magisterial statements, Gallagher finds that they all speak of the sacraments as efficacious rites, but that there is no clear statement on efficient causality of grace. The Council of Florence dealt with the sacraments in its decree for the Armenians (November 22, 1439). Here, following St. Thomas' opusculum De Articulis Fidei et Ecclesiae Sacramentis, the Council explained that "the sacraments of the Old Law did not cause grace but were only a figure of the grace that was to be given through the Passion of Christ; but our sacraments both contain grace and confer it on those who receive the sacrament worthily."⁸⁷ In speaking of the Eucharist, the Council document continues: "the form of the sacrament is the words of the Savior with which he effected this Sacrament; for the priest effects this sacrament by speaking in the person of Christ."⁸⁸ This is the only direct conciliar use of the phrase in persona Christi until Vatican II. Instrumental causality is indicated here both of the minister and the words of consecration. The Council of Trent states that the sacraments "confer" grace, but did not want to try to settle the question of causality in the sacraments. Among the early scholastics, Gallagher finds two trends. One of these sees the real power in the sacramental rites to cause grace under the primary causality of God. The other approach sees in the sacraments no real power to cause grace or a disposition for grace, but only the direct action of God.

Gallagher finds an evolution in the thought of Thomas from his earlier works to the Summa Theologica. There is a move from

dispositive causality to a perfective approach; a movement from seeing the sacraments as instruments which only prepare for the action of God in grace, to seeing them as instruments which cause grace, with God as the principal cause, but the sacraments as real efficient causes.

Studying the theologians after Thomas, Gallagher finds in Cajetan (1493) the first certain exposition of efficient causality as the opinion of St. Thomas.⁹¹ Cajetan shows that Thomas affirms that the sacraments instrumentally cause grace itself. Christ uses the instrumentation of the minister, words and elements, and moves them as principal cause to an effect which is beyond their own proper power which is grace. Cajetan's view of efficient instrumental causality of grace in the sacraments became the common theological position.

Gallagher then seeks to work out more explicitly what Thomas means in saying that the sacraments significando causant. He concludes that "the sacrament is an act of God, using the humanity of Christ as instrument. The human minister acts merely as separated instrument. Thus in conferring the sacramental rite, his imperium, of itself incapable of producing the effect of the sacrament, is elevated and used as instrument by Christ. Once elevated instrumentally, that imperium is capable of causing an effect beyond the power of its own form, an effect assimilated to the principal cause. The principal cause being God, the effect, supernatural grace, is proportioned to the divine power."⁹² It is the intention or the imperium of the minister which places the minister "in active contact with Christ the principal cause; and it further determines the signification of the

rite."⁷³ He concludes his treatise by stating that "built upon the imperium of the minister, our solution shows how the sacraments, ecclesiastical actions, do not merely cause and signify; do not merely cause what they signify; but in the very action of signifying, they cause - significando causant.

Although Gallagher's study does not directly concern itself with the phrase in persona Christi, it does shed helpful light on Thomas' notion of instrumental causality and the essential role of the minister in the causing of grace through the sacraments. God is the principal cause of all grace through the redeeming action of Christ. Christ continues to act in and through the Church, his Body of which he is the head. He has chosen some who are conformed to Him through the power of order by which they become "habitual instruments of the redemption of Christ."⁷⁴ "The instrument must be conformed to the principal cause, and we have seen that priestly character conforms the members of the hierarchy to Christ the priest, as instruments in His words of sanctification. These men can now place valid sacramental sign-actions."⁷⁵ By ordination, the priest is in the state of instrumentality. This instrumentality is only realized in an actual instrumental or sacramental act. It is through the intention of the priest that a connection is placed between the instrument and the principal cause and that the signification of the rite is determined. This distinction indicates that the priest acts in a general sense in the person of Christ through his ordination as an habitual instrument of redemption and in a more specific sense when he acts in persona Christi in relation to the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

In summing up this lengthy analysis of Thomas' use of the phrase, we can say that his use of Scripture in relation to the phrase in persona Christi shows that he tended to understand this phrase in terms of "authority" and "representation." Thomas consistently uses the word persona with the meaning of Boethius as an "individual substance of a rational nature." He seems to use the word persona as a noun rather than as part of the preposition. His consistent use of the name "Christ" over that of Jesus shows His strong emphasis on the Divine Word assuming the human nature. Thomas seems to have a stronger sense of the identification of the Ordained with Christ than some modern Scriptural scholars would accept, especially in relation to the phrase in persona Christi. Although the philosophical concepts of causality do not always seem to be directly linked with his use of the phrase in persona Christi, it seems clear that the understanding of efficient instrumental causality is important if one is to grasp the deeper implications of the phrase in persona Christi for Thomas, as it related to the ordained minister or priest.

D. THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

As stated in the section on the Council of Trent in Chapter II, there is no direct use of the phrase in persona Christi in the documents of Trent. The Decree on the Reunion of the Armenian Church at the Council of Florence (1439), which followed quite faithfully St. Thomas' section on the sacraments in "De Articulis Fidei et Ecclesiae Sacramentis," reads as follows: "The form of the sacrament is the words of the Savior with which he effected this sacrament; for the priest effects this sacrament by speaking in the person of Christ."⁹⁷ Trent for some reason did not see fit to use this

terminology. In light of the conflicts of the time, it affirmed that Holy Orders imprints a character without defining what the character was. There has been much theological discussion about the concept of "character" and the sacraments. Thomas states that "the sacramental character is specially the character of Christ, to Whose character the faithful are likened by reason of the sacramental characters, which are nothing else than certain participations of Christ's Priesthood, flowing from Christ Himself."⁷⁹ Thomas also sees "character" as signifying "a certain spiritual power ordained unto things pertaining to the Divine worship."⁷⁹ This spiritual power is either active or passive. He tends to identify passive power with the "character" received in Baptism and Confirmation and active power with the "character" of Orders. The language of "character" was not emphasized as strongly in the documents of Vatican II as the concept of "consecration." The relationship between the doctrinal concept of orders and the conciliar formula in persona Christi remains unclear.

The Fathers at Trent emphasized that there was truly a visible and external priesthood in the New Testament and that priests had the power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of the Lord and remitting sin. They did not seem to need to emphasize that this is done "in the person of Christ" as the Council Fathers of Vatican II did.

Trent emphasized that Holy Orders is truly a sacrament instituted by Christ and not a human invention. In a different fashion, but as clearly, the documents of Vatican II grounded the priesthood of the ordained in the priesthood of Christ and more clearly related it in service to the priesthood of the faithful.

Trent speaks of Christ leaving priests as His own vicars in relation to the forgiveness of sins. A vicar is one who acts on behalf of another or represents another. It is a term used in one of the patristic references to the phrase in persona Christi.

The Council of Trent also speaks of the power of the priest to consecrate and forgive. It is not a commission by the community to preach. Thomas speaks of the twofold aspect of spiritual power as sacramental and jurisdictional, the first coming through a consecration and the second coming through human appointment. The Vatican II documents reaffirm that, in the person of Christ, the ordained minister as bishop or priest consecrates and forgives, shepherds and teaches. They do not emphasize the separation of the spiritual powers. They place the priest within the community of the faithful as servant, but as receiving his authorization in and through Christ and the Church.

The documents of the Second Vatican Council are faithful to the teaching of Trent, but integrate that teaching in a clearer way in the total theological perspective of the Church. Each of the councils was responding to the needs of its time in fidelity to the Scriptures and Magisterial development.

E. THE PRE-VATICAN II ENCYCLICALS OF PIUS XII, PIUS XI, AND PIUS X .

In reviewing the five papal encyclicals that were studied in Chapter II, it is clear that the phrase in persona Christi was not extensively used in relation to ordained ministry. Pope John XXIII, in his more pastoral meditation on priestly life on the 100th anniversary of the death of St. Jean Marie Vianney, did not use the phrase, although the Vatican Documents did use the phrase in pastoral sections of the documents as well as in the more theological sections.

Pius XII, in his strong theological style, uses the phrase in persona Christi once in his encyclical Menti Nostrae. He uses the phrase specifically in reference to the priest speaking the words of consecration in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The phrase is placed in quotation marks without any reference. It clearly is a reflection of the use of the phrase in Thomas' Summa Theologica III, q. 73-83. Thomas, in this section, uses the phrase without references, as Pius XII does. Pius XII also uses phrases like "another Christ" and "as it were, a living image of our Savior," in a mix of theological and spiritual ways. He does connect these two descriptive phrases with the character received in ordination. The phrases connote an inner quality, rather than a function. The Vatican II documents usually use the phrase "acting in the person of Christ." They do not use the phrase "another Christ."

It is Pius XII's encyclical Mediator Dei which, among the five papal encyclicals, seems to have had the most impact on the theology of the ordained priesthood in the documents of Vatican II. Two references were made to it in Lumen Gentium.¹⁰⁰ It is only in this encyclical that references are given to earlier sources to which the use of the phrase in persona Christi can be traced directly. Reference is made to the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas and then to a homily of St. John Chrysostom. Although Mediator Dei is focused on the Sacred Liturgy and although section 69 is speaking of the priest as the minister in worship, the language has a greater sense of openness about it. The priest has the "power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very person."¹⁰¹

Later on in this encyclical, Pius XII makes a reference to St. Robert Bellarmine's use of the phrase in persona Christi. Bellarmine's references are related to the words of consecration and are strongly influenced by Thomas Aquinas. Pius XII makes it very clear that the priest acts as the minister of Christ, and not of the people, at the consecration. The people do not act "in the person of Christ."

Pius XII's third encyclical studied here, Mystici Corporis Christi, centers in on all the faithful as the Body of Christ. It develops the priesthood of the faithful, speaks of the headship of Christ in the Church, but says very little about the ordained. It does not use the term "in the person of Christ," but it had a strong influence on setting the context of the priesthood of the faithful and the theology of the Church which was developed at Vatican II.

Pius XI does not use the phrase in persona Christi in his encyclical Ad Catholici Sacerdotii. He does speak of the priest as "the minister of Christ," as "an instrument in the hands of the Redeemer," as "another Christ." He speaks of offering the victim "in the name of Christ." The priest is to be the "ambassador for Christ." Pius X uses the phrase "act the part of Christ" in his Apostolic Exhortation Haerent Animo. It is interesting to note that neither of these two Popes, writing after Trent, used this theological formula.

No real developments or theological clarifications seem to develop from these encyclicals in relation to the phrase in persona Christi.

F. THE USE OF IN PERSONA CHRISTI IN THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II.

Having analyzed the meaning of the use of the phrase in persona

Christi in Scripture, the Fathers, the writings of Thomas Aquinas, especially the Summa Theologica, in Trent, and in some of the encyclicals of the Popes in this twentieth century, we return to the use of this phrase in the documents of Vatican II. First of all, I will look at the use of the words "person" and "Christ" within the context of the phrase as used in the documents of Vatican II. Then I will review how this phrase is applied to the ordained priesthood in the documents. Finally I will make some comments on the significance of the use of the phrase.

It is not possible to do a complete review and study of the use of the word persona in the Vatican documents. The word is used 148 times in the Latin texts of the Vatican Documents.¹⁰² It is used most often in Gaudium et Spes and Dignitatis Humanae. It is not surprising to see the word most used in these documents on "The Church in the Modern World" and the "Declaration on Religious Liberty." The word is used eight times in Lumen Gentium, with five out of the eight uses connected to the phrase in persona Christi. It is used five times in Presbyterorum Ordinis, with two of the five related to in persona Christi. It is used six times in Sacrosanctum Concilium, once in reference to in persona Christi.

Reference has already been made to the different ways in which persona has been used in Scripture and to the development of the word as it was used by the Fathers of the Church in the Trinitarian and Christological debates. The definition of persona by Boethius was, with some refinement, developed and used by Thomas Aquinas. This ontological definition of persona as used by Thomas continued to have

a strong influence upon theological developments within the Catholic tradition. Scripturally, Thomas interprets the Vulgate phrase in persona Christi in II Cor. 2:10 as indicating that the forgiveness is by the auctoritas Christi, with Christ as the author or source of this particular action. Philosophically, Thomas interprets this phrase in terms of efficient instrumental causality. Christ is the principal cause of the sacraments in his divinity. Christ's human nature, the minister, the matter and words are instrumental causes of God's saving grace. Thomas theologially applies the classical and ontological definition of the person acting through instrumental causes to describe how the auctoritas Christi operates in the sacramental context.

In studying the use of the phrase in persona Christi in the documents of Vatican II, there is no specific reference to the works of St. Thomas. But upon studying the other references given there, it is clear that the Vatican II Documents are building on the foundation laid by St. Thomas. Perhaps the tension involved in choosing between Thomas and more modern philosophers, or the problems raised by Thomas' use of II Cor. 2:10, or a desire to make more use of the Fathers, or a combination of some or all of these, persuaded the Council Fathers of Vatican II not to rely specifically upon St. Thomas to warrant the use of the phrase in persona Christi.

There has been a controversy over the etymological roots of the word persona. The use of the word in the early theological controversies differed between the East and West and between various theologians in either group. Although the scholastic tradition rather consistently followed the definition of Boethius and Aquinas, the word

"person" is defined in a great variety of ways in modern philosophy.¹⁰³ Modern philosophers treat the word more in its empiriological meaning of personality and consciousness than in its ontological meaning. It would be difficult to say that the modern use of the word persona has no bearing on the conciliar understanding of the phrase in persona Christi, although it seems clear that the theological and ontological sense of the word as used in Thomas predominates.

In the Council documents, there is a strong preference for the use of the name "Christ." It is used 884 times in the official Latin text.¹⁰⁴ The name "Jesus" is used 118 times¹⁰⁵ and many of these times it is combined with "Christ" or "Lord." There is a tendency as found with Thomas to use the name "Jesus" for the action of the human nature of the Word. "Christ" is more clearly used as the appropriate title for the Risen Lord, Son of God and Son of Man.

Having looked at the individual words of this particular phrase, we will study the way that the phrase is applied to the ordained priesthood in the ten different sections of Lumen Gentium, Presbyterorum Ordinis, and Sacrosanctum Concilium.

First of all, this particular theological phrase which usually relies upon Thomas Aquinas as the authority for its regular theological use, is clearly only used of the ordained priest/bishop in these Vatican documents. It is a phrase which tries to clarify the distinction and the relatedness between the priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood. However, the way in which this phrase is applied theologically to ministerial priesthood within the documents varies.

The phrase is used five times in Lumen Gentium. In section 5, the kingdom of God is said to be revealed principally "in the person of Christ himself (in ipsa Persona Christi)."¹⁰⁶ Initially it seems that the text refers only to the historical activity of Jesus, but a study of the text in different languages and in its context will show that it includes the ongoing revelation of the kingdom through the glorified Christ. No specific reference is made in this passage to the ordained ministry, but one can see here a foundational context for understanding the ministry of the ordained. They are to be the outward sign of the ongoing presence of the historical and glorified person of Christ. The modifying phrases which follow clarify who this person of Christ is. He is the "Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45).'"¹⁰⁷ This clearly indicates who the person is and how the person is to act who is called to be one who "acts in the person of Christ." How this happens is part of the mystery of the Church in Christ.

In the second chapter of Lumen Gentium on "The People of God," after affirming the priesthood of all the faithful or the common priesthood, the ministerial priesthood is described as forming and ruling the priestly people by its sacred power and effecting the eucharistic sacrifice "in the person of Christ."¹⁰⁸ The phrase potestas sacra is described as that which priests exercise personally in the name of Christ.¹⁰⁹ It is also described as a participation in the authority of Christ.¹¹⁰ The potestas sacra is that which enables the priest to form and rule the priestly people. The phrase in persona Christi here is only applied to the Eucharistic sacrifice.

This follows the lead of Pius XII in Mediator Dei which would connect with the Eucharistic context in Thomas Aquinas. There seems to be a strong connection between the two phrases potestas sacra and in persona Christi, but they are not identified in this context.

The third chapter of Lumen Gentium is on the Hierarchy of the Church. Sections 18 through 27 speak of the role of the Bishop. Section 28 treats of the ministry of the ordained presbyter. Section 21 affirms that "by means of the imposition of hands and the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is so conferred, and the sacred character so impressed, that bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person (in Eius persona agant)."¹²² This carefully worded sentence is rich with meaning and implications. The sentence distinguishes between the sacramental grace and sacred character conferred and impressed by the ordination and the action which is to be the response to them. In this particular case, the bishop acts in Eius persona when he sustains the teaching, shepherding and sacrificial roles of Christ in an eminent and visible way. In Eius persona is not identified with the grace or character of the sacrament, but with the visible carrying out of the three munera of Christ. All the ministerial activity of the bishop/priest is done in Eius persona. The application of the phrase in this context is used in an expanded sacramental way. The use here is in contrast to, but certainly not in contradiction of, the use of the phrase in section 10 which is specifically Eucharistic. The expanded use of the phrase is appropriate to the patristic texts which are mentioned in the footnote. They include the sacramental and

eucharistic context as well as the other activities of the ordained priest.

The fourth use of the phrase in Lumen Gentium comes in section 28 which considers the ordained priests "of the second rank" who are associated directly with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity. They, too, are consecrated to preach the gospel, shepherd the faithful, and celebrate worship as true priests of the New Testament. They share in all three of the munera. But it is in the Eucharist where they exercise "in a supreme degree their sacred functions" and are "acting in the person of Christ."¹¹² The Council Fathers here make a specific reference to the Council of Trent and to Pius XII's encyclical Mediator Dei.¹¹³ The priest acts in the fullest possible way "in the person of Christ" in the context of the Eucharist. He consecrates "in the person of Christ" and offers in union with the prayers of the faithful. The instrumental nature of the role of the priest seems to be expressed in this context. Trent emphasizes that Christ acts through the priest.

The fourth chapter of Lumen Gentium on the Laity asks the laity to see those in sacred ministry as brothers "who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ (auctoritas Christi) feed the family of God so that the new commandment of charity may be fulfilled by all."¹¹⁴ This phrase auctoritate Christi seems very close to the phrase in persona Christi and may be a substitute for it if we compare it to the use of the phrase in Eius persona in section 21. In section 37, the laity are encouraged to express their opinions openly for the good of the Church, but always "in truth, in courage and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who

by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ (personam Christi gerunt)."¹¹⁵ There are no footnotes given in either of these sections of Chapter IV, but the use of the phrase here is similar to the way it is used in section 21, in an expanded sense.

In persona Christi is used three times in Presbyterorum Ordinis. Here, as in Lumen Gentium, the context of the ministerial priesthood is set within the perspective of the Church and the priesthood of the faithful, with a special relationship to Christ and the bishops. The third sentence of section 2 describes the ministerial priesthood of priests. "Through that sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."¹¹⁶ This sentence which is central to the theological treatment of the ordained priesthood in this document seems very close to the description of episcopal consecration and mission in section 21.¹¹⁷ In the first sentence of this section, it has already been stated that bishops and priests share "in the authority of Christ by which Christ himself builds up and sanctifies and rules his Body."¹¹⁸ This authority of Christ is different from secular forms of authority. For Jesus, it essentially is a commission from the Father.¹¹⁹ It is "a commission to lead in love and in the service of love; this, and not a grant of dominative or jurisdictional power in the secular sense, is what enables authority to exercise its leadership."¹²⁰ This first sentence is similar to the sentence in section 21 of Lumen Gentium which speaks of the sacred ministry of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the authority of Christ.

The first part of the sentence in Lumen Gentium 21 refers to the grace and character conferred and impressed by the sacrament. Here it speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the character, and the configuration to Christ. These statements on the "consecration" given by the sacrament lead to the "so that" of the mission of those ordained. Section 21 for the Bishops combines the threefold munera and the fact that the bishops act "in His person." Section 2 in Presbyterorum Ordinis just uses the phrase "they are able to act in the person of Christ the head," since the threefold munera had already been mentioned.¹²¹ This section distinguishes between the sacramental character and grace and the mission of acting in the person of Christ. However, it is only in this context that there is a specific reference to "Christ the head" in connection with this phrase. The footnote in the text here refers back to Lumen Gentium 10 which speaks of the priest acting in persona Christi in the Eucharistic sacrifice, but makes no mention of Christ as Head. In Lumen Gentium 28 the priest is referred to as sharing in the "sacrifice of Christ their head" and in the "office of Christ, the Shepherd and Head."¹²² The image of Christ as Head is often connected to Christ's shepherding function, but is not limited to it.¹²³

The use of the phrase in persona Christi in this particular context is used once again as in Lumen Gentium 21 and 37, in the extended sense to refer to all the ministerial activity of the priest, without diminishing the particular importance of his action in the Eucharist.

The second and third use of the phrase in Presbyterorum Ordinis are in the third chapter on "The Life of Priest." The call to perfection of the priest already began at baptism, but is deepened through the consecration of ordination. Article 12 then continues: "Since every priest in his own way assumes the person of Christ (*suo modo ipsius Christi personam gerat*), he is endowed with a special grace. By this grace the priest through his service of the people committed to his care and all the People of God, is able the better to pursue the perfection of Christ, whose place he takes."¹²⁴

The use of the phrase personam Christi in this context is different from the others. First of all, it is not the complete phrase. It does not use the preposition "in." This translation uses the word "assumes" for the Latin word "gerat." The Latin word "gero" literally means to bear or carry, and in this sense "assumes" may be appropriate. It also can mean to represent or portray or take the place of.¹²⁵ A third element which adds a different dimension to the text is the phrase suo modo (in his own way). The person of Christ is assumed or represented in different ways or in ways personal to the minister. It is not the same for all. This important phrase helps to avoid the danger of physicalism or literalism in interpreting how the priest is to assume or represent the person of Christ.

The text refers to a "special grace" with which the priest is endowed so that through the ministry or service of the priest he may be able to move toward the perfection of Christ.¹²⁶ The nature of this special grace is unclear from the text. This grace enables him to pursue the perfection of Christ through his ministry. The grace of the sacrament of ordination moves the priest toward growth in spirituality as well as in effective ministry.

It is difficult to sense the exact meaning of the use of the phrase in this context. The phrase speaks more of a quality of the personal relationship of the priest in the person of Christ. In this sense, the text is using the phrase in a more expanded meaning than its use in relation to the threefold munera.

Article 13 brings in the relationship of the threefold munera to holiness. After stating that priests will find that their holiness and their ministry are interrelated, it speaks of the importance of priests being nourished by the Word, if they desire to be effective ministers of the Word. It then refers to the ministry of worship. "Priests as ministers of the sacred mysteries, especially in the sacrifice of the Mass, act in a special way in the person of Christ (underlining added) who gave himself as a victim to sanctify men."¹²⁷ The Latin text of the words underlined reads: "Presbyteri personam specialiter gerunt Christi."¹²⁸ The Council Fathers here are using the phrase in a sacramental context with a special reference to the sacrifice of the Mass. In a sense, its use here is similar to that in Lumen Gentium 28. The use of the word specialiter highlights the fact that there is a uniqueness about the way in which each priest acts in persona Christi in the Eucharist.

Since Presbyterorum Ordinis followed after Lumen Gentium, there are strong connections between the use of the phrase in the two documents, but there are some nuances in the second document which build upon and expand upon the use in the first document. These nuances mainly are shown through the use of the added words head, suo modo, and specialiter.

In the document Sacrosanctum Concilium, two passages were studied. The first one did not use the phrase in persona Christi, but spoke of Christ being present "in the person of his minister."¹²⁷ Following this text, there is a direct quote from the Council of Trent, Session 22.¹²⁸ The context is liturgical, but it also sees Christ present to the people in a variety of ways other than through the minister.

The document on the Sacred Liturgy was the first document completed by the Council Fathers at Vatican II. The first formal use of the phrase in the Vatican II documents is in article 33. "The prayers addressed to God by the priest who, in the person of Christ, presides over the assembly, are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present." No references, footnotes, or explanations are given for the use of the phrase in this text. A presumed source for this text would be Pius XII's encyclical Mediator Dei which strongly effected the liturgical and theological foundations of the documents of Vatican II. The language is more open than the sacrificial and consecratory language of Mediator Dei. The priest acts in the person of Christ when he is presiding over the assembly. It sees the priest acting in the person of Christ in the entire Liturgy and not just in the act of consecration.

Having analyzed the meaning of the words persona and "Christ" and the application of the phrase in persona Christi to the ordained ministry in the documents of Vatican II, I will consider the significance of the use of the phrase. Can a phrase which is used only six times in the documents in the form of in persona Christi and three times in the adaptive form of personam Christi gerere really have importance? The answer is affirmative.

The documents of Vatican II, although pastorally oriented, do have significance for the doctrinal teaching of the Church. Lumen Gentium has particular significance because it set the ecclesial perspective for the other documents and for the ongoing life of the Church. The mystery of the Church in Christ as the people of God is set as the context for discussing the role of the hierarchy, the laity, and the religious. The major portion of the content of Lumen Gentium relates to the role of bishops and the laity. The role of the ordained presbyter is seen in relation to the role of the bishop. A key aspect of the teaching of this document is the affirmation of the common priesthood in Christ of all the faithful, but also of the special role of the ordained within the community of the faithful. One of the main significances of the phrase is that it is used only in relationship to Christ himself or to the ordained ministers. It is a phrase which tries to express the distinctiveness of the ordained priesthood in relationship to the common priesthood.

The significance of the phrase is also seen in that it is used in the most key sections and sentences on the theological and doctrinal meaning of the ministerial priesthood. This is particularly true in articles 10, 21, and 28 of Lumen Gentium and article 2 of Presbyterorum Ordinis.

The phrase is usually used to show the intimate connection between the action of the ministerial priest and the action of Christ. The exact meaning of the phrase is never fully explained within the documents themselves. Footnotes and references are indicated several times when the phrase is used. I have reviewed and analyzed these in the second chapter of this thesis. They help to provide a sense of

the meaning of the phrase, but do not attempt to give a theological explanation of it.

In studying the use of this phrase, it also becomes clear that it is not used in one sense, but in a variety of ways. Within the nine uses of the phrase studied in the documents of Vatican II, four variations can be discerned. The use of the phrase in Lumen Gentium 5 refers to Christ Himself. The Kingdom of God is revealed in ipsa persona Christi. The person of Christ here is the Son of God and the Son of Man who came to serve and ransom. It is the historical and glorified Christ who continues to reveal the kingdom of God.

In Lumen Gentium 10 and 28, Presbyterorum Ordinis 13, and Sacrosanctum Concilium 33, the phrase in persona Christi is used to describe the way in which the priest acts in the Eucharistic sacrifice. Sacrosanctum Concilium 33 uses it to express how the priest presides over the assembly. Presbyterorum Ordinis 13 includes all the "sacred mysteries" as ways in which the priest acts in the person of Christ. In these texts, the phrase is used in a sacramental way. It is used to express how the priest acts within the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

In Lumen Gentium 21 and 37 and Presbyterorum Ordinis 2, the phrase is used to refer to the way in which the priest acts within his ministerial responsibility which includes the threefold munera of teaching, shepherding, and sanctifying. Here the documents broaden the use of the phrase beyond its traditional sacramental sense. It is applied in an expanded sense which does not diminish the importance of its use in the sacramental sense. But a question can arise about the interpretation of the meaning of the phrase in these two different

contexts. Does the ordained minister's action in persona Christi in teaching and shepherding have the same or a different effect than it would have in sacramental ministry? What is the implication of extending the phrase to read in persona Christi Capitis?

Article 12 of Presbyterorum Ordinis speaks of the priest assuming the person of Christ in his own way (*suo modo*). The use of the phrase here can be related to the other uses, but seems to have more of a sense of the personal identity of the ordained priest with the person of Christ. It is not a physical or material identity, but a relationship which is integrated with the personal identity of the individual priest.

These variations seem to indicate an analogous use of the meaning of the phrase in different contexts. Before drawing any conclusions from these reflections on the significance of the use of the phrase for the theology of the ordained priesthood, it will be helpful to look at the way in which the official documents of the Church have continued to use this phrase after Vatican II.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), Vol. VI, p. 771.

²Ibid.

³Proverbs 25:7.

⁴Corinthians II 2:10.

⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 770.

⁶Howard Clark Kee, Franklin W. Young, and Korlfried Froehlich, Understanding the New Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 2nd ed., 1965), p. 102.

⁷St. John Chrysostom, Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, on the Second Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Oxford: Library of the Fathers, 1848), p. 61.

⁸Thomas Aquinas, Opera Omnia, Tomus XIII (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1969), p. 309.

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¹⁰Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 70-71.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 209-210.

¹²Fritz Rennecker, A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1980), p. 124.

¹³St. John Chrysostom, op. cit., p. 142.

¹⁴Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Opera Omnia, Vol. XIII, "Expositio in S. Pauli Epistoli," (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1949), pp. 330-331.

¹⁵St. Augustine, The Trinity (The Fathers of the Church), trans. Stephen McKenna, C.S.S.R. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1963), pp. 187-188.

¹⁶The Council of Chalcedon, as quoted in The Church Teaches No. 414 (St. Louis: Herder, 1955), p. 172. Also cf. Bernhard Lohse, A Short History of Christian Doctrine (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 92.

¹⁷Lohse, Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁸Berthold Altaner, Patrology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), pp. 579-580.

¹⁹J.N.D. Kelley, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 331.

²⁰Boethius, The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 84 (Latin) and p. 85 (English).

²¹Ibid., p. 85.

²²St. Thomas, Summa Theologica I, Q. 29, A. 1 (New York: Benziger, 1947), Vol. I, p. 155.

²³Joseph Lecuyer, C.S.Sp., What is a Priest ? (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1959), p. 11.

²⁴Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, "Commentum in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Volumen Secundum," in Opera Omnia, Tomus VII (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948), p. 331.

²⁵Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Book IV (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957), p. 285.

²⁶Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, "Expositio in S. Pauli Epistoli," in Opera Omnia, Vol. XIII (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948).

²⁷Ibid., p. 299.

²⁸Ibid., p. 309.

²⁹Roy J. Deferrari and Sister M. Inviolata Barry, C.D.P., A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1949), p. 96.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., pp. 96-97.

³²Matthew 10:20.

³³Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Opera Omnia, Tomus X (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1949), p. 101.

³⁴I, Q. 29, A. 3 (Benziger), Vol. 1, p. 157

³⁵I, Q. 29, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 155.

³⁶cf. Robert E. Brenner, Thomistic Psychology (New York: MacMillan Co., 1941), p. 287.

³⁷I, Q. 29, A. 3 (Benziger), p. 158.

³⁸III, Q. 2, A. 2, Reply Obj. 1 (Benziger), Vol. II, p. 2034.

³⁹III, A. 2, A. 4 (Benziger), p. 2037.

⁴⁰III, Q. 3, A. 6 (Benziger), p. 2048.

⁴¹III, Q. 17, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 2123.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³III, Q. 37, A. 2, Corp. (Benziger), p. 2220.

⁴⁴Ibid. pp. 2220-2221.

⁴⁵III, Q. 46, A. 12 (Benziger), p. 2277.

⁴⁶cf. Roy J. Deferrari and Sister M. Inviolata Barry, C.D.P., A Complete Index of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1956), pp. 49-50 for "Christus" and p. 185 for "Jesus."

⁴⁷Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957), p. 194.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 197.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 247-248.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 285.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 286.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 294.

⁵⁴III, Q. 2, A. 2 (Benziger), Vol. II, p. 2035.

⁵⁵III, Q. 7, A. 2, ad. 3 (Benziger), p. 2066.

⁵⁶III, Q. 19, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 2132.

⁵⁷III, Q. 62, A. 1, Corp. (Benziger), p. 2355.

⁵⁸III, Q. 62, A. 1, Reply Obj. 2 (Benziger), p. 2356.

⁵⁹III, Q. 62, A. 1, Reply Obj. 1 (Benziger), p. 2356.

⁶⁰Cf. III, Q. 64, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 2367.

⁶¹Cf. III, Q. 64, A. 3 (Benziger), p. 2368.

⁶²III, Q. 64, A. 5 (Benziger), p. 2370.

⁶³III, Q. 78, A. 4 Corp. (Benziger), p. 2476.

⁶⁴Roy J. Deferrari and Sister M. Inviolata Barry, C.D.P., A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1949), Vol. I, p. 138.

⁶⁵I, Q. 2, A. 3 (Benziger, Vol. I), p. 13.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 13.

⁶⁷I, Q. 5, A. 4 (Benziger), pp. 25-26.

⁶⁸I, Q. 14, A. 8 (Benziger), p. 78.

⁶⁹I, Q. 19, A. 4 (Benziger), pp. 105-106.

⁷⁰Cf. I, Q. 105, A. 5 (Benziger), p. 518.

⁷¹I, Q. 18, A. 3 (Benziger), p. 101.

⁷²I-II, Q. 112, A. 1, Reply Obj. 1 (Benziger), p. 1140.

⁷³I-II, Q. 112, A. 1, Reply Obj. 2 (Benziger), p. 1140.

⁷⁴III, Q. 62, A. 1 (Benziger, Vol. II), p. 2356.

⁷⁵III, Q. 64, A. 1 (Benziger), pp. 2366-2367.

⁷⁶Deferrari, A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 689.

⁷⁷III, Q. 64, A. 5 (Benziger), p. 2370.

⁷⁸III, Q. 64, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 2352.

⁷⁹Cf. III, Q. 62, A. 5 (Benziger), p. 2359.

⁸⁰Cf. III, Q. 64, A. 3 (Benziger), p. 2368.

⁸¹Cf. III, Q. 64, A. 5 (Benziger), p. 2370.

⁸²III, Q. 64, A. 7 (Benziger), p. 2371.

⁸³III, Q. 64, A. 8 (Benziger), p. 2372.

⁸⁴III, Q. 78, A. 1 (Benziger), p. 2472.

⁸⁵III, Q. 82, A. 1, 2, 5, 7 (Benziger).

⁸⁶III, Q. 22, A. 4 (Benziger), p. 2145.

⁸⁷Summa Contra Gentiles, op. cit., p. 286.

⁸⁸John F. Gallagher, C.M., Significando Causant: A Study of Sacramental Efficiency (Fribourg: University Press, 1965).

⁸⁹The Church Teaches, op. cit., p. 261.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 279.

⁹¹Gallagher, op. cit., p. 191.

⁹²Gallagher, op. cit., p. 239.

⁹³Ibid., p. 241.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 264.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 229.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 234.

⁹⁷The Church Teaches, op. cit., p. 279.

⁹⁸III, Q. 63, A. 3 (Benziger), Vol. II, p. 2363.

⁹⁹III, Q. 63, A. 2 (Benziger), p. 2362.

¹⁰⁰Lumen Gentium n. 10, Footnote 2, p. 361, and n. 28, Footnote 69, p. 385.

¹⁰¹Pius XII, "Mediator Dei" section 69 (Carlen), p. 131.

¹⁰²Xaverius Ochoa, Index Verborum cum Documentis Concilii Vaticani Secundi (Roma: Commentarium pro Religiosis, 1967), pp. 373-374.

¹⁰³cf. Karl Rahner, Sacramentum Mundi, Vol. 4 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), pp. 404-419, and Robert E. Brenner, Thomistic Psychology (New York: MacMillan Group, 1941), pp. 291-299.

¹⁰⁴cf. Ochoa, op. cit., pp. 74-80.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁰⁶Lumen Gentium n. 5 (Flannery), pp. 352-353.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸L.G. n. 10, p. 361.

¹⁰⁹L.G. n. 27.1, p. 383.

¹¹⁰Cf. Mgr. Philips, L'Eglise et son Mystère au Deuxième Concile Du Vatican, Vol. II (Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1968), p. 163.

¹¹¹Lumen Gentium n. 21.2 (NCWC), p. 131.

¹¹²L.G. n. 28 (NCWC), p. 139.

¹¹³L.G. n. 28, Footnote 69 (Flannery), p. 385.

¹¹⁴L.G. n.32 (NCWC), p. 144.

¹¹⁵L.G. n. 37 (NCWC), p. 149.

¹¹⁶Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 2 (Flannery), p. 865.

¹¹⁷L.G. n. 21 (Flannery), pp. 372-373.

¹¹⁸P.O. n. 2, p. 865.

¹¹⁹John L. McKenzie, S.J., Authority in the Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 25.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 61.

¹²¹P.O. n. 2, p. 865.

¹²²L.G. n. 28 (Flannery), p. 385.

¹²³Cf. Pius XII, "Mystici Corporis Christi," sections 34-51 (Carlen), Vol. 4, pp. 43-47.

¹²⁴P.O. n. 12, pp. 885-886.

¹²⁵Roy J. Deferrari, A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1960), p. 439.

¹²⁶P.O. n. 12, pp. 885-886.

¹²⁷P.O. n. 13, p. 887.

¹²⁸Ochoa, op. cit., p. 768.

¹²⁹Sacrosanctum Concilium, n. 7, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹S.C. n. 33, p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

IN PERSONA CHRISTI

IN POST-VATICAN II DOCUMENTS

Having reviewed the use of the phrase in persona Christi in the documents of Vatican II, in Church documents before Vatican II, and having studied the phrase and its significance for the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood, I now will review some of the documents which have been promulgated after the Second Vatican Council to see if and how they use the phrase in persona Christi in relationship to the ministerial priesthood. It is not possible to review all the documentation or to do a complete analysis. Rather I will highlight some of the documents which use this phrase in order of the dates on which they were published.

A. Mysterium Fidei

On September 3, 1965, before the end of the Council, Paul VI released his encyclical letter "On the Holy Eucharist" (Mysterium Fidei). In this encyclical, Paul VI reiterates the greatness of the Eucharist as the deepest mystery of our faith and responds to errors which distort the teaching of the Church on the Eucharist as it has been held throughout tradition. The document does not directly use the phrase in persona Christi. In section 31, he emphasizes the fact that "it is the whole Church which, in union with Christ functioning as Priest and Victim, offers the Sacrifice of the Mass and is offered

in it."¹ He wants this wondrous doctrine to take root in the hearts of the faithful, realizing that the role of the ordained priest is distinct in the Eucharist. He quotes St. John Chrysostom as saying that "the priest standing there in the place of Christ says these words but their power and grace are from God."² The document centers mainly on the importance of the real presence and not on the role of the minister of the Eucharist.

B. EUCCHARISTICUM MYSTERIUM

On May 25, 1967, the Concilium set up to implement the Constitution on the Liturgy, on the instructions of Pope Paul VI, published the document entitled "Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery" (Eucharisticum Mysterium), in order to set forth the general principles and practical rules for instructing the faithful on the Holy Eucharist. In section 12 on the nature of active participation in the Mass, after making clear that all have an active part in the sacred action of the Mass, the document refers to "the priest alone, who, acting in the person of Christ, consecrates the bread and wine."³ In section 43 on the proper role of priests in the celebration of the Eucharist, it quotes article 13 of Presbyterorum Ordinis: "ministers of the sacred mysteries, especially in the sacrifice of the Mass...act in the person of Christ in a special way."⁴ It is not surprising that in this document on the Eucharistic Mystery the context of the use of the phrase in persona Christi would have specific reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass.

C. ON PRIESTLY CELIBACY

On June 24, 1967, Pope Paul VI published his encyclical letter on Priestly Celibacy. This encyclical was written to respond to the many

objections that were being raised to mandatory priestly celibacy in the Latin rite and to affirm the importance of continuing this tradition. In a section about the reasons for celibacy, Pope Paul VI refers to new incentives for personal sanctification of the priest which can be found "in the ministry of grace and in the ministry of the Eucharist, in which all the riches of the Church are contained: acting in the person of Christ, the priest unites himself most intimately with the offering and places on the altar his entire life."⁵ A little later on, he says that the priest is Christ present to the community of the faithful and that he should reproduce the image of Christ in his personal and apostolic life.⁶ In describing the relationship between the bishop and his priests, Pope Paul exhorts the bishops: "The love which Jesus had for his Apostles showed itself very clearly when he made them ministers of his real and Mystical Body: and even you in whose person 'the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest, is in the midst of the the faithful' know that you owe the best part of your hearts and pastoral care to your priests and to the young men preparing to be priests."⁷ The first use of the phrase in this document is in a Eucharistic context. The second use of the phrase is in a more general ministerial context, relating to Lumen Gentium 21.

D. CREDO OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

In his "Credo of the People of God" (June 30, 1968), Pope Paul VI proclaims that "we believe that the Mass which is celebrated by the priest in the person of Christ in virtue of the power he receives in the Sacrament of Order, and which is offered by him in the name of Christ and of the members of his Mystical Body, is indeed the sacrifice of Calvary sacramentally realized on our altars."⁹

E. GENERAL INSTRUCTION ON THE ROMAN MISSAL

On March 26, 1970, the General Instruction on the Roman Missal was promulgated. In this document, the phrase in persona Christi is used four times. In section 4 of the Foreword, the celebrant is the ministerial priest "who offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, and who presides over the holy people."¹⁰ In Chapter II on the structure of the Mass, section 7, it states that "the people of God are called together into one place where the priest presides over them and acts in the person of Christ."¹¹ In section 10 of the same chapter, in speaking of the priest, he addresses these prayers to God "presiding over the assembly in the person of Christ."¹² There is a reference here to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 33. In Chapter III, on the functions and ministries in the Mass, section 60, it states: "in virtue of his ordination the priest is the member of the community of the faithful who possesses the power to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ."¹³ The text here makes a special reference to Presbyterorum Ordinis 2 and Lumen Gentium 28, both of which were studied in Chapter I of this thesis. All four references in this document use the phrase in persona Christi in the context of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

F. THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD

A key document for the study of the ordained priesthood is that which was developed by the Synod of Bishops in November, 1971, and approved by Pope Paul VI. This document is entitled "The Ministerial Priesthood" (Ultimis Temporibus) and is dated November 30, 1971. Pope Paul VI had chosen both the topics of the "Ministerial Priesthood" and "Justice in the World" as topics for the 1971 Synod. Both documents

which were developed at this Synod have had significant impact on the life of the Church.

Because of the renewal of the II Vatican Council, many questions continued to arise about the theology and role of the priest in the life of the Church. In response to these questions, the document on the Priesthood from the Synod focused on "Principles of Doctrine" and "Guidelines for the Priestly Life and Ministry." The section on principles of doctrine first speaks of Christ who is the sign and manifestation of God's love. After discussing the relationship of Christ in the Church through the apostles, it treats of the origin and nature of hierarchical ministry. Based upon New Testament writings, the essential structure of the Church is an Apostle and a community of the faithful united in Christ the head and the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ The priestly ministry continues Christ's function as mediator and through the bishops and priests makes Christ present through the functions of sanctifying, teaching and governing in hierarchical communion. Then it continues: "The priestly ministry reaches its summit in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the source and centre of the Church's unity. Only a priest is able to act in the person of Christ in presiding over and effecting the sacrificial banquet wherein the People of God are associated with Christ's offering."¹⁵ This is the only place in the document with a specific use of the phrase in persona Christi and the text refers directly back to Lumen Gentium 28 which uses the phrase in the Eucharistic sense.

In the next section on the permanence of the Priesthood, however, the document states that priestly ordination "configures the ordained minister to Christ the Priest, consecrates him and makes him a sharer

in Christ's mission under its two aspects of authority and service. That authority does not belong to the Minister as his own: it is a manifestation of the exousia (i.e. the power) of the Lord, by which the priest is an ambassador of Christ in the eschatological work of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20).¹⁶ The reference here to 2 Cor. 5:18-20 is the same one used by St. Thomas as his second Scriptural reference relating to the phrase in persona Christi. The Greek concept of exousia is closely related to the concept of auctoritas as used by St. Thomas in relation to this phrase. There seems to be a relation between this explanation and the phrase being studied.

G. MYSTERIUM ECCLESIAE

On June 24, 1973, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a "Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against some Present-Day Errors" (Mysterium Ecclesiae). In a section on the Church associated with the priesthood of Christ, it first speaks of the common priesthood of the laity. Then it goes on to say that "Christ, the Head of the church, which is his Mystical Body, appointed as ministers of his priesthood his apostles and through them their successors the bishops, that they might act in his person within the Church and also in turn legitimately hand over to priests in a subordinate degree the sacred ministry which they had received."¹⁷ It is interesting that the text makes a reference after the words "act in his person within the Church" to the encyclical Ad Catholici Sacerdotii of Pius XI. The text is speaking of the priest in general, not the bishops. The Latin text in Denzinger reads: "cum eius gerat personam secundum illud: 'Sicut misit me Pater,

et ego mitto vos.'"¹⁸ An English translation which was used earlier in this thesis poorly translates this as "for, in some way, he is himself a continuation of Christ."¹⁹ In this context, the phrase is used in the extended ministerial sense as in the encyclical of Pius XI. The reference to Lumen Gentium 28 in the last part of the sentence relating to priests is a general reference rather than a reference specifically to its use of in persona Christi.

After speaking of the Eucharist as the source and summit of the entire Christian life, it states that "priests, acting in the person of Christ the Head, offer this Sacrifice in the Holy Spirit to God the Father in the name of Christ and in the name of the members of his Mystical Body."²⁰ Here the footnote in the text refers to Paul VI's "Credo for the People of God" and the text that was mentioned earlier in this chapter.²¹

The Declaration later refers to the Second General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (November, 1971) which "rightly affirmed that only the priest can act in the person of Christ and preside over and perform the sacrificial banquet in which the people of God are united with the oblation of Christ."²² The footnote after this text refers back to the section in the Synod document "The Ministerial Priesthood" which was quoted in this chapter and relates back to Lumen Gentium 28.²³

In this document, we have one use of the phrase in the extended ministerial sense and two in the Eucharistic sense. The footnotes make clear the connections between this document and the documents of Vatican II.

H. EVANGELII NUNTIANDI

On December 8, 1975, Pope Paul VI promulgated his famous encyclical "Evangelization in the Modern World" (Evangelii Nuntiandi). In the section of this encyclical on the evangelizers, he first describes the role of the bishops and then says: "Associated with the bishops in the ministry of evangelization and sharing in their power by a special title are those who by their priestly ordination 'act in the person of Christ' as educators of the people of God in the faith, as heralds of the divine Word and as ministers of the Eucharist and the other sacraments."²⁴ The footnote reference is to Lumen Gentium 10 and 37 which were studied earlier in Chapter I. It also includes a reference to Presbyterorum Ordinis 2, 12, and 13 which were studied, and to Ad Gentes 39. The latter text was not studied because Flannery's English translation rendered it: "Priests represent Christ."²⁵ But the Latin text reads: "Presbyteri personam Christi gerunt."²⁶ The remaining part of this text refers to priests being cooperators in the threefold office of the bishops. The references include the eucharistic as well as the extended use of the phrase, but the text itself uses the phrase in relation to the ministry of the Word or education as well as the sacramental life.

I. INTER INSIGNIORES

After the Second Vatican Council, the question of the role of women in the Church and their admission to priestly ordination became a vocal issue. On October 15, 1976, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued their "Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" (Inter Insigniores). It is in section 5 of this document which treats of the ministerial priesthood

in light of the mystery of Christ that the phrase in persona Christi is discussed in greater detail than in any of the previous documents.

The introduction to this document sets the context for the discussion. The difficulty of sexual discrimination, the importance of the contributions of women, and the growing involvement of women in leadership roles in the Church, lead to the ecumenical and theological issue of the possibility of the ordination of women. The debate on this issue, on the request of Pope Paul VI, has led the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to reassert the Church's constant tradition that priestly or episcopal ordination cannot be validly conferred on women. The attitude of Christ and the practice of the Apostles have set up a permanent value which is normative.²⁷

The opening paragraph of section 5 indicates that the intent of this section is to show the fittingness of this norm through a process of theological reflection. In an official commentary on this document, it is made clear that the theological reflection on fittingness is distinct from the magisterial datum of the norm.²⁸ This is not intended as a proof, but an attempt to clarify the teaching.

It is in the second paragraph of section 5, where the Sacred Congregation summarizes the teaching on the ministerial priesthood and sees the expression in persona Christi as critical to its nature. Because of the nature and importance of this paragraph, it is quoted here in full.

The Church's constant teaching, repeated and clarified by the Second Vatican Council and again recalled by the 1971 Synod of Bishops and by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its Declaration of 24 June

1973, declares that the bishop or the priest, in the exercise of his ministry, does not act in his own name, in persona propria: he represents Christ, who acts through him: "the priest truly acts in the place of Christ," as Saint Cyprian already wrote in the third century. It is this ability to represent Christ that Saint Paul considered as characteristic of his apostolic function (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20; Gal. 4:14). The supreme expression of this representation is found in the altogether special form it assumes in the celebration of the Eucharist which is the source and centre of the Church's unity, the sacrificial meal in which the People of God are associated in the sacrifice of Christ: the priest, who alone has the power to perform it, then acts not only through the effective power conferred on him by Christ, but in persona Christi, taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image, when he pronounces the words of consecration.²⁷

In the first sentence, the document reiterates the teaching of the Church that the ministry of the priest or bishop is not his, but Christ's. The exercise of the ministry here seems to include all the elements of the three munera. There is a clear distinction made between acting in persona propria and acting in persona Christi. The quotation from Cyprian was used as a footnote in Lumen Gentium 21 in relation to the phrase in Eius persona. The phrase was used in this context in relationship to the threefold mission of the bishop.

The second sentence shows that the teaching is not just in the present day Church documents, or even only in the Fathers. It is rooted in the Scriptures. The text makes two references to the apostolic ministry of Paul. It clearly steers away from the disputed text of II Cor. 2:10 which was used by Thomas in the Vulgate form, but it uses the second supporting text of Thomas, 2 Cor. 5:20, where Paul refers to himself as an "ambassador of Christ." The second text, Gal. 4:14, reads: "you took me to yourselves as an angel of God, even

as if I had been Christ Jesus!" This text had not been used previously in this context.

The third sentence then speaks of the supreme expression in which the priest represents Christ or acts in persona Christi - in the Eucharist. The text then makes a distinction. The priest alone has the power to perform it, which is an effective power given by Christ. It is not only through this effective power he has in Christ that he acts, but he acts in persona Christi. Acting in persona Christi involves more than acting with effective power in Christ. The footnote after in persona Christi then refers to the texts in the documents of Vatican II which use this phrase in relation to the Eucharist (SC 33; LG 10, 28; PO 2, 13) as well as to the 1971 Synod Document and the Declaration of the Sacred Congregation of the Faith of 1973 which have been studied.

The text then explains the phrase in persona Christi as "taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image, when he pronounces the words of consecration."³⁰ It is at this point that a Vatican II or Post-Vatican II document first makes a specific reference to the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas in relation to this phrase. The footnote refers to Thomas stating that "the priest also enacts the image of Christ, in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration."³¹ Thomas does not use the word "role" here, but he does use the concept of "image." He does make a distinction between the priest acting in the person and in the power of Christ. This last line seems part of the theological reflection rather than the magisterial norm, for it sets the context for the next paragraphs.

The text then follows with three theological reflections. The first reflection is based upon St. Thomas' theology of sacraments as

involving res et sacramentum. Those persons as well as things which are to serve as sacramental signs must signify through a natural resemblance. The minister who would "take the role of Christ" must have a natural resemblance to Christ and therefore be of the male sex. The second theological reflection states that Christ is the firstborn of all and reestablishes the unity of all, but, in fact, was incarnated in the male sex. The third theological reflection centers on the nuptial mystery of the language of the revelation of God's plan in the mystery of the Covenant. The text then draws to the conclusion that "it must be admitted that, in actions which demand the character of ordination and in which Christ himself, the author of the Covenant, the Bridegroom and Head of the Church, is represented, exercising his ministry of salvation--which is in the highest degree the case of the Eucharist--his role (this is the original sense of the word persona) must be taken by a man."³³ This is the first time that a Church document defines the meaning of the word persona as related to this particular phrase.

The document then responds to two objections. The first objection deals with the question of whether the glorified Christ needs to be represented by a man. The second addresses the relationship between in persona ecclesiae and in persona Christi. The priest does represent the church, but he does so because he first represents Christ. "The Second Vatican Council used this phrase to make more precise and to complete the expression in persona Christi."³⁴ Pius XII, in Mediator Dei, following Robert Bellarmine, clearly emphasizes that the priest is first the representative of Christ, and only because of this, represents the Church.

In this document, the phrase in persona Christi is used in relationship to the exercising of the ministry of the bishop or priest in general as well as in the special form of the Eucharist. The meaning of the phrase is explained as representing Christ by carrying out His role. A connection is made here between the person of Christ and the maleness of Christ which extends to his incarnate reality even in the glorified state. In persona Christi and in persona Ecclesiae are not placed in opposition to one another or put on an equal level, but the priest act in persona Ecclesiae because he first acts in persona Christi. The intent of this document pushed the Sacred Congregation to clarify terms through theological reflection without giving them the authority of statements of the magisterium.

In discussing the meaning of the word persona, there is debate over the etymological origins of the word. The first meaning of the word usually given is face, disguise, or mask.³⁵ The second definition given is a character, part, or representation or likeness.³⁶ This document, however, interprets the first or original meaning of the word as partes or role. It is not possible to do a complete analysis of this particular section, but it does give an idea of the mind of the Congregation on the understanding of the phrase.

J. MUTUAE RELATIONES

After a joint plenary session of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in October, 1975, and consultation with the National Conferences of Bishops, National Conferences of Religious and the International Unions of Superiors General, the Sacred Congregation for

Religious and Secular Institutes published a document entitled "Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church" (Mutuae Relationes) on April 23, 1978. The document included some doctrinal elements as well as directives and norms for the relationship between bishops and religious in the Church. In the doctrinal section on the ministry of bishops, the document quotes from Lumen Gentium: "(Bishops) in a resplendent and visible manner take the place of Christ himself, Teacher, Shepherd and Priest, and act as his representatives."³⁸ This part of the quotation is from Lumen Gentium 21, although the text also makes reference to Lumen Gentium 27 and 28, Presbyterorum Ordinis 1 and 2, and Christus Dominus 2. The phrase "act as his representatives" in Latin is "in Eius persona agant."³⁹ This phrase was studied in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 and uses the phrase in reference to the total ministerial activity of the bishop. This is the only occasion in this document where the phrase is used.

However, the first and second paragraphs of this document are also important for this study. They refer to the indivisibility of the ministry of bishops. Bishops, with their priests, are to serve the community of the faithful through the threefold service of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling. "These, however, are not three separate ministries: since Christ, in the New Law, has united in Himself the three functions of Teacher, Priest, and Pastor, there is only one ministry, unique in its origin. That is why the episcopal ministry in its various functions has to be exercised in an indivisible way."⁴⁰ It goes on to say that circumstances may give prominence to one ministry, but that it must not be isolated from the other two. This clarifying point about the unity, yet diversity, of the ministry of

the bishop and priests is helpful in understanding how the phrase in persona Christi can be used with special reference to the Eucharist, but that this Eucharistic ministry is intimately connected to the functions or dimensions of teaching and ruling.

K. NOVO INCIPIENTE NOSTRO

Following these two documents of the Sacred Congregations, we come to the first letter of Pope John Paul II to Priests, dated April 6, 1979. This letter comes a few months after his election to the papacy after the deaths of Paul VI and John Paul I. Pope John Paul II wanted to express his prayerful concern for his brothers in the priesthood on the occasion of the annual feast of the priesthood, Holy Thursday, when the bishops gather with their priests in the Eucharist and renew the promises made at priestly ordination. John Paul II confirms the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the priesthood along with Paul VI's encyclical Sacerdotalis Caelibatus and the Synod document De Sacerdotio Ministeriali of 1971 which was approved by Paul VI.

In section 3, John Paul first reaffirms that the People of God accomplish their mission by sharing in the office and mission of Jesus Christ Himself. He then clarifies, as stated in the last document, that "we should speak of a threefold dimension to Christ's office and mission, rather than of three different functions. In fact, these three dimensions are closely linked to one another and they explain, condition and clarify one another."⁴¹ These three dimensions of the office and mission of Christ are shared by all the people of God. He then goes on to quote the entire article 10 of Lumen Gentium which includes the sentence: "The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of

Christ he effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people."⁴²

In section 4, in examining the meaning of the relationship between the hierarchical priesthood and the common priesthood of all believers, he emphasizes that Christ is the source of all priesthood and that the ministerial priesthood is in service to the common priesthood. After re quoting the above from Lumen Gentium 10, he states that the special ministerium of the hierarchical priesthood does not originate in the community through its call or delegation, but originates in Christ who gives it as a gift for the community. Christ acts through the ministerium of the priest. "Our whole priestly existence is and must be deeply imbued with this service, if we wish adequately to celebrate the eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ."⁴³

In this particular letter, John Paul II follows the use of the phrase in persona Christi as found in Lumen Gentium 10. He intimately ties together the three dimensions of Christ's ministry and speaks of the priest acting in persona Christi in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

L. CATECHESIS IN OUR TIME

On October 16, 1979, Pope John Paul II published his Apostolic Exhortation on "Catechesis in Our Time" as the culmination of the work of the 1977 Synod of Bishops on the topic of "Catechesis of Children and Youth." The first chapter of this Exhortation reasserts the importance of the Christocentricity of all authentic catechesis. This is brought out in two dimensions. The heart of catechesis, in essence, we find in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. The primary and essential object of catechesis is the mystery of Christ. "It is

therefore to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person."⁴⁴ Here Pope John Paul II uses the phrase in persona Christi in a similar way to its use in Lumen Gentium 5 where the kingdom of God is revealed in persona Christi. He goes on to say: "We must therefore say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught --everything else is taught with reference to Him--and it is Christ alone who teaches--anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips."⁴⁵ This statement comes close to saying that the catechist teaches in persona Christi.

M. DOMINICAE CENAE

Pope John Paul II chose to write a follow up letter to bishops, priests and deacons in connection with the celebration of Holy Thursday in 1980. It is entitled "On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist" (Dominicae Cenae) and is dated February 24, 1980. In this letter, he intends to write about the Eucharist and "certain aspects of the Eucharistic mystery and its impact on the lives of those who are the ministers of it."⁴⁶ He reaffirms the central place of the Eucharist for the ordained priest as well as for all the faithful. In part II on the sacred character of the Eucharist and Sacrifice, John Paul II explains the meaning of the priest offering the Holy Sacrifice in persona Christi.

The priest offers the Holy Sacrifice in persona Christi; this means more than offering "in the name of" or "in the place of" Christ. In persona means in specific sacramental identification with "the eternal High Priest" who is the Author and principal Subject of this Sacrifice of his, a Sacrifice in which, in truth nobody can take his place. Only he--only Christ--was able and is always able to be the true and effective "expiation for our sins and

...for the sins of the whole world." Only his sacrifice--and no one else's--was able and is able to have a "propitiatory power" before God, the Trinity, and the transcendent holiness. Awareness of this reality throws a certain light on the character and significance of the priest celebrant who, by confecting the Holy Sacrifice and acting "in persona Christi," is sacramentally (and ineffably) brought into that most profound sacredness and made part of it, spiritually linking with it in turn all those participating in the Eucharistic assembly.⁴⁷

The sacredness of the Mass is not something added to the Mass, but it is integral to the action of Christ at the Holy Thursday supper. It is in that sacredness that the priest and the faithful participate. The text above explains how the priest is brought into and made part of this sacredness sacramentally and links the faithful with him spiritually.

In persona Christi thus means more than "in the name of" or "in the place of" Christ. John Paul then states his interpretation of in persona as "specific sacramental identification."⁴⁸ This is the most explicit explanation of the term given. He sets the context of this identification in the Sacrifice of Christ for the expiation of sin which only Christ can make. No one can take his place. The priest is drawn into the sacred action of Christ and made a part of it sacramentally and ineffably. No reference is given for the use of italics (part underlined) in the original text or for the marks around "and ineffably" which is in the original Latin text.⁴⁹

Later on in section 11, Pope John Paul states that "one must not forget the primary office of priests, who have been consecrated by their ordination to represent Christ the priest: for this reason their hands, like their words and their will, have become the direct instruments of Christ."⁵⁰ This comment, though not including the

specific phrase in persona Christi, is related to it through the priest being the direct instrument of Christ through his hands, words and will. This is connected with the description which he used before, the specific sacramental identification with Christ.

N. THE MINISTER OF THE EUCHARIST

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a letter to the bishops of the world which was dated August 6, 1983 on "The Minister of the Eucharist." The intent of this document was to affirm once again the certainty of faith that only bishops and priests can confect the Eucharistic mystery. In section 1 of the introduction, the document states: "Although all the faithful indeed share in the one and the same priesthood of Christ and participate in the offering of the Eucharist, it is only the ministerial priest who, in virtue of the sacrament of holy orders, can confect the eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ and offer it in the name of all Christian people."⁵¹ The text gives footnote references to Lumen Gentium 10, 17, 26, and 28; to Sacrosanctum Concilium 7; to Christus Dominus 15; and Presbyterorum Ordinis 2 and 3 as well as to Mysterium Fidei by Paul VI. The references cover both phrases - in persona Christi and in the name of all the people.

Following this statement of teaching, the document indicates that contrary and erroneous positions are being spread about the Eucharistic minister which are causing harm to the inner life of the Church. In section 4 in part III on the doctrine of the Church, after reaffirming the special apostolic role of bishops and priests and their exclusive power to confect the Eucharist, the document states: "when they pronounce the words of consecration, they do not act on a

mandate from the community, but in persona Christi which means more than just 'in the name of Christ' or 'in the place of Christ' since the celebrant, by reason of this special sacrament, identifies himself with the eternal high priest, who is both author and principal agent of his own sacrifice in which truly no one can take his place."⁵²

This section is a direct quotation from the letter of John Paul II, Dominicae Cena, which was referred to earlier in this chapter. The context here is Eucharistic which is appropriate according to the nature of the document studied. No further clarifications are really developed here, but the importance of the earlier text is emphasized by being used in this important document.

Q. MEANING OF PRIESTHOOD

On September 9, 1983, Pope John Paul II addressed 37 U.S. Bishops on the topic of the "Meaning of Priesthood." Toward the end of his address, after speaking of the importance of Eucharist and Penance in the ministry of the priest, he states: "With fidelity to Christ, in whose 'person' he acts, the priest realizes his identity and mission also through the Liturgy of the Hours, through different forms of prayer, through the reading of the word of God and through the oblation of his will, made in union with that of Christ."⁵³ The context of the use of the formula in this address is different than many of the others. It is used in a general sense. The entire life and activity of the priest is to take place in persona Christi. This seems closer to the way in which the phrase was used in Presbyterorum Ordinis 12.

P. ADDRESS TO PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS IN SAN SALVADOR

On March 6, 1983, Pope John Paul II spoke to the priests and

religious in San Salvador. "By our ordination we are ministers who act in persona Christi (in the person of Christ), in virtute Spiritus Sancti (in the power of the Holy Spirit), with a human fullness fortified by this grace."⁵⁴ In this context, the general and open sense of the phrase is used.

Q. HOLY THURSDAY MESSAGE

For his Holy Thursday Message to Priests in 1984, Pope John Paul II used the text of a homily he delivered at St. Peter's Basilica on February 23, 1984. In this exhortatory homily, he says: "Let us open our eyes ever wider - the eyes of our soul - in order to understand better what it means to act in persona Christi, in the name of Christ: to act with his power - with the power which, in a word, is rooted in the salvific ground of the redemption."⁵⁵ It seems strange that he would put together here the phrases "in the person of Christ" and "in the name of Christ" since he indicated before that they were not equivalent.⁵⁶ Both seems to be understood as acting with Christ's power. The exhortations before this one relate to the Eucharist and to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This statement seems to have a broader application.

R. APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE

On December 2, 1984, Pope John Paul II issued his Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance as a reflection on the work of the 1983 Synod of Bishops on the theme of "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church." In section 29 of this exhortation, when discussing the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the role of the minister of this sacrament, he states: "Just as at the altar, where he celebrates the Eucharist and

just as in each one of the sacraments, so the priest, as the minister of penance, acts in persona Christi." No references are given in this specific text. Here we find the formula used in the broader sacramental sense.

It is not possible to give a complete list of all the post-conciliar uses of this formula in this thesis, but these particular documents included here do show the importance of this phrase in the theological consideration of ordained ministry after the II Vatican Council, show the diversity of the use of the phrase, and give some clarifications for understanding its use. Taking all this material into consideration, I move now to draw together the material and seek out some conclusions.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

¹Paul VI, "Mysterium Fidei" n. 31 (Washington, D.C.: NCWC, 1965), p. 9.

²Ibid., n. 48, p. 14.

³"Eucharisticum Mysterium," n. 12 (Flannery, Vol. I), p. 111.

⁴Ibid., p. 126.

⁵Pope Paul VI, "On Priestly Celibacy," n. 29 in Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents, Vol. II, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 293. Note: Post Vatican II texts from this volume will be noted as Flannery, Vol. II.

⁶cf. Ibid., n. 31, p. 294.

⁷Ibid., n. 42, pp. 310-311.

⁸Lumen Gentium n. 21 (Flannery, Vol. I), p. 374.

⁹Pope Paul VI, "Credo of the People of God" (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 393.

¹⁰"The General Instruction on the Roman Missal," n. 4 (Flannery, Vol. I), p. 156.

¹¹Ibid., n. 7, p. 163.

¹²Ibid., n. 10, p. 164.

¹³Ibid., n. 60, p. 180.

¹⁴Synod of Bishops, "The Ministerial Priesthood," Part I, n. 4 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 678.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 679.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 680.

¹⁷"Mysterium Ecclesiae" (Flannery, Vol. II), pp. 435-436.

¹⁸Denzinger-Schonmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum (Rome: Herder, 1963), 3755, p. 735.

¹⁹Pius XI, "Ad Catholici Sacerdotii" n. 10 (Grail, 1953), p. 43.

²⁰"Mysterium Ecclesiae," op. cit., p. 436.

²¹Paul VI, "Credo for the People of God" (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 393.

²²"Mysterium Ecclesiae," op. cit., p. 437.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Pope Paul VI, "Evangelii Nuntiandi," n. 68 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 745.

²⁵Ad Gentes, n. 39 (Flannery, Vol. I), p. 853.

²⁶Ad Gentes, n. 39 (Ochoa), p. 751.

²⁷cf. "Inter Insigniores," n. 4 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 336.

²⁸L'Osservatore Romano, Feb. 3, 1977, p. 11.

²⁹"Inter Insigniores," n. 5, pp. 338-339.

³⁰Ibid., n. 16, pp. 344-345.

³¹Ibid., n. 5, p. 339.

³²Ibid., n. 17, referring to St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae III, Q. 83, A. 1, ad. 3 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 345.

³³Ibid., n. 5, p. 340.

³⁴Ibid., p. 341.

³⁵Roy J. Deferrari, A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1960), p. 787.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Inter Insigniores," n. 5, p. 340.

³⁸"Mutuae Relationes," n. 6 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 214.

³⁹Ochoa, op. cit., p. 579.

⁴⁰"Mutuae Relationes," n. 7 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 214.

⁴¹Pope John Paul II, "Letter to Priests," n. 3, April 6, 1979 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 348.

⁴²Ibid., p. 349.

⁴³Ibid., n. 4, p. 350.

⁴⁴Pope John Paul II, "Catechesis in Our Time," n. 5 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 764.

⁴⁵Ibid., n. 6, p. 765.

⁴⁶Pope John Paul II, "Dominicae Cenaе," n. 2 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 65.

⁴⁷Ibid., n. 8, p. 74.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Pope John Paul II, "Dominicae Cenaе" (Latin Text) in Notitiae, Vol. XVI, 1980, p. 138.

⁵⁰"Dominicae Cenaе," n. 11, (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 82.

⁵¹Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The Minister of the Eucharist" in "Origins," Sept. 15, 1983, Vol. 13, n. 14, p. 229.

⁵²Ibid., p. 232.

⁵³Pope John Paul II, Address to 37 U.S. Bishops on "The Meaning of Priesthood" in "Origins," Sept. 22, 1983, Vol. 13, n. 15, p. 259.

⁵⁴Pope John Paul II, Address to Priests and Religious in El Salvador in "Origins," March 17, 1983, Vol. 12, n. 40, p. 640.

⁵⁵Pope John Paul II, Holy Thursday Message to Priests, 1984 in "Origins," April 19, 1984, Vol. 13, n. 45, p. 752.

⁵⁶cf. Pope John Paul II, "Dominicae Cenaе," n. 8, (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 74.

⁵⁷Pope John Paul II, "Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance" n. 29 in "Origins" December 20, 1984, Vol. 14, No. 27, p. 450.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It is within the mystery of the Church that we seek to clarify the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood. The Bishops sought to deal with these issues particularly in their documents entitled Lumen Gentium and Presbyterorum Ordinis. The mystery of the Church and the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood as expressed in these documents can be studied from a variety of perspectives. The purpose of this thesis has been to study the use of the theological formula in persona Christi for an understanding of the theology of the ordained priesthood.

The phrase in persona Christi is used five times in the document Lumen Gentium. In article 5, the kingdom of God is revealed principally "in the person of Christ himself, Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk. 10:45)."¹ Although this use of the phrase is not in specific reference to ordained ministry, it sets the foundation for the revealing of the kingdom in Christ himself, who continues to be present and revealing the kingdom through those who represent His person. In article 10, the bishops speak of the ministerial priest forming and ruling the priestly people with sacred power and effecting the Eucharist in persona Christi. This first use of the phrase for the ordained priesthood focuses upon the action of the Eucharistic

sacrifice, but it is connected with the action of teaching and ruling.

Article 21 states that "bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest and act in His person (in Eius persona agant)."²⁸ In this context, the phrase is used in relationship to all three munera of the bishop. This appears as an expanded sense of the phrase in contrast to its use in Lumen Gentium 10. Article 28 considers the role of the ordained priest as cooperator with the episcopal order. It is in the celebration of the Mass that the priest acts in the person of Christ. The references to Trent and Mediator Dei emphasize the Eucharistic context. In article 37, laity are to express their opinions "with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ."²⁹ In this context, the use of the phrase relates to the full ministry of the ordained priest. It does not seem to be limited to the action of the priest in the munera.

The phrase in persona Christi is used; therefore, in four different but related ways in Lumen Gentium.

In Presbyterorum Ordinis, this theological formula is used three times. In article 2, which is the crucial theological statement, it states that priests "by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the head."⁴ In this context, the phrase is given the broader application used in Lumen Gentium 37. It also adds the dimension of participation in the headship of Christ which is not specified in other uses of the phrase.

Article 12 of Presbyterorum Ordinis says that "every priest in his

own way assumes the person of Christ."⁵ In this context, each priest acts in persona Christi in his own way, within the uniqueness of his own personality and ability. This adds another dimension to the use of the phrase. In article 13, we read that "priests as ministers of the sacred mysteries, especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, act in a special way in the person of Christ."⁶ Here the document returns to the sacramental and Eucharistic context as found in Lumen Gentium 28, although it speaks more generally of "sacred mysteries" and refers to the fact that each priest ministers "in a special way" which connects this to article 12 of this same document.

There are one related and one direct use of the phrase in the document Sacrosanctum Concilium. In article 7, Christ is present in the Mass "in the person of his minister."⁷ There is a reference to Trent which is also used in Lumen Gentium 28. In article 33, the first use of the phrase in a Vatican II Document, the bishops speak of the "prayers addressed to God by the priest who, in the person of Christ, presides over the assembly."⁸ The context here is Eucharistic, but relating to the action of the priest in prayer throughout the Mass.

In the ten uses of the phrase in persona Christi in the three documents of Vatican II, the phrase is always and solely used in reference to ordained ministerial priesthood which includes both bishops and priests. But the phrase is used in a variety of ways and in none of the contexts is the meaning actually explained. The ways in which it is used are not in contradiction to one another, but are distinguished as more specific or more general. The phrase is used in reference to Christ himself, to the ordained priest in the Sacrifice

of the Mass, to the ordained priest in sacramental action, to the ordained priest in his ministerial activity of teaching, ruling and sanctifying, to the ordained priest in light of his ordination, and to the ordained priest in relation to his own personal qualities and characteristics.

Concerning the use of this phrase in official Church sources before the II Vatican Council, five periods were studied: Pre-Vatican Encyclicals, Trent, St. Thomas, Fathers of the Church, and Sacred Scripture. Five Pre-Vatican papal encyclicals that relate to the theology of the ordained priesthood were examined. The phrase is used in Menti Nostrae by Pius XII in relationship to the Eucharistic Sacrifice.⁹ The encyclical Mediator Dei by Pius XII seems to have had an important impact on the theology of the ordained priesthood in the documents of Vatican II. There are two references to Mediator Dei in Lumen Gentium 10 and 28, relating to the phrase in persona Christi. The encyclical is focused on the Sacred Liturgy and it is to be expected that the use of the phrase here would be in the Eucharistic context. Pius XII is very strong in this encyclical on the distinction between the ordained and common priesthood and stresses that the priest in the liturgy primarily acts in the person of Christ and secondarily on behalf of the people. Pius XII gives important footnote references to Trent, Robert Bellarmine, Thomas Aquinas and St. John Chrysostom in relation to the formula in persona Christi.

The encyclicals Mystici Corporis Christi by Pius XII, Ad Catholici Sacerdotii by Pius XI, and Haerent Animo by Pius X were also studied. These encyclicals did not use the phrase in persona Christi directly

(at least in their English translations). But they used many related phrases such as "another Christ," "the minister of Christ," "acting the part of Christ," "acting as ambassadors of Christ," and "acting as the instrument of Christ." These encyclicals were not centered specifically on the Eucharist and spoke of the priesthood in more general terms.

The documents of the Council of Trent did not use the phrase "in the person of Christ" directly in relation to the Eucharist or the priesthood. But there are references to the documents of Trent related to this phrase in the documents of Vatican II. The phrase, however, was used in the document on the Reunion of the Armenians with Rome at the Council of Florence. The use of the phrase in this document is related to one of the works of St. Thomas.

It is in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, especially in his Summa Theologica, that the phrase is regularly used in relation to ordained ministry. Thomas uses two Scriptural references (II Cor. 2:10 and II Cor. 5:20) as foundational for his use of the phrase. His use of the Vulgate translation of II Cor. 2:10 is often criticized because most modern Scripture scholars disagree with Jerome's translation from the Greek to the Latin of the phrase en prosopo Christou. Thomas never explains his use of the phrase in the Summa Theologica, but uses it consistently especially in Part III, Qs. 78, 82, and 83, to describe how the priest acts as the minister of the Eucharist.

Some patristic texts were referred to in a footnote to Lumen Gentium 21. None of them used the specific phrase in persona Christi, but used related phrases and images. However, they clearly indicate

that the bishop/priest is related in a special way to Christ and represent Christ in their actions.

The main biblical resource to the phrase (II Cor. 2:10) is controverted, but the apostles and disciples appointed by the apostles clearly see their role as being primarily servants of Christ the Lord.

In analyzing the meaning of the phrase itself for the theology of the ordained priesthood, the biblical context is not helpful because of the variety of ways in which the Greek word for person, prosopon, is used in the Old and New Testaments. However, in studying the controverted passage II Cor. 2:10, it is interesting to note how different authors have commented on this text. John Chrysostom comments that the phrase in persona Christi means either "according to (the will of) God, or unto the glory of Christ."¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, in his Commentary on this Letter, states that the phrase in persona Christi refers to the authority of Christ which St. Paul has. Sins are forgiven not on Paul's authority, but by the authority of Christ.¹¹ The debate on the meaning of this phrase has continued through the centuries.

In the Patristic period, the word prosopon was involved in the great Trinitarian and Christological debates. The phrase itself does not seem to have been used by the Fathers of the Church in reference to ordained ministerial priesthood. Other related images are used. It is the definition of persona by Boethius as an "individual substance of a rational nature"¹² that was later generally adopted by St. Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics of the following years.

The writings of Thomas Aquinas are one of the most important sources for the study of the meaning of the phrase in persona Christi

for the theology of the ordained priesthood. In his commentary on Paul's II Letter to the Corinthians, Thomas explicitly interprets the phrase in persona Christi in II Cor. 2:10 as referring to the authority of Christ by which Paul acts.¹³ Auctoritas has a variety of meanings. It seems in this context to refer to the principle of origin or source. The authorship of the action is in Christ. It is Christ who acts through the instrumentality of the minister.

In studying the use of the words "person" and "Christ" in Thomas' writings, especially the Summa Theologica, one finds that he accepts the definition of "person" by Boethius with some nuances and prefers the term "Christ" as the name of the Son of God become Man. The name "Jesus" tends more to be identified with the humanity of Christ or the historical person. The term "Christ" is more identified with his divinity or his personhood which includes the divine and human nature or the Risen Lord.

The concept of causality is important in the theological writings of Thomas Aquinas. There are many different types of causality, but the use of the phrase in persona Christi relates particularly to the concept of efficient causality as understood in terms of principal cause and instrumental cause. The principal cause or agent is that which acts through its own form and causes the effect. An instrumental cause is that which acts, not by virtue of its own form, but through the principal cause or agent. In both the Summa Contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologica, Thomas applies these terms to the incarnation, to the action of the sacraments and to the role of the minister in the action of the sacraments.

The humanity of Christ is the united instrument of the Godhead and

the ministers of the Church and the Sacraments are the separated instruments. It is Christ who acts by His own power in the Sacraments while He employs the ministers as animate instruments who need to have as their intention to do what Christ and the Church desire. For Thomas, this is especially true in the Eucharist.

John F. Gallagher, C.M., in his book "Significando Causant," does a detailed analysis of how Thomas explains the causality of grace in the sacraments. He sees an evolution in Thomas' thought on this question which moves from a dispositive causality to a perfective causality. Initially Thomas sees the sacraments only as preparing for the grace that God would give. Later he sees the Sacraments as instruments which cause grace, with God as the principal cause, but the Sacraments as real efficient causes. It is the imperium or intention of the minister, which of itself cannot produce the effect, which places the minister in active contact with Christ as the principal cause and determines the signification of the rite of the sacrament. It is by ordination that priests become "habitual instruments of the redemption of Christ"¹⁴ and can place valid sacramental sign-actions. This explanation helps to clarify how the priest acts in a general sense in the person of Christ through ordination and in a more specific sense when the priest acts in the person of Christ in the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

In reviewing these perspectives, one can see how important Thomas is to the development and use of this phrase in relationship to ordained ministerial priesthood. Despite the consistent use of the phrase in persona Christi by Thomas, the Council of Trent did not see fit to use the phrase in its particular time and circumstances of

history. It affirmed the special "character" received through Holy Orders; that Orders truly is a sacrament; that priests had the power of consecrating and forgiving; that this power did not come from the people, but from Christ. The Second Vatican Council was faithful to the teaching of Trent, but integrated its view of the Sacraments and Holy Orders more clearly into the theology of the Church.

Although the phrase in persona Christi is found in the encyclicals Menti Nostrae and Mediator Dei by Pius XII, no theological clarifications seem to be developed in relation to the phrase in these encyclicals.

The importance of the phrase and some clarifications of its use are found in the rather consistent use of the phrase in official documents of the Church following the Second Vatican Council which relate especially to the ordained priesthood. The nature of these documents usually indicates the way in which the phrase will be used. In those documents following the Council which relate specifically to the liturgy and the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the phrase is usually used in a Eucharistic sense. This is seen in the documents "Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery" (1967) and "The General Instruction on the Roman Missal" (1970).

The important document on the Ministerial Priesthood from the 1971 Synod of Bishops uses the phrase only once and in relationship to the priestly role in the Eucharist. In his encyclical on Priestly Celibacy (1967) Paul VI uses the phrase first in the Eucharistic context and secondly in the more general ministerial context of Lumen Gentium 21. The "Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against some Present-Day Errors" published by the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith uses the phrase twice in the Eucharistic context and once in the extended ministerial context. Paul VI's Encyclical "Evangelization in the Modern World" speaks of priests by their priestly ordination acting in the person of Christ as educators of the People of God in the faith as well as in their role as ministers of the Sacraments.

In the "Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1976), section 5 repeats the perennial teaching of the Church that bishops and priests exercise their ministry, not in persona propria, but as representing Christ who acts through them.¹⁵ This refers to the general ministry of the priest or bishop. It then goes on to speak of the supreme expression of this representation in the celebration of the Eucharist. The priest, in the Eucharist, not only acts "through the effective power conferred on him by Christ, but in persona Christi, taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image, when he pronounces the words of consecration."¹⁶ Acting in the person of Christ is more than acting through the effective power received in ordination. It is in this document that there is a specific reference to the Summa Theologica in which Thomas states that "the priest also enacts the image of Christ, in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration."¹⁷ Thomas makes a distinction between image, power and person, but also closely relates them. A little later in this document, in the section of theological reflections on the doctrinal teaching of the Church concerning the need for the ordained priest to be male, the document first speaks of the need for "natural resemblance" for sacramental

signs based on Thomas' theology of res et sacramentum. After two other reflections, the conclusion is drawn that when Christ is represented - the highest form of this is in the Eucharist - "his role (this is the original sense of the word persona) must be taken by a man."¹⁸ This is the first indication in an official document on how the word persona in this context is being interpreted.

The document then goes on to state that the phrase in persona Ecclesiae was used by the II Vatican Council to "make more precise and to complete the expression in persona Christi."¹⁹

In the document "Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church" (1978), the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, in discussing the role of bishops, refers to Lumen Gentium 21, including the phrase previously studied in Eius persona agant which refers to the threefold ministerial activity of the Bishop. In this document, the Congregation states that the functions of teacher, priest, and pastor are all one indivisible ministry in Christ. The three functions should be viewed more as three dimensions of one ministry. Within this perspective, the phrase in persona Christi clearly relates to the fullness of the ministry of the bishop.

Pope John Paul II reiterates the unity of the three functions as threefold dimensions of Christ's office and mission in his first letter to Priests in 1979, and he uses the phrase in persona Christi in the context of Lumen Gentium 10. He refers to the ministerium of the hierarchical priesthood as originating in Christ, not in the community. In his Apostolic Exhortation on "Catechesis in Our Time," he uses the phrase "in the person of Christ" in the manner of Lumen Gentium 5, referring to Christ himself as revealing the kingdom.

In his letter to priests, bishops, and deacons in 1980 (Dominicae Cenae), John Paul II explains the meaning of the priest offering the Holy Sacrifice in persona Christi. He states that "this means more than offering 'in the name of' or 'in the place of' Christ. In persona means in specific sacramental identification with 'the eternal High Priest.'"²⁰ This is the most explicit explanation for the use of the phrase which is found in Church documents. Later, he states that "one must not forget the primary office of priests, who have been consecrated by their ordination to represent Christ the Priest: for this reason their hands, like their words and their will, have become the direct instrument of Christ."²¹ The context here is Eucharistic, but it has broader applications. The first section of this quote is used once again in the document from the Congregation of the Faith entitled "The Minister of the Eucharist" (1983).²²

In an address to the U.S. bishops in 1983, Pope John Paul II uses the phrase in a more general way for the life and activity of the priest. This is true also for his presentation to priests and religious in San Salvador and in his Holy Thursday message to priests in 1984. In his Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance, he uses the phrase in the broader sacramental sense.

Based on the study of the use of the phrase in persona Christi in the documents of Vatican II, and of the documents which preceded and followed the Second Vatican Council, several conclusions can be drawn for the study of the theology of the ordained presbyteral ministry. First of all, the phrase is used only in relation to the ordained ministerial priesthood and is one of the ways in which the Council Fathers distinguish between the priesthood of the faithful and the

priesthood of the ordained bishops and priests. The documents always emphasize that the ordained ministerial priesthood is in service to the common priesthood of all the faithful.

Secondly, the phrase is used in key doctrinal sections of the documents to express the intimate relationship between the ordained priest and Christ. The priest primarily represents Christ and through his representation of Christ, he represents the community of the faithful.

Third, the exact meaning of the phrase is never fully explained within the documents of Vatican Council II. A variety of footnote references are made within the documents and these have been examined. They help toward an understanding of the phrase, but do not give a theological explanation of it. St. Thomas' explanation of the phrase in his commentary on II Corinthians 2:10 seems to be one of the clearest when he explains that the phrase refers to the auctoritas Christi. Pope John Paul II, after the Vatican Council, explains the term as meaning the "specific sacramental identification" with Christ. Different nuances of theological meaning are hinted at in the different uses of the term. But it always is clear that it identifies the life and mission of the priest with the life and mission of Christ.

Fourth, in studying the use of the phrase in the documents of Vatican II, it becomes clear that the phrase is not used in one sense, but in a variety of ways. The variety of ways in which it is used are not in opposition or contradiction to one another, but are wider or narrower applications of the phrase within the context of the ordained ministerial priesthood. Earlier in this chapter, I indicated that the

phrase is used (1) in reference to Christ himself; (2) to the ordained priest in the Sacrifice of the Mass; (3) to the ordained priest in sacramental action; (4) to the ordained priest in his ministerial activity of teaching, ruling and sanctifying; (5) to the ordained priest in light of his ordination in general; and (6) to the ordained priest in relation to his own personal qualities and characteristics. These variations seem to indicate an analogous use of the phrase in different contexts. These same variations are found in the documents which follow those of Vatican Council II.

From these conclusions, several implications can be drawn for the ongoing theological reflection on the topic of ordained presbyteral ministry. First of all, it seems clear that any complete theological treatise on the ordained ministry or the Sacrament of Orders cannot ignore the phrase in persona Christi. It must be considered as an integral part of the theology of ordained ministry.

Secondly, theologians cannot interpret the phrase in persona Christi exclusively in referring to the use of Christ's authority in the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist by ordained priests. In the documents of Vatican II and in the Post-Vatican documents, the phrase is used in a variety of ways within the context of ordained ministry.

Thirdly, the use of the phrase in persona Christi for the ordained ministry does not deny the active presence of Christ in all the baptized or deny their important role in the Church.

Fourthly, theologians today need to explore the meaning of the phrase - in persona Christi - in light of our present understanding of the concept "person" and the implications for representing another person or acting in the person of another. Is there a distinction

between the theological/philosophical understanding of acting in the person of Christ and the democratic notion of representation?

Finally, the implications of acting in the person of Christ related to the question of being in the image of Christ and the whole notion of symbol need to be further explored. The modern philosophical notions of person have effected the use of this phrase in the documents of Vatican II.

My intention in this thesis is not to resolve all the issues of the theology of the ordained ministerial priesthood, but to explore the use of the phrase in persona Christi for the theology of ordained presbyteral ministry in the documents of Vatican II. My hope is that this thesis will contribute to the ongoing theological study and reflection on ordained presbyteral ministry which is so important today.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER V

¹Lumen Gentium n. 5 (Flannery, Vol. I), pp. 352-353.

²L.G. n. 21 (NCWC), p. 131.

³L.G. n. 37 (Flannery, Vol. I), p. 395.

⁴Presbyterorum Ordinis n. 2, p. 865.

⁵P.O. n. 12, pp. 885-886.

⁶P.O. n. 13, p. 887.

⁷Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 7, pp. 4-5.

⁸S.C. n. 33. p. 12.

⁹Pius XII, "Menti Nostrae" in The Popes and the Priesthood: A Symposium of Seven Papal Documents, ed. Grail (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1953), p. 86.

¹⁰St. John Chrysostom, The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Second Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Oxford, John Henry Parker, 1848), p. 61.

¹¹Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Opera Omnia, Vol. XIII, "Expositio in S. Pauli Epistoli" (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1949), p. 309.

¹²Boethius, The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 85.

¹³Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, op. cit., Vol. XIII, p. 309.

¹⁴John F. Gallagher C.M., Significando Causant: A Study of Sacramental Efficiency (Fribourg, Switzerland: the University Press, 1965), p. 229.

¹⁵Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Inter insigniores" n. 5 (Flannery, Vol. II), p. 339.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., Footnote 17, p. 345.

¹⁸Ibid., n. 5, p. 340.

¹⁹Ibid., n. 5, p. 341.

²⁰Pope John Paul II, "Dominicae Cena" (Flannery, Vol. II).
p. 74.

²¹Ibid., p. 82.

²²Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The
Minister of the Eucharist" in "Origins," September 15, 1983, Vol. 13,
n. 14, p. 229.

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