

REPORT  
ON MATERIALS  
SUBMITTED TO  
THE BISHOP OF CUERNAVACA, MEXICO  
WITH RESPECT TO  
CONFLICT-SITUATIONS  
FOR PRIESTS  
IN THE MODERN WORLD

MATERIALS EDITED AND  
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A. Source of Material: the data which supports and shapes this study on conflict-situations in priestly life today derives from the following sources:

1. The Schemas already formulated and to be presented to the Conciliar Fathers at the Third session of the Second Vatican Council, the Schemas "De Sacerdotibus", "De Institutiones Sacerdotali", "De Clericis" and "De Cura Animarum."
2. The Observations and Interventions of the Conciliar Fathers in preliminary discussions of the aforesaid Schemas, and also in prior redactions of these Schemas and in the work of the preparatory commissions.
3. Various writings on the priesthood and clerical life: Papal documents, theological works, sociological, psychological and historical studies.
4. Special data collected by personal interviews and by

responses to a detailed questionnaire sent out by the Bishop of Cuernavaca to selected contributors in Latin America and in the United States. This data was collected and coordinated with the help of the Center of Intercultural Formation (C.I.F.) at Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

B. Procedure: the following procedure will be followed in presenting this data:

1. Statement of fact: the presentation of the observable symptoms of conflict or disorder in priestly life, as witnessed especially in sources 2, 3, and 4 above.
2. Casualty: an attempt, with the help of these same sources, to locate the characteristic cause or causes behind the disorders.
3. Contemporary mystique: some more profound tendency or reality or human need characteristic of men in our time and reflected in the disorder. For example, the spirit of freedom, democracy and personal liberty so characteristic of our time, as this affects the concept of, and actual regime of, obedience in clerical life. The material in this section will help us to grasp -
  - a. The Changing Conditions of priestly life in our time as a reflexion of ideological, cultural and political changes;
  - b. The great historical and human drives which must be recognized, honored and purified in order to permit the structuring of a truly relevant and truly vital priestly life and priestly ministry.

4. Supernatural mystique: some more profound tendency or reality or need that is in the priest by reason of his Christian and his sacerdotal vocation, a need that must be satisfied if his priestly life is to be happy and fruitful. For example, his need as pastor to generate, to form and to lead the Christian community.
5. Resolution of the problem: an attempt, with the help of the same sources, to suggest and propose the necessary knowledge, changed attitudes and practices, new or modified structures that promise eradication or alleviation of the conflicts or disorders in priestly life.

### C. Actual Conflict-Situations

#### 1. Problems of obedience

##### a. The symptoms

1. In general: the crucial problem of freedom and authority, involving both the priest as superior - bishop, pastor, religious superior - and the priest as subject.

##### 2. In particular

- a) in the seminary: the new spirit of freedom in the seminarian and in the young seminary professor, a spirit often clashing with an older regime which is more rigorous, more monastic, more authoritarian, more dogmatic, a regime that stresses docility, unquestioning obedience, minute observance, etc,

b) in priestly life: great dissatisfaction among certain members of the clergy, especially the younger members (often the more gifted and more zealous members), with regard to the actual regime of priestly and pastoral life. This dissatisfaction often brings them into open contention with pastor and bishop. Along with the discontent and actual resistance have come the new theories 1) of fraternal rather than paternal authority, 2) of apostolic disobedience, and 3) of obedience to the Church and to the mind of the Church rather than obedience to the ecclesiastical superior, who so poorly reflects the mind of the Church. Also, the problem with personal authority is paralleled by the difficulties with doctrinal authority, difficulties with the Magisterium, with the force, scope and accuracy of the teaching authority in the Church.

b. The causes

1. Internal: failure to resolve personal problem with authority, a problem that characteristically has psychological roots in disorders in family life and early formation, chiefly through the lack of a good relationship with the father and through a strong identification with the mother apart from, or even a-

gainst, the father. For example, a psychological study of U. S. priests hospitalized for psychological disorders, chiefly alcoholism, reveals that among 100 of these priests 91% came from homes where the mother was the dominant figure and 86% came from homes where one parent had exhibited definite psychiatric symptoms, 60% of these being alcoholism on the part of one parent, usually the father. Religious and clerical obedience must be founded upon a firm sense of filiality, of trust in the father, of a healthy dependence of soul leading to liberation of spirit and maturity.

2. External:

a. Structures of obedience: Forms or structures of obedience in the Church which are still authoritarian and paternalistic, rather than truly pater-  
nal and properly collegial. For example, 1) the relationship between the seminarian and dominative authority in the seminary; 2) between the assistant-pastor and the pastor, 3) between priest; pastor or non-pastor, and the bishop, 4) between religious subject and superior, and 5) between episcopal authority and the Holy See. The forceful articulation in the Constitution on the Church of the notion of the collegial authority of the bishops suggests not only a doctrinal obscurity but a structural weakness existing in the Church prior to Vatican II, namely too great a dependence by the bish-

ops on the Holy See and the Curia, and a lack of the spirit of, and the operative procedures for, true collegiality. Also, and conversely, in the decline and growing impotence of such authoritarian structures, there has been discernible in the Church the phenomenon of practical anarchy, with a merely juridical conformity to authority on the part of the subject and excessive indulgence of disordered subjects by superiors, for example, the scandalous indulgence by bishops of grave disorders in irremovable pastors. Such a scandal is especially harmful to younger priests who are living with, and actually subject to, such pastors.

Even apart from such personal disorders on the part of superiors in clerical life, the structures of authority in the Church suffer from:

- 1) over-large dioceses where the priests, except for the Curia, the pastors and the monsignori are not really known by the bishop;
- 2) long assistantships or curateships in parochial life, the structure, for example, in many large dioceses in the U.S. where a priest may be an assistant for 20 or 25 years or more before becoming a pastor. By the time he is made a pastor he is old, frustrated, often conservative or even cynical in his outlook, without vision or energy to give leadership to imaginative, hopeful and effective pastoral action;

- 3) the conservatism and smallness of vision of pastors themselves, with their limited view of the parish as a center for the reception of the sacraments and for a certain amount of social life;
- 4) the monarchical and non-collegial structure of parochial authority where basic pastoral leadership emanates univocally from the pastor, who is himself often deformed by the structures and attitudes referred to above;
- 5) the monarchical and non-collegial structure of episcopal authority, where diocesan leadership derives completely from the bishop and his curia, with little structuring of the presbyterium as a whole, and no real sharing of pastoral vision or pastoral responsibility.

b. The religious priest

The special problem of the religious priest who is subject to two authorities, the authority of the bishop (the bishop, not his bishop) and the authority of his religious superior. This is a serious problem in places where the religious priest is engaged in parochial work or in any kind of continual pastoral work in the diocese, and thus called to work for and with the bishop (the bishop, not his bishop) and thus to enter more fully into the presbyterium of the place. Several consequences of this ambivalent state:

- 1) actual and open conflicts in authority that sometimes motivate the abandonment of religious life, through a desire to enter completely into the local presbyterium, or at times the abandonment of priestly life itself;
- 2) the de facto weakening of the authority of the bishop and of the unity of the local presbyterium; the juridical separation of power through exemption, i.e. the separation of the regime of the house from the care of souls, is seen to be unreal, unwise and often unworkable;
- 3) the consequent weakening of the apostolate, which depends so much on true filial union with the bishop and full fraternal union among the members of the presbyterium.

c. Contemporary mystique

The spirit of personal freedom, creative initiative and mature responsibility; a fondness for more democratic and collegial modes of authority; the desire for a mature obedience, an adult obedience and thus a more authentic cooperation of subject with superior. This spirit has been ratified and blessed, as it were, by the relatively happy experience in our time of democracy and religious pluralism. We observe here the phenomenon of social and cultural influence, even on a supernatural society like the Church. For example, the actual regime of freedom and authority in the Church is

affected by influences from a civil regime and a cultural milieu that is feudal, monarchic and authoritarian. Conversely, the regime of freedom and authority in the Church is affected in quite another way by a civil regime and a cultural milieu that is personalist, democratic and collegial. There is little doubt, for example, that changes both in ecclesiastical policy and ecclesiastical theory with respect to religious pluralism derived in large part from the experience of modern democracy since the time of the French and American Revolutions, as also from the experience, since the Reformation, of credal coexistence in countries like Germany and Holland and, later, England and the United States. This spirit or mystique has, in fact, been gradually assimilated by the Church until we see it openly manifest in the Decree on Ecumenism, in the forthcoming decree on Religious Liberty, and in the monumental Constitution on the Church. In the last-named document we may discern clear signs of this spirit:

- 1) in the theology of the People of God, and the theology of the common priesthood of the laity;
- 2) in the notion of the charisms operating in the Church and among the laity, charisms to be discerned by but not deriving from ecclesiastical authority;
- 3) In the way in which the Constitution speaks a-

bout obedience, e.g. in speaking of the advantages of the religious life, it mentions "the support of liberty...strengthened by obedience" (n.43). And again, the notion that the evangelical counsels do "not detract from a genuine development of the human person" (n.46); indeed, the counsels "contribute a great deal to the purification of the heart and spiritual liberty" (Ibid.).

d. Supernatural mystique: by reason of orders and the grace of orders there is a twofold inclination in the priestly soul:

1) A need to conform himself completely to Christ and to his bishop, and this for several reasons. First, by reason of the sacred character he has received, a power which already conforms him to Christ ontologically, so to speak; by reason of the instrumental character of priestly action, especially the action of sacrificing; by reason of the need on his part for interior sacrifice by which he becomes not only ontologically but morally, voluntarily, both priest and victim; by reason of the need for jurisdiction in order to exercise his priestly ministry; by reason of his participation in the pastorate of the bishop. In virtue of all of these reasons the priest is one who is called to be subject to and conformed to an-

other. He is essentially "sharer", "instrument", "servant", "victim". By reason of these various and characteristic titles of his state and of his action obedience appears to be a connatural virtue for the priest and the state of obedience a connatural state, even though not necessarily stabilized by vow.

- 2) At the same time the priest is father and pastor and apostle, titles which do not belong to the state of servitude and subjection but to the state of maturity and apostolic freedom. Within his obedience to God, to Christ, and to his bishop, and strengthened by that obedience, the priest needs the apostolic freedom to generate his people and to bring them to maturity. Real pastoral action requires freedom, the power to choose the most appropriate pastoral means. When his liberty is strengthened by obedience and sustained by the confidence of authority in his priestly desires and priestly designs, then freedom and obedience grow together and the apostolate flourishes. When the liberty of the priest is thwarted and repressed by a decadent structure or by an ignorant and unjust regime, then obedience tends to languish along with freedom; its fruit is not strength but defiance or a stubborn sadness; and in the end it is the apostolate which suffers. In

practice obedience is a very delicate thing and a very human thing; it does not normally flourish when authority is too plainly unreasonable and unjust. As one of the Conciliar Fathers stated in an Intervention during the 2nd session of the Council: "We are faced at present not so much with a crisis of obedience as with a crisis of command."

e. Resolution

1. The need for a truly mature understanding of the theology of obedience, and in its full practical dimension. This includes an understanding of the two paradoxes of sacerdotal obedience.
  - a) the need on the part of the priest for full submission and self-oblation, together with his need for pastoral freedom;
  - b) the necessity of affirming the unchangeable essence of obedience together with the necessity of accepting the validity of change in the actual regime of obedience, a change brought about in accordance with the authentic values of contemporary life and contemporary forms of authority.

N.B. It is the priest above all who suffers from distortions and diminutions in the theology and practice of obedience. He needs the guidance and the surety of the

Magisterium in his teaching, yet he needs to be open to the lines of true theological development. He needs the blessing of the bishop on his apostolic endeavors, yet he needs the wisdom, courage and freedom to experiment with new forms of the apostolate. He needs to honor that profound impulse to conform himself entirely to Christ, so that the sacramental transformation of species shall be the sign and cause of his own mystical transformation in Christ. At the same time he needs to be conformed to the actual needs of the members of Christ, so that he must follow the twofold law -- fidelity to Word, fidelity to the people of God. In the perfect realization of the dialectics of freedom and authority he needs to discover, through loving and voluntary self-oblation, the perfection and joy of spiritual liberty. We may say, finally, that he needs to know by sound doctrine and experience the theology of obedience, the psychology of obedience and the history of obedience.

- 2) The need in seminarians and young clerics for an early resolution or alleviation of psychological problems that impede religious and clerical obedience, problems stemming from dis-

orders in family life and in early experiences of authority. As we have seen these experiences often generate rebellion or withdrawal, especially that occult rebellion or withdrawal which is the root of neurosis. Psychological studies show a strong sampling in religious and clerical life of the withdrawn, docile, overly-submissive personality together with a growth in the troublesome, aggressive personality, suggesting that the choice of religious and clerical life might be for many a misguided way to resolve a psychological problem in the area of obedience and authority. The practical need in clerical and pre-clerical life is for:

- a) more careful screening of candidates for religious and clerical life;
- b) early psychological help and the kind of spiritual direction that includes the psychological dimension of the problem;
- c) a healthy milieu in the seminary, a family milieu, featuring the experience both of loving authority (paternity) and genuine friendship (fraternity). Such a milieu will be favorable to the spiritual and psychological rehabilitation of those suffering from hidden or overt disorders in the area of obedience.

- 3) Priestly structures that are true to the unchanging reality of obedience, yet true also to the special sacerdotal needs of our own time - the need for a shared authority and for large areas of personal freedom and creative initiative. Such structures would include:
- a) Elimination of long assistantships or curateships, which are deformed structures in priestly life. Serious pastoral consideration would have to be given, of course, to alternative structures, such as the breaking-up of large parishes or the gathering of priests in larger communities serving many smaller areas, or special segments of society, or special kinds of apostolic work.
  - b) The positive revival of a living presbyterium, a healthy and effective presbyterium, functioning, perhaps, as an established consultative body in the diocese. Such a body would serve to inform, advise and petition the bishop on a variety of apostolic concerns - liturgical matters, forms of the apostolate, specific needs of the people, the way of life of the clergy, etc.
  - c) The structuring of such a presbyterium would probably also entail the reform of

the diocesan curia and a reform, or even eradication, of the outmoded and feudal order of Domestic Prelates.

N.B. The restructuring of the diocesan priesthood in this direction would not undermine or weaken episcopal authority. Rather, it would tend to strengthen it. With the revival of a living presbyterium functioning in adult cooperation with the bishop, the jurisdiction of the latter would be exercised more wisely, more effectively and, no doubt, more equitably. Furthermore, the greater dignity, humanity and catholicity of such a structure would serve to inspire a more vital and more united apostolate, greater fraternity among priest-apostles, and a more profound filial regard for the bishop.

2. Problems with regard to celibacy and priestly chastity

a. The symptoms

1) Sexual

- a) habitual concubinage, enduring homosexual relationship, attempted marriage;
- b) occasional or quasi-habitual (chronic) deviation - whether it be heterosexual, homosexual or masturbatory;
- c) occasional or habitual laxity with regard to erotic thoughts, desires, reading, shows, etc; - all symptoms of unresolved sexual problems

2) Spousal

The problem of the unresolved relationship with women, even apart from overt deviations. The spousal need is there, unresolved, unsatisfied, unintegrated, unsublimated. The symptoms are fear and inhibition together with a morbid fascination. This situation - the most frequent of all among the clergy - spells out a simple lack of maturity with regard to this vital human relationship.

3) Affective

This refers to the larger problem of retarded or stunted affectivity in the priest, who is often afraid of any open and loving relationship. Strong compensatory affections which are sub-personal often hide or mask the disorder - excessive love for work, travel, sports, hobbies, etc.

b. the causes

1) Internal

a) Psychological: the same lack of resolution of personal problems that is manifest in symptoms of disobedience, is manifest also in symptoms of sexual weakness or overt deviation. The flight from painful authority and from unhappiness in the family is characteristically coupled with sexual indulgence or deviation. The result, at best,

is sexual immaturity; often there is evidence of latent homosexuality and unresolved Oedipal impulses. Many young men burdened in this way find their way into religious and clerical life, not only because they are typical products of our culture and of the present condition of family life, but also because religious or clerical life offers to many of them an apparent solution to their problems. Such a life may be for them 1) a continuation of the flight from reality, 2) a protection from the fear of sexual encounter, 3) a stabilization of the Oedipal impulse and of the conquest over the father, 4) a desire stemming from latent homosexuality to be part of an all-male society, etc.

- b) Moral: lack of sexual maturity due to human infirmity, bad habits, inadequate or even distorted sexual education.
- c) Spiritual: a widespread lack of understanding -
  - 1) of the human dimension of clerical celibacy, that is, the need for a supernatural realism in which the choice of celibacy is a true and voluntary choice, a knowing renunciation of a great human good for the greater good of the Christian community.

- 2) of the full theological dimension of clerical celibacy - its consecrated character, its need for constant renewal, its relationship to love and to growth in love, its relationship to freedom of spirit, its value in terms of apostolic accessibility and eschatological witness.

## 2. External

### a) Structures and spirit of seminary life

- 1) a spirituality and a regime which is monastic and segregated from the world, rather than pastoral and in loving contact with the world;
- 2) lack of contact with girls and women, a contact which is normally necessary for sexual maturity;
- 3) lack of fully-formed and satisfying relationships with authority, with bishop, rector, moderator, spiritual director:
  - i. on the part of the subject: on the one hand, lack of openness and filial confidence; on the other hand, though less frequently, servile dependence;
  - ii. on the part of the superior
    - x) tyrannical regime - attempt to

dominate;

y) formal regime - fear of personal relationships with subjects;

z) impotent regime - imprudent laissez faire.

4) relationships with fellow seminarians

i. one extreme: adherence to the spirit of the old regime, i.e. a life dominated by law and rule, with no particular friendships, individualist practices in prayer, study and ascetical life;

ii. The other extreme: imprudent and distorted embracing of the 'new dispensation' of open affective relationships; often related to latent homosexuality.

5) the regime of the seminary itself:

still reflecting the old regime, with modifications. That is to say, formal and institutional rather than familial; the reign of law and of an individualist piety rather than the reign of love and corporate worship; fear of particular friendships; formal and regimented program of studies; little contact with secular learning or secular life; no experience of family life; very little

experience of the apostolate; chiefly a place of trial and approbation before admission to the exclusive circle of those in sacred orders.

b) Structures and spirit of sacerdotal life

1) special problem of the apprentice years:

the young, protected and unprepared priest entering into the freedom and complexity of the first years in priestly and apostolic life;

2) lack of satisfying human relationships:

i. lack of filial and fraternal relationship with the bishop: separated by age, by outlook, by the curia, by the 'higher' clergy;

ii. lack of filial and fraternal relationship with pastor

x) overlong apprenticeship as curate, with little authority or responsibility (cf. C,I,b.,2.,b) above)

y) separation of pastor and curate by years, attitudes, theology, pastoral outlook, etc.

iii. lack of true priestly fraternity:

x) isolation of priests

1) physical: in rural or mission areas

2) psychological: even in large cities where the structures and customs of clerical life separate priests from one another - each with his own hobbies, amusements, interests, family, friends; often each with his own separate and unique apostolate;

y) lack of a living presbyterium  
(cf. C, I, e., 3, b above)

z) unawareness or neglect of the need for a common life: Canon Law, Papal Encyclicals and other papal documents on the priesthood, the present Schemas on the Priesthood, on Clerical life, etc. - all call attention to the need of priests to lead a common life with other priests; yet present structures and customs establish it very feebly and little is done to encourage improved structures and customs in this regard.

iv. lack of continued spiritual direction: maturity in the young priest is a desideratum but seldom a real-

ity and there is great need, especially in his first priestly years, for substantial spiritual direction. Its absence, and the absence of the tradition of the spiritual director of priests as a vital figure in the presbyterium, is one of the hidden tragedies of sacerdotal life.

Whether it be in the figure of bishop and pastor or in the figure of the wise and saintly confessor, or the expert psychologist and counselor, a healthy presbyterium requires the continued action and influence of spiritual paternity.

### 3) Compensatory relationships

#### i. with the rich or well-to-do

Often the discontented priest turns to wealthy friends for honor, comforts, pleasure, travel, food and drink, shows and concerts, relaxation. Family and friends supply not only necessities but luxuries. The affective needs of the priest are partially satisfied thereby but at the cost of his apostolic freedom, his evangelical witness and the vigor of a simple and manly way of life.

ii. With girls and women:

These relationships are often linked with the one just mentioned. One of the great social pleasures is the pleasure of mixed company. The frustrated and unhappy priest goes from this harmless pleasure to indiscreet confidences to dangerous situations and then to falls. The greatest single cause of these defections, however, appears to be not the women themselves nor the occasions nor even the imprudence of the priest; rather, it is the lonely and unsatisfying life that leads the priest to seek these very occasions. There is a grave obligation on the bishop and pastor, and on those responsible for priestly formation and the structuring of priestly life, to re-examine that formation and re-evaluate those structures, so that all things tend to liberate, to purify, to satisfy, to enlarge the affective life of the priest.

c. Contemporary mystique: the desire on the part of men today, and the priests also, to enter fully into the human experience. Signs of this: greater freedom of

the clergy as to dress, participation in social events, in sports and the theatre; greater interest in authentically human studies, such as history, sociology, psychology, the positive sciences, art and literature. There is also a strong undercurrent of thought and feeling that the priest needs sexual and spousal experience in order to be fully human. Cf. the influence of Freud, plus modern findings in sociology and psychology with respect to the need for a full affective life.

d. Supernatural mystique: the need of the Christian, and even more intensely the priest, to love universally and without measure. Great love of God and neighbor is requisite for the fruitfulness of his apostolate and also for the personal happiness of the priest. There is need also to love with an incarnational love, in two senses:

- 1) To love with a truly human love enlarged and purified by contact with the Heart of Jesus;
- 2) To love Jesus not only in Himself but in His members, and to love them in a way that fully embraces their humanity. The priest must be more aware than ever that the dynamic of supernatural love is not schizophrenic, i.e. not cut off from or elevated totally above the human instinct for love and the human objects of love. The theological problem involved here is the relationship between caritas and amicitia.

e. Resolution

- 1) The need for a genuine understanding and experience of incarnational love, that is, the experience of being loved as a real person yet loved in Jesus, and the experience of loving as a real person another real person yet loving that person in Jesus. Though a deeper understanding of incarnational love through study, prayer and discussion is most helpful here, the greatest need on the part of the seminarian and the young priest is for the experience of such a love, which can be gained only by contact with those who are strong in faith and love. That is, no doubt, why the Schema on priestly formation requires that moderators and teachers in the seminary be selected "from the very best men" (ex optimis viris) in the presbyterium.
- 2) The need for a true and adequate theological understanding of priestly celibacy as it is related to 1) the reality of incarnational love; 2) consecration of self and growth in love; 3) interior freedom of spirit; 4) apostolic freedom and accessibility; 5) eschatological witness.
- 3) The need for a realistic training and instruction in celibacy during the years of formation, a training designed to help the candidate - 1) to understand both the theology and the psychol-

ogy of love; 2) to realize his need for love, especially for spousal love; and 3) to renounce this love knowingly and willingly for the sake of the kingdom of God and for the service of the people of God.

N.B. This realistic instruction has two further advantages:

- 1) The opportunity for a profound and realistic treatment of the theology and psychology of marriage, especially the intrinsic ordination of marriage to holiness and Christian perfection. Both in the choice of celibacy and in the apostolate to come it is most important that the young cleric should not identify the notion of perfection or the striving for perfection with the notion of celibacy or perfect chastity.
- 2) The opportunity to reveal and thus to cope with latent homosexual tendencies present in many seminarians. Expert personal guidance would be needed at this point, both to deal with inclinations that are now overt, and to resolve the question as to whether to remain in clerical life. Further studies are needed to determine: a) the incidence of even innocent and non-overt homosexuality among seminarians; b) the possibility of substantial cure; c) the avail-

ability of therapy; d) the question of the common good, especially of the image of the Church and of the priesthood communicated by the innocent but effeminate priest.

- 4) Even apart from this special problem, there is an outstanding need in many seminarians and priests for true psychological liberation, as they face their repressed instincts and face also the hidden motives which impede the purification of their affectivity. This work of psychological liberation should begin as soon as possible, before entrance into the seminary or novitiate if feasible, certainly in the early years of formation, and under the direction of a priest or laymen who is expert in psychological testing and in therapy. Testing alone is not enough; there must be continued therapy, whenever such therapy is needed and when the prognosis is good. When the prognosis is not good, the candidate should not be allowed to advance towards the priesthood.
- 5) The need for priestly structures and way of life that will aid in the development of a healthy affectivity, for example:
  - a) in the seminary: a family atmosphere, the experience of paternal and fraternal love, the beginnings of an authentic priestly community. There is a necessity here not only

for changes in the rule and the regime but also changes in the quality of the priests who are assigned to seminary work. These priests ought to be mature, loving, perceptive, thoroughly human.

b) apostolic regency (cf. C, II, e., 3): possibility in priestly formation of a time for apostolic work - between philosophy and theology, or after theology but before Ordination. An apostolic regency of one, two or three years. Why? 1) for growth in pastoral experiences and apostolic motivation; 2) for a realistic appraisal of clerical life; 3) for sexual and affective maturity.

c) apprentice years: with or without the apostolic or pastoral regency, the neo-priester has many needs in order to attain a healthy maturity. He needs both guidance and a certain freedom of action; rightful contact with women yet a growing prudence in their regard; he needs community life, time for prayer and study, genuine friendship, the good example of older priests and especially his pastor. Some have suggested the further protection of seminary life during the first year or two but there is more emphasis on the need of the young

priest to take his place in the presbyterium, but in a healthy presbyterium where priestly fraternity prevails.

d) sacerdotal life

1) community life: many have suggested a true common life for priests, a priestly community, for example, that would serve several parishes or chapels, or several apostolic centers or areas of apostolic work. If this is impossible or unworkable, then a general concern by bishops and pastors that the priestly community, large or small be a happy community. A crucial element in the choice of pastors ought to be their capacity to form and to lead a happy priestly community.

2) importance of loving relationships

i. between the bishop and his priests, a relationship calling for frequent contact, for the genuine accessibility of the bishop, probably for more bishops and much smaller dioceses. An important factor in regulating the size of the diocese ought to be the size of the priestly community. A bishop

cannot be spiritual father to 1,000 or 1,500 priests; probably not even to 400 or 500. Ideally no more than 100 priests.

- ii. between pastor and assistant, a relationship calling for great mutual cooperation and strong fraternal love. Eradicate once and for all the system of long assistantships (cf. C,I,e., 3.,a), never more than ten years, except for special reasons.
- iii. between priest and priest
  - x) revival of a living presbyterium (cf. C,I, e,3, b)
  - y) opportunity for priestly community, if not the actual physical community suggested above, then at least many opportunities for living together and working together, in retreats, workshops, conferences, vacation villas, etc.
- iv. between priest and people:  
Recognition of great desire and great need of the priest to be a spiritual father and not just a distributor of the sacraments, certainly not just an administrator of the parochial estab-

lishment. Cf. testimony of U.S. priests in sociological study that the two most satisfying priestly works for them were 1) hearing confessions, and 2) counseling, both pertaining to the personal function of the priest as pastor and father. Parochial structures and the parochial regime must be re-examined and regulated so as to free the priest for priestly and pastoral work. The affective relation of the priest to people must be centered around his capacity and need for spiritual paternity.

v. with women:

No easy resolution of this sensitive area of the priest's affective life; certainly no solidity or spiritual freedom without affective maturity. Practical suggestions:

- 1) continued realism with regard to spousal needs of the priest as man;
- 2) need for continual purification of conscience in relations with women;

3) need for experience of spiritual paternity with regard to women and also for the experience of other loving relationships with them, relationships of sister and even (at times) of spiritual spouse;

4) need for continual renewal of the consecration to God in the celibate life.

6. Consideration of the various alternatives with regard to the present regime of priestly celibacy:

a) Continue present regime in the Western Church but improve the theological and psychological knowledge of the priest; strengthen emotional and affective maturity; work towards true spiritual freedom and mature commitment to the celibate life.

b) Change present regime in Western Church -

1) regime of two clergies, one celibate and one married, as in the Oriental Church;

2) Regime of unmarried priests and married deacons, the latter a genuine 'clergy' with substantial pastoral duties;

3) Regime of a married clergy:

i. arguments pro: celibacy not a matter of divine law but only of human

law; celibacy intrinsically related to religious life but not to sacerdotal life; marriage will increase the experience of human love, enlarge the humanity of the priest, prevent sacrilege and defection, increase the number of priests.

ii. arguments con: example of Christ, St. Paul and most of the saints; celibacy ordered to greater love of God and neighbor, to spiritual freedom, apostolic accessibility, eschatological sign.

7. Clear need for more liberal and flexible law of dispensation after Ordination for priests unable to persevere in celibate life:
  - a) either a regime of two clergies, with change possible from unmarried to married clergy;
  - b) or a regime of one clergy, the unmarried, but with easier reduction to the lay state, no special burdens imposed, no stigma, and special structures for easier assimilation into life in the world.
8. Need for growth in divine love and for a regime and practices that will foster growth in love:
  - a) an authentic and satisfying prayer-life, indeed a truly contemplative life, not the

contemplative life of the monk but that of the priest and pastor. In practice such a prayer-life must be personal, not legal, and thus may require further reforms in the breviary and in the regime of priestly prayer;

- b) a fervent eucharistic life, supported by a living liturgy, by loving meditation, and by great faith in the eucharist as sign and cause of mystical transformation - the transformation of the priest into another Christ, not only according to the power of Orders but according to his interior life.
- c) devotion to Mary, Mother of priests, for it is in Mary and united to her Immaculate Heart that the heart of the priest is transformed into the Heart of Jesus.

N.B. The rightful concern in contemporary religious literature for the psychological and sociological factors in the development of the affective life of the priest often obscures the more profound need of the priest for loving union with Christ the High Priest. Further, in the accurate ordering of these concerns we should affirm that the bettering of psychological and sociological conditions is directed towards liberating the soul of

the priest so that he can lovingly submit to the total transforming of Christ in his soul.

3. Problems of Addiction

a. The symptoms: excessive and compulsive use of alcohol or narcotics; compulsive sexual activity.

b. The Causes

- 1) Pathological: these symptoms are usually traceable to psychological disorder, of which the addictive behavior is only a symptom. Characteristically in the clerical community these symptoms are recognized too late, or the therapy applied is inadequate, often the non-professional therapy of reproof and admonition. Conditions are improving in this regard, though facilities are still limited, both as to persons and places offering professional help.
- 2) Non-pathological: caused by human weakness coupled, in most cases, with a repressive environment, such as tedious or arduous manner of life, lack of satisfying human relationships, lax or tyrannical authority, severe frustration in work and creativity, etc. At times a worldly and dissipated manner of life filled with senseless socializing may be a cause, yet more often it is an effect, an effect of shallow formation and a lonely and barren sacerdotal life.

c. Contemporary mystique: no special comment here,

unless we could speak of excessive drinking or drug-taking as related to the need on the part of modern man to enter into every type of human experience. More often however, with the priest, such behavior reflects a flight from painful experience.

d. Supernatural mystique: symptoms such as these, in the priest or in others, are a providential sign of human weakness and thus the occasion for a more complete abandonment to Divine Mercy. It may be added here that the priest especially, if he does not understand the dynamics of Divine Mercy, will more easily despair at his own inadequacy and turn to alcohol and drugs for relief. A psychological study of alcoholic priests reveals a high incidence of abortive perfectionism, leading to frustration and despair.

e. Resolution

- 1) More careful screening of candidates to avoid admission of more evident pathological types.
- 2) A keener awareness on the part of religious and clerical superiors of the need of many young clerics and clerical candidates for psychological help, and for spiritual direction with a psychological dimension. This requires:
  - a) the type of moderator or spiritual director in the seminary who can recognize this need;
  - b) actual provision for such help, either in-

side or outside the community.

3) Greater knowledge by the seminarians themselves of the symptoms of psychological disorder, in self and in others.

4) Greater perceptiveness on the part of the priestly community of the psychological needs of members of that community, plus more positive action on behalf of the sick member. Overt deviations of this kind usually develop within five or ten years after Ordination, sometimes within two or three years, and fellow priests are usually the first to know. They are not always the first to act.

5) Greater realism and humility on the part of the priestly community as to their own human infirmities and their need for help, human and divine. Studies show that priestly alcoholics are more poorly motivated, less cooperative and less hopeful of a cure than their counterparts among the laity.

6) Greater understanding of these same infirmities on the part of clerical superiors - pastor, vicar, bishop, religious superior. Too often the reaction to addiction or psychological breakdown is highly confused and judgmental; there is excessive fear of scandal; the attempt at therapy and hospitalization is made to seem either positively punitive,

or at best ordered more to the common good (avoidance of scandal) than to the cure of the individual.

- 7) Need for expert spiritual direction, which is-
  - a) aware of the psychological dimensions of the problem, yet
  - b) concerned also to communicate the great therapeutic truth of God's Merciful Love.

4. Problems with regard to faith

a. The symptoms

1) Confusion and fear

- a) On the part of the older clergy, as they see new forms and new ideas prevailing in the Church;
- b) On the part of the younger clergy, who feel unprepared by their seminary training to cope with contemporary problems.

2) Doubt and defiance, especially on the part of the younger clergy, many of whom are quick to despise and reject their own theological training, and to embrace novelties in doctrine and practice.

3) Denial of the faith and apostasy: few in number but the conditions are favorable, especially in certain countries where freedom and reaction are in sharper contention.

b. The causes

1) Generic cause

The knowledge explosion in the world during the last 300 years and the knowledge explosion in the Church during the last 50 years.

- a) In the world: enormous progress in the physical and social sciences, in mathematics, and in the uses of science and mathematics by technocracy. Equally great progress in political theory and in actual political structures. Even if one is not convinced that all of this spells out 'progress', there is no doubt that it spells out enormous change. Consider the great and highly influential theories on man (Freud), on life (Darwin), on the state or the collectivity (Marx), on mathematics and the cosmos (Einstein), on man and the cosmos (Chardin).
- b) In the Church: great contemporary developments in biblical scholarship, in the theology of the Church itself, in the theology of human life and human action - marriage, capital and labor, war and peace, human art and science, political and social forms, the whole theology of history and culture, the theology of the action of God in the world.

In the presence of this knowledge explosion in the world and in the Church the priest feels more displaced, more inadequate, than

ever. He wants to be, in Suhard's phrase, "the doctor of the city", yet he feels inadequate to realize such a vocation.

2) Causes of inadequacy in priestly learning

- a) The spirit of the Counter-Reformation itself, with its strong affirmation and reaffirmation of orthodox belief and its suspicion of secular and heterodox learning.
- b) The lack of vitality of Catholic theology, its ingrown condition, as it perpetuated a scholasticism that had lost its vitality and its relevance, with a mild and reluctant resurgence of Thomism under Leo XIII. The call to 'fidelity to St. Thomas' was interpreted too often as fidelity to the letter and exact methodology of St. Thomas, rather than fidelity to the true profundity of his doctrine and to his spirit - the spirit of open inquiry into things human and divine under the guidance of divine wisdom.
- c) The growth of unfamiliar statements and structures of belief, through the influence of modernism, phenomenology and existentialism, historicism, the methodology of the positive sciences, the method and findings of sociology and psychology, the new Christian platonism of a figure like

Chardin. Reaction to these new statements and new structures still divides and exacerbates the Catholic intellectual community, dividing also the priests who share in the problems and concerns of the Catholic intellectual community.

- d) The narrowness and ingrown character of seminary education, a narrowness deriving from -
- 1) its reliance, and often reluctant and unconvicted, on a decadent scholasticism;
  - 2) its formal, systematic and highly 'logical' structure, methodology and pedagogy - so uncongenial to the mentality and sensibilities of the seminarians themselves;
  - 3) its narrow conception of the range of theology;
  - 4) its weakness on the 'positive' side, both with respect to theological sources, biblical and patristic, and also with respect to the positive data of religious psychology and sociology;
  - 5) its separatist spirit, that is, the sense - mostly unspoken - that the knowledge gained there, both in philosophy and theology, is different from,

and even hostile to, the knowledge to be gained 'in the world'. The separatist spirit affects, for example, the treatment in the seminary of 'the adversaries', both in philosophy and theology, so that it is difficult to find out what these great minds really held, and why they held it, and what contribution they have made to total human wisdom; also what contribution they might be able to make, even obliquely, to Christian wisdom. Until quite recently this spirit has been notably and tragically evident with respect to the treatment of Protestant theology, both in its foundations and in its great contemporary revival, a revival that has been so enlightening to Catholic theology by its continued examination of the transcendence of God, grace, faith and justification;

- e) The lack of further intellectual development on the part of the priest after he enters the apostolate. The priest needs to become a 'cleric' again in the true sense, a man of knowledge, a man of learning, one destined to be the teacher, "the doctor of the city". Causes for this lack of con-

tinued intellectual development:

- 1) failure of the seminary training to motivate a love for study;
- 2) excessive busy-ness of priestly life, with little time for prayer and serious study, not much personal discipline in this matter and lack of help from pastor and bishop, who seem to have little regard for the need of the priest for meditation and sacred study;
- 3) lack of sufficient opportunities for formal or group study and serious group discussion by the priestly community;
- 4) virtual non-existence of a modern tradition of priestly excellence in this matter.

3) Contemporary mystique:

The present-day thirst for knowledge and for the communication of knowledge; the passion for continued enlargement of knowledge explosion; the enormous facilities today for the communication of knowledge through universal education and through the large-scale publication of books, especially paperbacks; the inevitable apotheosis in a secular society of learning and the academy, the socratic notion still prevailing that man will be saved by knowledge. Beyond that there is the plain

fact that the great advances in human knowledge in modern times have taken place outside of the Church and apart from theological influences, so that the priest who wants to be a true cleric, a man of learning, will be drawn to the treasures of secular wisdom, will inevitably give himself to the doctors of secular learning, to be instructed by them.

4) Supernatural mystique:

The God-given urgency in the priest, by reason of Orders and the priestly character, also by reason of the needs of the people of God, to realize the perfection of that configuration to Christ which makes him, with Christ, prophet of the word of God and doctor of the Christian people. The grace of Orders and the actual graces ~~of the pastoral life~~ follow upon the character of Orders, which makes the priest, radically, prophet and doctor. This supernatural urgency is in every priest, however poor he may be in secular training, however, poor in a developed biblical and theological wisdom.

5. Resolutions and suggestions

a. Broaden seminary training, so that the priest will be a man of general culture, open to knowledge and to the world. At the present time this requires also, and even primarily, a broadening of theological culture itself, an awakening to

those contemporary developments in theology which reflect both the needs of our time and the inner movement of the Church towards the fulfillment of its doctoral and prophetic mission.

- b. Communicate especially in priestly formation the correct theology of the Church's relationship to science, culture, political life, social forms, contemporary ideas and movements, etc. One of the great necessities in the Church: a theology of the human - of history, human life, human institutions. This requires also a true theology of change, together with a strong sense both of what is unchangeable in the deposit of faith and in the structures of the Church, and what is changeable in the historical unfolding of the life of the Church in the world.
- c. Continue the education of the priest after Ordination, through pastoral institutes, workshops, libraries of priestly studies, intelligent reading programs, etc. Educate also the pastors to cooperate in such a program of continued priestly learning by the regime of their own house and by generous permission for special study projects, such as workshops, lectures, discussion groups among the clergy, etc. The Bishop should also encourage and promote priestly scholarship and specialization, through higher studies, research, etc. While only a relatively few members of the pres-

byterium would be engaged in these studies, they would raise the general level of priestly culture and learning, contribute personally to the continued education of their fellow priests, and increase the power of prophetic witness manifested to the world by the presbyterium.

- d. Encourage prudent involvement of the priest in modern ideas and movements, especially those aimed at the betterment of man - poverty, health, civil rights, education, security, etc. The 'doctor of the city' must also become, in whatever way this is possible and desirable, the helper and healer of the city.
- e. Importance of meditative prayer and sacred study for the priest. The 'doctor of the city' is always a sacred doctor, a humble, serious and assiduous student of the divine, mediating not just sacramental grace but divine light - to his people and to the city.
- f. Special need for continuing pastoral studies. The priest is not, like the monk, merely a contemplator of the divine. His sacred knowledge looks to practical and effective pastoral action. He needs to study the best and most contemporary means to make his sacramental, prophetic and pastoral mission more effective in the world.

##### 5. The problem of status

- a. Symptoms: In general, uncertainty and confusion

on the part of the priest as to his place in the world and in the Church. A sense of instability, not only personally and psychologically, but socially, that is, with reference to his role or function in society.

1) In the world: apart from certain specific sacramental functions, in which only his own people believe, it appears that the world could get along very well without him. He is referred to in several studies as a displaced person, separated, isolated, out of touch with the world in which he lives. He is called an alien, a stranger, a man of no city.

2) In the church: lack of clarity and definition with respect to his role in the church, which is itself alienated from the world. Lack of dignity and stability within the presbyterium itself. Lack of clear goals; often, after many years, the sense of a wasted life. Phenomenon of older priests still looking for their place in the Church. No strong sense of co-operating actively and maturely with pastor and bishop in the pastoral mission within the parish and within the entire diocese. Uncertainty and lack of rapport in relation with the laity

b. The Causes

1) His ambivalent status in the world

The historical decline of the professional 'cler-

ic' and the historical rise of the isolated distributor of the sacraments has left the priest as a man who appears to be socially expendable. His temporary status as leader (pastor) and man of learning (prophet) in more primitive communities, e.g. in the colonial period in Latin America and in the early immigrant period in the United States, has passed. The priest is better educated now in the States and for the most part comes from a higher social class than the earlier generation of priests in America. Yet his role is less clearly defined and the range of his leadership more limited, unless he chooses positively and personally to enter into the public life of the community, and this is generally not encouraged either by his training or by his ecclesiastical superiors. In the case of Latin America and many parts of Europe there is a two-fold problem: 1) that of the priests who are taken from the lower classes and so are unable to realize, culturally and intellectually, the full potentialities of the prophetic and pastoral mission of the priest; and 2) that of the more gifted, and more educated and more progressive priests who are constrained and frustrated by the narrowness of pastoral structures. The latter class is also a suffering class in the U.S. priesthood; they are prepared for a

status which does not exist within the contemporary structures and so they tend to become alienated from the presbyterium itself, often identifying themselves very strongly with some other class or group (e.g. professors, scientists, sociologists, artists, etc.) in the search for professional status in the world.

2) The priest and secular learning

This is a perennial problem in the Church; it has never been resolved in any culture or in any era. Yet it is particularly intense today because of the knowledge explosion in the world and in the Church, coupled with the separatist instinct in the post-Reformation era. And so today the priest has no clearly discernible priestly function in the world of human learning - the world of the positive sciences, anthropology, sociology, psychology, art and literature, etc. He has been looked upon, in fact, as a man who was not 'free' to be a truly objective physical or social scientist, not 'free' to follow an authentic vocation as an artist. Not even free to be a real philosopher, for his role in this area was restricted more and more to a restatement and 'application' of the philosophia perennis. Only in theology was he considered really expert and at home,

yet even here his status was minimized and suspect due to the narrowness of his theological learning, the alternating rigidity and casuistry of his moral teaching, and his suspicions towards theological evolution, that is, towards the progress and perfection of his own scientific enterprise. In addition to this the modern theologian has witnessed the rise of the knowledgeable and outspoken lay theologian who has challenged clerical hegemony even in this sacred and well-protected domain.

3) The priest and social action

In spite of the extensive papal documents on social theory and social action, in spite of the clear-cut call for the Church to participate in collective action for human betterment, there is no general involvement of the priestly fraternity in social or community concerns.

There are two problems here: 1) the priest has no clear idea of his specifically priestly function in these areas, even granted that there is an authentic Christian function, e.g. the need for Christian witness and for some kind of spiritual direction in the movement: 2) the priest is not prepared for an authentic entry into these movements, whatever his function may be there. He is not prepared by at-

titude, nor by adequate training, nor by the will and wisdom of his ecclesiastical superiors.

4) The priest and social classes

When the priest has lost his place in the world, and has not found a satisfying place in the presbyterium, he tends to gravitate towards, and to be identified with, some specific class in his own society, usually some class with a certain prestige or distinction. There is no uniform picture here because of diverse conditions in diverse countries but the situation in the United States may be taken as typical. There the priest tends to become strongly identified with the middle class, either with the upper middle class (the professional men: doctors, lawyers, businessmen, less often professors or scientists, whose own intellectual status is more challenging to the priest) or with the lower middle class (small businessmen, civil servants, school teachers, etc.). The contacts with these classes are sometimes apostolic and sometimes social but the force of identification is strong. Very often there is a strong affective factor involved: the priest is admired and loved by a family and so adopted by them, most often by the mother with the consent of the father. The priest becomes 'one of the family' and so one with

the class and the society to which the family belongs. He becomes part of the class insofar as he becomes part of the family. (This aspect of priestly status is closely related to the problem of priestly celibacy and chastity. Just as the priest cannot destroy but only integrate and consecrate his need for a wife, so he cannot destroy his need for a family. And he will inevitably seek 'family' somewhere, in the presbyteral community or outside of it.) At any rate, in every country and in every culture, there is a very profound class-identification of the priest, one that strongly conditions his status in his own society. It conditions also his ideas, his manner of life, his interests, his pastoral concern, his affective life, and his evangelical witness, especially in the matter of poverty.

5) The priest and poverty

Very rarely, and then only in remote urban parishes or in so-called 'mission' areas, is there a real identification of the priest with the poor. Often this identification or assumption of poverty and of a poor life is lacking even in places where it would be physically and culturally possible. Even among 'missionaries' the substantial and comfortable mission center plus frequent returns to the

home country impede this real identification with the life of the poor. In middle-class cultures the priest tends to lose (or never to acquire) any awareness at all of poverty, either as personal purification or as witness to the poor Christ and to the Church of the poor, so that the Church is profoundly weak today in one of its greatest apostolic resources, the witness of evangelical poverty.

6) The priest and marginal areas in society

The weakness of the evangelical witness of poverty is equalled in sacerdotal life by the feebleness of priestly penetration into all the marginal areas of society - into the areas of the destitute, the delinquent, the addicted, the imprisoned, the mentally disturbed, the derelicts, prostitutes, homosexuals, etc. The Church becomes the Church of the saved, the Church of the church-goer, the Church of the respectable and faithful Christian, and so (too often) the Church of the Pharisees.

7) Priestly status and economic justice

Several documents call attention to another aspect of priestly poverty, namely, the inequality of clerical remuneration, with many priests leading comfortable upper-middle-class

lives while fellow priests are on a marginal subsistence in depressed areas. The Schemas on the Priesthood and on Clerical life call attention specifically to the need for greater equality in the support and remuneration of priests. There are, therefore, three distinct problems with regard to the priest and poverty:

- 1) the problem of justice and charity in the priestly community itself;
- 2) the need of the priest-apostle for some personal experience of evangelical poverty and detachment;
- 3) the necessity in the Church of the witness of evangelical poverty, a witness which is fittingly given by the priest-apostle both by reason of his personal configuration to Christ and by reason of his oneness with the people whom he has been sent to love and to serve

2) His ambivalent status in the Church

The problem of the status or place of the priest in the Church has a two-fold perspective: 1) the place of the priest in the special priesthood, that is, with his bishop and fellow-priests;

2) the place of the priest with and among his people, that is, in relation to the common priesthood of the faithful.

N.B. We are concerned in this section not so

much with the problem of affective relationships with bishop, fellow-priest and people (as in section 2); rather, we are concerned with the problem of the status and dignity of the priest in the ecclesial community.

a) priest and bishop ( or religious prelate):  
in the structure and action of the Church the priest cannot be understood apart from his bishop, who selects, forms and empowers the priest as his spiritual son and ally in the work of caring for the people of God. If it is true to say that the bishop 'makes' the priest, it is also true to say that he makes him, so to speak, in his own image and likeness, as one who participates actively in the episcopal dignity, power and ministry. This is the special emphasis of c.III, n.28 in the Constitution on the Church. Priests are "prudent cooperators with the episcopal order". They are "united with their bishop in sacerdotal dignity", so that they constitute 'one priesthood with their bishop'. Priests, indeed, "as regards orders and ministry, are joined to (coaptantur) the body of bishops", exercising under them and with them the same three-fold ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Action. The bishop possesses

this three-fold power in its plenitude, for "by episcopal consecration the fulness of the sacrament of orders is conferred," yet every priest radically possesses these same powers and is supernaturally inclined to exercise them, so that we could say that the true happiness of bishop and priest alike consists in the free and fruitful exercise of these three powers. The truth is neither well understood in theory nor honored in practice that "all priests, both diocesan and religious, as regards orders and ministry, are joined to the body of bishops and serve the good of the whole Church according to their vocation and the grace given to them."

b) Priest and fellow-priest: it is evident that a strong bond of fraternity unites those many sons who are called to collaborate with the one father in the work of caring for the people of God. The priestly fraternity is not a merely voluntary association, nor even a professional guild. It is a true brotherhood of sons generated by the same spiritual father and called to work with him as sons and brothers and fathers, in their own right, generating with him the people of God. This is espec-

ially true, of course, of priests in the same diocese who constitute together "one priesthood with the bishop". The status, therefore, of the priest, and his sense of status, depends very much upon his actual experience of priestly community. Without this experience, he really is alienated, and by a painful alienation within the Church, indeed within his own particular and divinely-instituted class.

c) Priest and people

1) One priesthood with his people

It is necessary to understand the dignity of the priest not only as it is a sharing in one priesthood with the bishop and with his fellow-priests but also as it relates to the people he is called to love and to serve. The dogmatic foundation for the De Sacerdotibus is found in the Constitution on the Church, not only in the chapter on the hierarchical structure of the Church (c III) but also in the chapter on the people of God (c.II). In the latter the stress is on the relationship of the priest not to the plenary priesthood of the bishop but to the common priesthood of the faithful. From this point of view priests are to

be considered as "those of the faithful who are consecrated by holy orders" and "appointed in Christ's name to feed the Church with the Word and the grace of God" (n.11). They are taken from the people and ordained for the people who are themselves, by reason of Baptism and Confirmation, a priestly people, so that priests may be said to form "one priesthood" also with the people of God. The priest is one with the priestly people in a common dignity and a common mission, that of building up together the kingdom of God.

2) leader of his people

The priest needs both the experience of oneness with the people in forming the Christian community and also the experience of pastoral leadership in this same work of forming the Christian community. The priest already appointed by Church to be pastor and leader of the people of God discovers his role or status experientially in the discovery of their need for him. They do not juridically invest him with this status; that comes from God and from the Bishop, through Orders and Jurisdiction. But they en-

able him to realize his status - experientially, psychologically - as he exercises his ministry among them.

We conclude, then, that the true and plenary status of the priest is achieved in this exercise of his pastoral mission, i.e. his mission to generate his people, to form them, and to bring them to the fulness of the manhood of Christ. Authentic status in the priesthood means, ultimately, pastoral status, the status of the spiritual father and leader of the people of God.

c) Contemporary mystique

The profound need in modern man for unity and community with other men, and the need of each man for his rightful place in such a community. Contemporary studies in anthropology, sociology and psychology confirm man's urgent need for status and the priest cannot deny nor repress this need in himself. Priestly status, moreover, in the most primitive as well as the most advanced cultures, is a very special and very elevated status, one related to the life, the health, the stability, the progress of the entire community.

d) Supernatural mystique

1) Conformity to Christ the Priest

The priest is configured to Christ the High Priest and thus is destined to be, like Him, prophet, priest and king. This status is given by Orders and so is the inclination to act in accordance with this status. The priest needs to exercise his ministry, especially his pastoral ministry, just as a father according to the flesh needs to exercise his power of generating, forming and bringing to maturity the child of his flesh. The priest has a supernatural exigency to be the pastor of his people, to exercise and delight in the acts proper to his status as pastor.

2) Conformity to his people

The priest is configured to Christ the High Priest but also configured to his people and the needs of his people. He is taken from them and sent to them and so achieves true status with and among them and not apart from them. He belongs to Christ and he belongs to his people, yet too often by attitude, formation and status-goals he tends to remain separated and alienated from his people. The priest is passing through

a crisis of self-identity the outcome of which depends on his rediscovery both of his authentic humanity and of his divine mission. He needs to rediscover his own incarnational being and vocation. Especially he needs to rediscover and reaffirm his humanity, similar to the way in which, in an earlier age of the Church, the humanity of Christ had to be reaffirmed against the Docetists. So the humanity of the priest has to be reaffirmed against the corrupt remnants of St. Sulpice, the monastic seminary and a separatist piety. The problem of the priest in the age that preceded ours was how to be a man without ceasing to be a priest. The problem of the priest in our day is how to become a priest without ceasing to be a man.

e. Resolution

1. The need for a truly incarnational understanding of the priesthood, i.e. the priest as a man taken from among men, sent by God to men to mediate His Love in the midst of human life. This incarnational view of the priesthood must be:
  - a) taught to the clerical student and

actually experienced by the clerical student;

- b) reflected in the spirit and in the structures of seminary life - which must be human, familial and in real contact with the world and with the human;
- c) reflected in the attitudes and structures of the presbyterium and of priestly life, so that the priest is always -

- 1) a man of truth and self-knowledge, i.e. deeply aware of his own humanity, his need for love, his need for others;
- 2) a man who is liberated affectively and emotionally so that he is capable of authentic human love and authentic human emotion;
- 3) a man who can live with other men in open and whole-hearted fraternity and cooperate with these same men in a common apostolate;
- 4) a man who can really love a woman, yet be capable under grace of renouncing the carnal fulfillment of that love, giving himself (and her) to God;

- 5) a man who can love his own family and his own people;
- 6) a man who can love and be identified with the people of God who are given to him; a man who can give himself completely to his people in acts of paternal love;
- 7) a man who can by his work and by his mere presence bring about the humanization of society, and then its evangelization;
- 8) a man who can become freely and actively involved in social and community concerns;
- 9) a man who can freely enter and evangelize the marginal areas of human society.

2) The need for bishops and pastors who really want grown sons, i.e. intelligent and zealous cooperators in a common apostolate, rather than passive instruments of univocal pastoral planning. Very often it is the attitude of the bishop towards his priests that makes for actual pastoral status. The bishop mediates radical sacramental status in the act of ordination; he confers actual psychological status through his pater-

nal love and confidence.

3) The need for continual pastoral formation and education in the latest biblical, theological and pastoral developments, so that the priest has the sense of being a real professional, a man with the knowledge, skills and confidence for effective pastoral action.

4) The need for a priestly spirituality which is pastoral rather than monastic. This will be a spirituality centered around the three-fold mission of the priest as priest, prophet, king:

a) as priest: a spirituality that is truly liturgical, involving a thorough knowledge of the liturgy, fervent meditation on the liturgical texts and on the liturgical action, and, finally, actual liturgical leadership that is externally dignified and reverent, interiorly thoughtful and recollected.

b) as prophet: a spirituality that is founded on continual meditation and sacred study. The priest is a minister and prophet of divine truth and so his sense of status depends greatly on his loving familiarity with

divine truth;

c) as king: a spirituality that is truly pastoral, that is, paternal and loving, always looking to the needs of his people. In the name of these needs the priest prays and works and mortifies himself, offering himself to the Father for their salvation.

5) The need for a priestly spirituality that is profoundly theological, especially with regard to the theology of the priesthood itself, which must be the object of frequent study and meditation.

6) The need for growing union with Christ the High Priest. The priest, by reason of Orders, is already quasi-ontologically one with Christ, configured to Him; in his priestly action He is the living instrument of the action of Christ. He must, therefore, be one with Christ in the intimacy of his moral life and be tending vitally towards mystical transformation into Christ. This is the only absolute and adequate final cause of priestly formation and priestly spirituality, the mystical transformation of the priest into Christ the High Priest, so that the Person and Action of Christ will be made manifest to men again, in the person and action of the priest.