

THE SACRAMENT OF PRIESTHOOD IN HOLY SCRIPTURE THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

Prof. Christos Sp. Voulgaris

Professor of New Testament

Dean of the School of Theology

of the University of Athens

I. Prologue

In recent decades, we witnessed to dynamic pressures on behalf of various feministic organizations in Europe and America, upon different Christian denominations requesting that Sacramental Priesthood be granted also to women. Motivated by purely sociological presuppositions and based on the principle of equality between the sexes, this request found fertile soil among the Protestant denominations and more recently in the Anglican Communion which decided in its favor by a majority vote, thus putting at stake its integrity and unity. Equal strong pressure is also put upon the Latin Church on behalf of lay people and clergy alike and also by feminine monastic centers. Of special importance in this respect is the open antithesis of “The Catholic Theological Union” of Chicago against the declaration of the relevant Vatican Commission issued on October 15, 1976, and entitled “Declaration on the Question of Admission of women to Ministerial Priesthood” approved by Pope Paul VI.

This phenomenon is not new in the history of the Christian church. As early as the 2nd century and up to the 4th century, various Gnostic sects admitted women into all ranks of Priesthood¹, after the example of pagan religions in which, as is known, female deities were worshipped as well. The Church’s reaction to this was mainly restricted to reminding of the absence of any indication in Scripture and tradition in favor of admitting women to priesthood and to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles after him elected only men as their successors, although a number of important women and especially Mary the Theotokos were members of the primitive Church².

The Orthodox (Catholic) Church stays outside this turmoil considering the issue to be definitely resolved³, although sporadic voices are echoed from time to time, mainly by women, with no substantial theological argumentation, in favor of it⁴. Even so, however, the Orthodox Church can not remain indifferent to the ongoing debate. In this respect, the Orthodox Church is forced to re-interpret and confirm its tradition in unbroken continuity with the tradition and practice of the ancient undivided church considering it as its task “to give an account to

everyone" (1 Pet. 3,15) and show "earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope, until the end" (Heb. 6,11). To this end, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople organized a Panorthodox Consultation in Rhodes in 1988 to discuss the issue under the title "The place of woman in the Orthodox Church and the question of the ordination of women". The present study was a contribution to that Theological Consultation written with the hope to help those interested in the matter to get a better understanding of it.

II. Priesthood as a Sacrament

The Orthodox Church counts Priesthood among its seven Sacraments. Not conveying the exact significance and content of the Greek equivalent "Μυστήριον", the English word "Sacrament" designates generally any religious act or performance with no specific connotation. On the contrary, widely used in Mystery Religions, the Greek term "Μυστήριον" designates specific acts performed in and by the Church itself during which individual believers receive in a mystical (mysterious) way from God the power and ability to experience the Church's very mystery in the context of divine revelation as God's agent for the salvation of the "cosmos", the entire universe. In other words, at the "Mysteries" the partaker does not acquire a knowledge of God and his grace. As such, the importance of these Mysteries does not stem from the external functional and ceremonial form, but from what it provides or mediates to provide, i.e. the supernatural and so the mystical reality offered to the partaker through the Church which performs this act. Thus the individual experiences the divine reality and grace through and within the reality of the Church. Objectively considered, therefore, Church Mysteries are rituals at which the redemptive work of Christ, which took place in history at a specific time in the past, is continued and extended within history until the end of time⁵. Subjectively experienced, however, Church Mysteries offer the remissions of sins and renew sinful man within the context of Christ's new creation (2 Cor. 5,17 - Gal. 5,15) and so grant to him the life of Christ's body "which is the Church" (Col. 1,24. Ephes 1,23), or the life of Christ himself (Gal 2,20).

In considering Church Mysteries, however, we must keep two things in mind. *First*, that they are rooted in history in a way that they can not be understood apart from Christ's historic person and redemptive work. In fact, through and in them the performing Church repeats specific historic acts of Christ himself for the saving benefit of its members. Under this spectrum then, the description of these rituals as "Mysteries" has no connection with theoretical mysticism. Instead, they denote the mysterious and hidden divine reality and emerge which operates in them. Thus, on account of their being rooted in saving history, the

individual partaker of the Mysteries comes to communion with specific redemptive events of that past saving history. For example, in the Mystery of Baptism the partaker comes to communion with Jesus Christ's death and resurrection⁶, and in the Mystery of Unction he partakes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, thus appropriating to himself the benefits of the historic event of Pentecost, while at the Mystery of the Eucharist the participant comes to communion with the body and blood itself of Christ in accordance with his instruction to the disciples that, when this Mystery is celebrated his very sacrifice on the cross is repeated in a real though mystical way (Matth. 26,26 - 28 par. 1 Cor. 10.16. 11,23-36). In the same manner, the participant in the Mystery of Priesthood partakes of Christ's double role as highpriest and victim which brought about the remission of sins in an objective way (cf. Heb. 2,14-17. 5,9. 9,11 ff. 10,5-10. etc.).

Second, the Church's Mysteries are not an end in themselves as acts of "Theosis", but a way to it. As such Church Mysteries have no relation with similar rituals performed in Mystery Religions where, it was thought, the participant was absorbed by and identified with the divine. The goal of Church Mysteries is not the participant's complete absorption and identification with Christ but the participant's unity with him in the realm of his human nature. This means, furthermore, that Church Mysteries have an ecclesiological connotation for the additional fact that in them the individual is also united through Christ with the other members of his body, the Church (Rom. 12,4-5. 1Cor. 12.12ff. Ephes. 4,25. 5,20). Thus, f.e. through the Mystery of Priesthood, the participant is united with Christ and through him with all those who like himself had partaken of Christ's priestly function at his passion. Thanks to them, i.e. to the new priests who will partake of Christ's priestly office to the end of time, his passion and sacrifice will be repeated anew in a mystical way "until he comes again" (1 Cor. 11,26)⁷. The Christian priest acts in Christ's stead and in his name offering the bread and the wine, i.e. those very elements which he himself blessed at his Last Supper and gave them to his disciples to eat and drink as his real flesh and blood. And it is Christ himself who is invisibly present each time the priest offers the bread and the wine in his name and stead who turns them into his own flesh and blood in a mystical way. The idea of representation is from the outset the fundamental factor that lies at the bottom of the Mystery of Priesthood.

III. Priesthood in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, sacramental Priesthood, like all other institutions, originated with the covenant and the law which defined its nature, form and goal. The term itself occurs very rarely in the canonical books (1 Chron 29,22. 1 Macc. 2,54. 3,49. 7,9,21. 4 Macc. 5,36. 7,6), but it is more frequent in the Apocrypha,

Philo and Josephus. Even so, however, the authors of the books in question refer to the work and the duties of the Highpriest and the priests.

The Greek term “ἱερωσύνη” comes from the word “ἱερός” (Hebrew “qadosh”) signifying someone invested with the power of the deity and thus dedicated to it. The term is used both of persons and things. As such then the term “ἱερωσύνη” denotes the office of the priest and so his function performed in the divine power and authority which the priest bears upon himself. Thus, the priest, appointed to office by God is dedicated to Him, as God’s servant or agent and so his duty and function is to mediate to men God’s will, power and grace. In other words, the priest (“ἱερεὺς”) is not man’s mediator to God, but God’s mediator to man for the sake of man’s salvation and so God’s representative and man’s spiritual guide and shepherd.

According to the Old Testament, this special, sacramental priesthood is beyond and above the general priesthood of all Israelites, called “a royal priesthood and holy nation” (Exod. 19,6. 23,22. 2 Macc. 2,17. cf. 1 Pet. 2,9. Rev. 1,6-10) in the sense of their special place in God’s plan of salvation and as members of His own community (“Kahal Jahwe”). Israel enjoys this place on account of her election by God as well as on account of God’s continuous saving activity for her, as a result of which Israel is set apart from among all other nations. Thus, all Israelites participate in a broad sense in God’s functions and offices revealed in sacred history.

Alongside this general (royal), so to speak, priesthood of all Israelites we find in the Old Testament also the special or sacramental priesthood conferred by God upon specific persons through the mediation of Moses (Exod. 28. 4 Num. 6,5). This took place immediately after the establishment of the Covenant and the giving of the Law (Exod. 19-20. Deut. 5,6ff), which stand in confirmation, so to speak, of Israel’s election as God’s people and so “a royal priesthood and holy nation”⁹. In other words, sacramental priesthood was instituted after the formation of Israel as “Kahal Yahweh”, and this means that sacramental priesthood has an “ecclesiological” (i.e. communal) dimension, a fact that determines from the outset its place in the history of the covenant, i.e. in the history of God’s Economy with Israel. Instituted within “Kahal Yahweh” as one of its institutions, sacramental priesthood aimed at promoting the moral purity of the members of the community¹⁰.

God’s mediator, as we said, in this respect was Moses the “servant of the house” (Num. 12,7. Heb. 3,3-5) and mediator of His covenant with Israel (Gal. 3,19-20. 1 Tim. 1,5), a position unique in the entire history of the covenant. Appointed by God to carry out His dealings with the elect people (Exod. 3ff) he was equipped with all the necessary power and authority as His representative, as it is clear from his function as the leader of the people “par excellence” (the royal office), as its preacher (prophetic office) and priest (priestly office). In other words,

in the person of Moses we find the condensation of Israel's subsequent religious life. Indeed, he alone had an immediate and direct access to God, and God only to him spoke "person to person as if one speaks to his friend" (Exod. 33,11. Num. 12,7-8). To Moses also God revealed His name and glory (Exod. 33,18-23) and after him "there appeared no prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew person to person" (Deut. 34,10). At God's command, Moses, His mediator, inaugurated the covenant with a bloody sacrifice (Exod. 24,8. Cf. Heb. 9,19-22), an act which was an indication of his priestly office. And when shortly after its inauguration the Israelites broke it, Moses "made expiation for their sins" (Exod. 32) and begged God to show His mercy upon them, God renewed His covenant again through him (Exod 34).

All these indicate two things : a) that Moses' authority and power, which he exercised in his dealings with Israel, were given him by God Whom he represented in all respects; and b) the fullness of his authority and power proved him to be God's mediator (a kind of general administrator) with Israel or, speaking more theologically, during the first period of God's economy of salvation, for, as we will have occasion to stress further down, even after Moses' death, the functions of the priests were carried out in his name.

Indeed, this is exactly what we observe at the institution of the sacramental priesthood, when at God's command whom he represented, Moses entrusted the priestly office to his brother Aaron and his four sons, Nadab, Aviud, Eleazar, and Ithamar (Exod. 28 and 41. Num 6), "to administer to him" (God). In addition to this, he entrusted the service inside and outside the Tabernacle ("to carry out the works of the Tabernacle") to the male members of the tribe of Levi (Num 3). From the outset, sacramental priesthood included the rank of the highpriest (Aaron) and the priests (his four sons) and both were assisted by the Levites whose task consisted in maintaining order during worship service, to help the highpriest and the priests with their duties, and read the law at worship service¹¹. That the highpriest was marked off from among the priests is clear from the following facts : a) at their consecration, the highpriest's head was completely anointed with oil, while the priest's was anointed only their forehead (Exod. 29,7. 1 Kings 10,1. 16,13); b) the highpriest alone entered the inner part of the tabernacle (the holy of holies), and this only once a year, during the day of Expiation (Lev. 16,3-34); and c) the vestments of the highpriest differed from those of the priests' (Exod. 28,4-39. Lev. 8,7-9), and after the highpriest died his vestments were handed over to his successor together with the office of which the vestments were a Symbol (Exod. 29,29. Num 20,25-28). The "great priest" therefore was from the very beginning distinguished from "his brothers" (Lev. 21,10. Num. 35,25-28), while his death marked the end of a period and the beginning of another.

The duties of the highpriest and the priests consisted in guarding the tabernacle and the sacred vessels there in, performing the worship, and teaching the law. Thus the nature and function of the sacramental priesthood was clearly connected with the double sense of the term “ἱερός” which we mentioned before, indicating one filled with the power of God and so dedicated to Him. This means, furthermore, that the nature of the priest’s consecration is absolutely determined by God’s grace upon the priest who from that moment belongs to the sphere of the divine presence.¹²

The consecration of both, the highpriest and the priests, was ruled to take place in the tabernacle itself which was God’s dwelling place, and in front or in the presence “of the whole congregation” of the people (Lev. 3,8). The ritual consisted in : a) washing the candidate with water; b) clothing him with special garments; c) washing the entire head of the highpriest with olive oil and anointing the priest’s forehead with it; d) anointing both the highpriest’s and the priest’s right ear, right hand, and right foot with the blood of a sacrificed animal; e) sprinkling the candidate and his garments with the same blood; and finally f) “the filling of the candidate’s hands” with the parts of the slaughtered animal which subsequently was burnt upon the altar of the burnt offerings¹³. The last act indicated that the consecrated highpriest or priest was authorized to offer animal sacrifices. This concluded the whole ritual and so the new highpriest or priest, consecrated to perform the worship due to God and purify the members of the community (Kahal Yahweh), were themselves purified and set apart from everything that was regarded morally and religiously profane¹⁴, they alone having the right “to approach the Lord God” (Exod. 19,22. Lev. 10,3. etc.).

Summing up the evidence we observe the following. First, God Himself is the source of priesthood and He grants it to those whom He chooses (cf. Heb. 5,4 “καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρῶν”). Therefore no priest (or highpriest) is a priest by his own power and authority, but depends absolutely on God for his office and function, in Whose priestly office he simply participates by grace. Second, the priestly office was functioned for the first time in the history of salvation by Moses the mediator of the first covenant who on account of that¹⁵ inaugurated it with an animal sacrifice and when Israel transgressed it he “made expiation for the sin of the people”. Also, on account of his priestly office and at God’s command and presence, Moses consecrated his brother Aaron as highpriest and Aaron’s sons as priests in a specific ceremony, who after that became Moses’ fellows and successors in this specific function of his¹⁶. Through them and their successors Moses’ sacramental priesthood extended into the history of the first covenant. Third, Moses’ superiority with respect to priesthood is stressed at the consecration of Aaron and his sons when, after placing the parts of the slaughtered animal in their hands in order to authorize them to offer animal sacrifices, he (Moses) received

them back again and placed them himself upon the altar to be burnt. This means that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were offered to God through Moses His mediator¹⁷. Fourth, sacramental priesthood in the Old Testament aimed at the purification of the flesh of the people of Israel (Heb. 9,13), stressed also by the institution of various ritual cleansing. The often used term “ἁγιασμός” with reference to the people, indicates God’s power to free man from the bondage of sin and corruption, indicated by the “common” and “unclean” elements of human nature; it also indicates the new condition of the purified person as restoration of natural order and life in the sphere of divine condition : “For I am the Lord your God; you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy; neither shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ...” (Lev. 11,44-45. 19,2. 20,7)¹⁸.

IV. Sacramental Priesthood in the New Testament. Jesus Christ the perfect Highpriest.

In God’s counsel, Old Testament sacramental priesthood was to have a limited scope, validity and duration, like the covenant of which it was an institution, and its human mediator, Moses. Therefore, in the second and final period of the history of Salvation, Moses was replaced by the “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2,5. cf. Heb. 8,6. 9,15. 12,24), i.e. the incarnate eternal Son and Logos of God through whom He established His new and “greater” covenant with the entire human kind (Heb. 7,22. 8,6;8. 9,15. 13,20 cf. Matth. 26,28 par.. 2Cor. 3,6). This means that the superiority of the second covenant depends upon the superiority of its mediator, the divine and human person of Jesus Christ, in whom was “ex officio” all divine power and authority and all offices united in order to carry out effectively his redemptive work.¹⁹

It is common place in the New Testament that Jesus Christ carried out his work on earth willingly and in complete obedience to the Father’s will.²⁰ It was the Father who sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8,3 etc.). The New Testament doctrine in this respect can be summed up in two points. First, that the goal of the incarnation of the eternal Son was to abolish the power of Satan by his entire work on earth and especially through his passion and death and so to grant the forgiveness of sins to all men. This explains why in the Gospels Jesus is pictured as deliberately going up to Jerusalem to suffer and die²¹. Second, that Christ’s death has a redemptive and vicarious significance, offered as a sacrifice of himself to God on behalf of all men and for their salvation. This explains why New Testament authors use terms similar to the sacrificial cultus in the Old Testament. It was Jesus Christ himself who described his own death as “a ransom for many”²². Thus in his

passion Christ functioned as a highpriest “par excellence” putting an end to the role of the Old Testament highpriests and its sacrificial system. This idea is dealt with in detail in the Letter to the Hebrews where Paul²³ compares the Old Testament priesthood and the sacrifices of animals with the priesthood of Christ and his sacrifice of himself, stressing the superiority of the latter over the former. In this way Christ inaugurated God’s “new” and “better” covenant with all humanity, thus effecting the forgiveness of men’s sins to the end of time (Heb. 2,8-18. 4, 14. 10,18), in contrast to the levitical priesthood and the animal sacrifices connected with it which “can never take away sins” (Heb. 10,11. cf. 9,9). Old Testament sacrifices were offered simply as “a reminder of sin year after year, for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10,3-4). Instead, “the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh” (Heb. 9,13), while Christ’s blood “purifies our conscience from dead words to serve the living God” (Heb. 9,14).

The Epistle to the Hebrews sheds light upon three major aspects of Christ’s priesthood of which we get only hints from the other books of the New Testament²⁴. The first aspect refers to the time when Christ was invested with the priestly office. Of particular importance in this respect is Heb. 5,1-6 placed in the wider context of Heb. 4,14-5,10. Thus in Heb. 5,1-3 Paul states that the work and task of human highpriests, to which they are appointed, consists in offering gifts and sacrifices to God for the remission of the sins of the people as well of their own (cf. 8,3-4). And in order that their word be effective, human highpriests must enjoy God’s confidence. This means that they cannot become highpriests by their own initiative, but they have to be appointed by God himself (v.4). In other words men highpriests can not possess highpriesthood but depend on God who is the only source of the real highpriestly office and gives it to those whom He chooses. On the other hand, since God is the receiver of the gifts and sacrifices, offered by human highpriests, He alone can grant the forgiveness of sins to those for whom they are offered. A proof of this is the priesthood of Aaron.

The same principle applies also in the case of Christ who “did not by his own initiative think of himself (“[ε]δόξασεν”) as a highpriest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee”; as he says also in another place, “Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5,5-6), Scholars have difficulties here with the aorist “ἐδόξασεν” which they believe it to mean “glorified”. So a number of commentators suggest that Christ was named by God a highpriest at his exultation, in accordance with John 8,54 (“it is my Father who glorifies me”). Accordingly, they also think that Ps. 2,7 and Ps. 109,4 in verse 6 refer to Christ’s exultation²⁵. Such an interpretation, however, is totally foreign to the context. If Christ had been appointed highpriest at his exultation at the right hand of God, then he was not a highpriest during his

earthly work and most particularly during his passion and death, which also means that his work on earth had not a redemptive value²⁶. But this notion is totally foreign not only to the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but also to that of the entire New Testament.

Besides here, Ps. 2,7 is also used in Heb. 1,5 together with 2 Kings 7,14 where both texts indicate clearly the eternal birth of the Son from the Father. Here Paul stresses the divinity of the Son in contrast to the created nature of the angels and so the Son's superiority over them. This is precisely the case in Heb. 5,5, too, as well as everywhere else in the New Testament where Ps. 2,7 stresses Christ's divinity as the Son of God (cf. Heb. 1,3)²⁷. It follows that Ps. 109,4 also refers to the same time, because it stresses the Son's appointment as highpriest by God simultaneously with his eternal birth from Him²⁸. It is interesting to notice at this point the intentional omission of the verb "εἶ" (you are) in the text of Ps. 109,4 in order to stress the identity of Christ's person as Son of God and priest alter the order of Melchizedek. It is plain, therefore, that the Son of God Jesus received his priesthood from the Father at the very moment of his timeless birth from Him, which means that his priesthood is inherent to his divine nature. This explains the exact meaning of the aorist "ἔδόξασεν" in Heb. 5,5 : Christ did not think arbitrarily to be highpriest by his own initiative, but was named highpriest at the moment of his eternal birth, by the Father²⁹. This explains also the preposterous statement in Heb. 4,14 which contrasts the nature of the highpriest Jesus the Son of God to the nature of the human highpriests. Thus the "great highpriest" Jesus is able "to sympathize" (i.e. to suffer together) with our weaknesses because "he has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb. 4,15. cf. 2,14;17;18). That Christ's priesthood originates from God does not imply his underestimation since divine nature is common to both. Rather, this fact emphasizes the Father's priority in the divine order, as the generator of the Son, as well the Father's quality as the source and cause of everything that exists, including the offices³⁰. The Son possesses everything which the Father possesses, even his own existence, by reception from the Father (John 10,29;37. 14,20. 15,15. etc.).

The connection of Christ's priesthood "for ever after the order of Melchizedek" with his divinity is explained in Heb. 7 where the king and priest Melchizedek is described as a "type" of Christ. That nothing about Melchizedek's origin and death is recorded in Gen. 14,17-20 is, according to Paul, a proof that "he is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life"; therefore, "he continues a priest for ever" (7,3). In other words, in connection with the endlessness of the priesthood of Ps. 109,4 referring to the Messiah, this fact indicates, for Paul, the timelessness and endlessness of Melchizedek's priesthood³¹. It is exactly for this reason that "he resembles the Son of God"³². Their timeless and endless existence (of Melchizedek and Christ)

implies the timelessness and endlessness of their respective priesthood, which for this reason is “permanent” (7,24)³³, in contrast to the priesthood of the levite priests which was handed over to their successors after their death : “the former priests (the Levites) were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office” (7,23)³⁴.

The second aspect refers to the time when the eternal Son of God functioned his highpriestly office. So in Heb. 5, after stressing that his highpriesthood is inherent to his divine origin (vs. 5-6), Paul says that the Son conformed to the will of the Father “in the days of his flesh”, and after he finished (“τελειωθείς”) his highpriestly work “he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Heb. 5,7-9). Following this the Son was received by the Father at his exultation with the exclamation “a highpriest after the order of Melchizedek” (5,9-10). At this point also interpreters have difficulties with the participle “προσαγορευθείς” in 5,10, interpreting it in the sense that the Son was designated (or appointed) a highpriest at the moment of his exultation. This is totally wrong, however, for the reasons we explained before, as well as for the position of v.10 as the conclusion of the entire pericope 4,14-5,10. Verse 10, as a matter of fact concludes and recapitulates v. 4,14. So, having acted as highpriest on earth and having achieved salvation for those who appropriated his work, Jesus the Son of God “passed again through the heavens” at his exultation from the earth³⁵, being received by God with the exclamation (“Προσαγορευθείς”) “a high priest after the order of Melchizedek”. The verb “προσαγορεύω” has an air of solemnity. The scene is similar to Heb. 1,3 where, returning to heavens after his campaign on earth, the Son is received by the Father and hailed with the words of the same Ps. 109,1 after which he is invited to take the seat of honor at the Father’s right hand till all of his enemies be subjected to him (cf. also 1 Cor. 15,24-28). Thus the Father who named him a high priest for over at his eternal birth, welcomes him at his return with the exclamation of his highpriestly office. In other words, the Son is welcomed by the Father for what he was and functioned on earth.

The third aspect refers to the purpose of the incarnation of the eternal Son. Thus in Heb. 2,14-18 we find an introduction to the highpriestly function of the incarnated Son. Taking to himself a human body (“blood and flesh”, v.14) was necessary because the Son was not concerned with the salvation of angels who are spirits, but with the salvation of Abraham’s offspring. Therefore only in the human form could the eternal Son function as a merciful and faithful to God highpriest in order to redeem the sins of the people. The same idea in a more explicit way is stated in Heb. 10,5-18. Just before that Paul spoke about the fulfillment of the prophesy of Jeremiah (18,31-34 LXX) by Jesus Christ concerning “the new covenant” and its superiority to the Old. But Jeremiah’s prophesy does not specify the way in which this covenant would be realized. For this purpose Paul appeals to Ps. 39,7-9a where God is presented as disliking the O.

Testament animal sacrifices, because though “offered according to the law” (10,8) they “can never take away sins” (10,11). So, He decided to replace the entire covenant by a new and better one. To this purpose the Son appears coming forth and offers himself : “Lo, I have come to do thy will” (10,9). Hence, God “prepared for him a body” (10,5b) which he offers to Him as a sacrifice “once for all” (10,10). In other words, the goal of the incarnation of the Son was to offer his human body as a sacrifice to God. Indeed, Christ’s sacrifice “has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (10,14), so that “where there is forgiveness of these (sins), there is no longer any offering for sin” (10,18).

It is clear, therefore, that Christ’s vicarious self-sacrifice was a function of his highpriestly office. So, in the new covenant we have the paradox that the sacrificer is identified with the victim. As highpriest, Jesus Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary “taking his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption”³⁶. After his sacrifice offered “once for all” to the end of time men can be saved by appropriating the effects of his sacrifice to themselves. This means that Christ’s sacrifice has a perpetual value as it is extended into history “until he comes” again (1 Cor. 11,26). The procedure was provided by himself during his last supper with his disciples, when in a special act he instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist³⁷. As a matter of fact, that moment Christ instituted this Sacrament by performing it himself. This is clear from the offering of the bread and the wine, his blessing upon them which resulted in the transformation of the bread and the wine into his real body and blood, and finally from his offering them to the disciples “for the forgiveness of sins”, together with the command to repeat it themselves over and over again “in remembrance of him” (1 Cor. 11,24)³⁸. The institution of the Eucharist was of a sacrificial and sacramental significance. This is clear from the use of the expressions “he gave thanks”, “blessed”, “sanctified”, “is given”, “is poured out”, “eat”, “drink” and “for the forgiveness of sins”, and also from the identification of the bread and the wine, after their blessing, with Christ’s own body which was to be sacrificed on the cross, as he himself did by saying “this is my body” and “this is my blood”, and finally from the divine action expressed in both (cf. John 6,55 “For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed”³⁹). After all, this was the way in which the disciples who were present understood it as it is seen from Paul’s comments expressing at this point the conviction of the whole early Church : “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10,16), and also : “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11,26).

The identification of the Eucharist with his passion by Christ himself makes it also a field in which he functions as highpriest. Every time the Eucharist is celebrated by the Church we experience in a sacramental (mystical) way the real

repetition of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This is done by the action of the Holy Spirit who at each particular time in the Church's life actualizes the redemptive events of the historic past. And whenever the Church celebrates this Sacrament, in accordance with Christ's command, she actually repeats in a real as well as in a sacramental way his dual act when he performed both of them, i.e. his own sacrifice of himself and the Eucharist. Thus, together with the celebration of the Eucharist in the history of the Church we experience also the function of Christ's priesthood which is tight to his self-sacrifice. In this way, through the Eucharist, the priesthood of Christ is extended also into the history of the "new" covenant. As a matter of fact, this is the only and unique sacrifice of the new covenant because it put an end to all other kinds of sacrifices. And the covenant is in fact renewed each time the Eucharist is celebrated because it is time and again confirmed as the believers partake of Christ's flesh and blood⁴⁰. In addition to this, since Jesus Christ performed them both, the Eucharist and his own sacrifice of himself in his highpriestly capacity, it follows that the repetition of his own sacrifice in the Eucharist by the Church must of necessity be performed by those members of the Church who partake in his priesthood. Such persons were at first the apostles who were also present at the institution of the Eucharist and who were commanded by Christ to "do this in remembrance of him" (1 Cor. 11,24). This means that the priestly office is connected with the apostolic one. Let us notice, however, that as Christ is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" and so holds his priesthood permanently (Heb. 7,24), the priests of the new covenant inaugurated by his sacrifice of himself do not possess the priesthood by their own right, but instead they simply partake in Christ's priesthood so that when they celebrate the Eucharist and repeat Christ's sacrifice, it is rather Christ himself who performs them, invisibly present, through the priests.

V. Christ's Priesthood in the history of the New Covenant.

Their election and appointment personally by Jesus Christ himself underlines the Apostles' unique place in the history of divine Economy. Of course, several other persons are called "apostles" in the primitive Church, but when it refers to those of supreme authority in the Church which stems from their personal relation to Christ, this term is strictly limited to the Twelve (and Paul) because only they were given by Christ his unique authority and power on earth and were commanded by him to preach the Gospel to the whole world⁴¹. This means that their election to be Christ's apostles refers to the continuity of his redemptive work and so to his presence in history through them.

More particularly, with respect to the Apostles' unique place in the New Testament and beyond, three points need to be emphasized here. *First*, be-

cause they were elected personally by Christ himself, they are “apostles of Christ”, i.e. his own personal and exclusive representatives in the world. So they were invested by Christ with his own power and authority as it becomes clear from their right to preach the Gospel, their power to cast out demons and perform healing, and their authority to retain and forgive sins.⁴² This is to say that in every respect they act in Christ’s name,⁴³ which indicates his continuous presence in the world. *Second*, because of their personal relation with Christ, they are the authentic “witnesses” and “interpreters” of his person and work and so of the entire history of Salvation culminated in Christ⁴⁴. *Third*, the Apostles’ role as Christ’s personal representatives and their absolute dependence on him extends and continues the same type of relationship between Christ and God. Their mission to the world continues Christ’s mission to it by the Father (cf. John 17,18. 20,21) for the same purpose and with the same power and authority. In a sense, the Apostles carry on the “apostolic office” of Christ as the Father’s “apostle” (Heb. 3,1). As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ himself indicated this kind of relationship between the Apostles and God through himself when he said “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me” (Matth. 10,40), and “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk. 10,16)⁴⁵. Thus, Christ’s “apostleship” is handed over to his own Apostles, so that God’s salvation in Christ is carried on in history through his Apostles. Therefore, everything eventually goes back to God the Father who is the sole origin and cause on the divine as well as on the human level. And so Christ’s Apostles are also God’s Apostles or, as Paul phrased it, they are “apostles of Christ Jesus by the will of God”⁴⁶, or “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”⁴⁷.

The Apostles’ investment with Christ’s power and authority signifies at the same time their participation in his offices in order to be able to continue his work on earth after his departure. Now, this explains why at the institution of the Eucharist Christ instructed them to repeat its celebration from that time until his second coming, for the same purpose and with the same effects. Having the apostolic office, they had also at the same time the priestly one, too, as part of it. The history of the primitive Church informs us that the Apostles conformed at once and completely with Christ’s command by “breaking bread” during the Church’s first worship services after his resurrection⁴⁸. Even the risen Christ himself celebrated again the Eucharist by breaking bread (cf. Lk. 24,30-35. John 21,13) in order to stress anew its vital importance for the life of the Church and in order to renew his command to the Apostles : “do this in remembrance of me”. Indeed, as we gather from Paul’s accounts in 1 Cor. 10,16 and 11,26, each time the Apostles celebrated the Eucharist, they went again through all those events which they had experienced living with Jesus Christ, especially his passion and the institution of the Eucharist which is connected with it.

VI. The Apostles' Successors. Church Order.

It has become clear, therefore, that the Apostles were placed “*jure divino*” in the leadership of the Church. As such they handled right from the beginning all functions of Church life as its supreme authority. Their first collective action was to elect a substitute for Judas in the circle of the Twelve right before Pentecost (Acts 1,15-26). But the Church’s rapid expansion in Jerusalem and Judaea necessitated the Apostles’ release from certain duties so that they could concentrate in the preaching of the Gospel and the conduction of worship centered in the Eucharist. The first measure towards this goal was the appointment of seven Deacons (Acts 6) whose function, as it appears, was related to the social work of the Church. By this the Apostles transferred part of their own responsibility of minor importance. Although the deacons were installed to office by ordination, which involved a prayer and the imposition of hands by the Apostles, their function did not, never the less, have a sacramental significance, but a social one confined to the service at the common meals of the community⁴⁹. And as we gather from Paul in 1 Cor. 11,17-34, these common meals took place after the celebration of the Eucharist, thus realizing in daily life the believers’ unity with Christ and with one another which they experienced in this Sacrament. But as Paul again informs us, serious incidents of disorder started soon taking place during these meals which eventually resulted in the Church’s decision to discontinue them. Therefore, it was after this when the deacons at tables moved, most probably, to the service at the table of Christ, the Eucharist. This early development in the order of the deacons apparently appears in the case of the deacons at Philippi (Phil. 1,1) and in the area of Ephesus (1 Tim. 3,8-13). On the other hand, that the deacons were originally confined to the Church’s social work, is confirmed by the fact that women also were appointed to it, like the deaconess Phoebe at Cenchreae who “has been a helper of many” including Paul (Rom. 16,1-2). Thus the deacons, appointed by the Apostles who ordained them, represented them in this particular aspect of Church life. That some of them were also preaching the Gospel, like Stephen (Acts 6,8f) and Philip (Acts 21,8f), does not mean that they were acting without the permission of the Apostles who supervised all Church life.

All of a sudden, shortly afterwards the Presbyters appear in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 11,30), Luke keeping silent about the conditions that necessitated their appearance and the procedure of their installment into office. Fortunately, however, we get information about all this from Acts 14,23 and 1 Tim. 5,17-22. According to Acts 11,30, the office of the presbyters, too, is connected with the social work of the Apostolic Church. Thus, the aid of the Church of

Antioch sent to the Church of Jerusalem, during the famine at the time of Claudius in AD 43, was received in Jerusalem by the presbyters. From Acts 15 also we learn that the presbyters occupied a leading place in the Church of Jerusalem after the apostles, together with whom they received the delegation of the Antiochian Church and discussed with it the issue of the presuppositions of the Gentiles joining the Church and following the negotiations they also took part in the Apostolic Council and together with them they signed the letter of that Council to the communities of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. Also, according to Acts 16,4, the presbyters were responsible on matters of faith, and according to Acts 21,18, they formed a group around James, the leader of the Church of Jerusalem.

Now, Acts 14,23 reports that after Paul and Barnabas finished their mission to the regions of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian's Antioch, and "after they had ordained presbyters for them in every Church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed". It is clear then that the apostles ordained these presbyters in view of their own departure from those local churches. So they had to appoint leaders to each one of them to manage their life on their behalf. This means that if in the case of the Deacons the apostles transferred part of their own responsibility to them on matters concerning the social work of the Church, in the case of the Presbyters they gave full responsibility to them with respect to the entire life of the local churches which comprised also the worship and the didache, except the right of ordination of other presbyters, as we shall see below. The evidence, therefore, leads to the conclusion that the presbyters are subject to the Apostles, installed by them to lead the life of the local churches on their behalf in matters concerning doctrine, worship and administration. It was to this effect that Paul gave a farewell address to the presbyters of Ephesus in Miletus (Acts 20,17f), whom he had obviously ordained during his three-year stay there (Acts 20,31).

The presbyters are mentioned again in 1 Tim. 4,14 and 5,17-19 where Timothy is instructed to be careful with the ordination of new presbyters (1 Tim. 5,22) and deacons (3,8). The ordination of presbyters was also part of Titus' main task in Crete to whom Paul writes "this is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint presbyters in every town as I directed you ..." (Tit. 1,5) after his departure from that island (Tit. 3,12). According to 1 Pet. 5,1-4, presbyters already existed in all the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, at the time of the writing of that epistle, "tending the flock of God that was their charge" in Peter's name who instructs them accordingly. The picture is concluded with the evidence of the epistles of James (5,14), Second and Third John and the Apocalypse⁵⁰. It becomes clear, therefore, that the presbyters and the deacons, who moved from the social work of the Church to worship after disorders broke out at the common meals, formed the group of leaders of the local communities (cf. Phil. 1,1).

Now comes the question : what necessitated the order of the presbyters? The answer is connected with the expansion of the Church in the areas outside Jerusalem, following the death of Stephen and the persecution of the Christians (Acts. 8,1-4. 11,19-21) who being scattered preached the Gospel and established communities in Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. It is obvious then, that the expansion of the Church increased the work of the apostles who thus had to transfer part of their own duties to local leaders whom they appointed. Thus the presbyters represented the apostles on the local level authorized to govern the Churches in their stead as teachers, leaders of worship and pastors.

But the most important issue as time went on was that of the succession of the apostles themselves by persons fully authorized and having the fullness of the priestly office as themselves. At this time, as we know, the use of the term “ἐπίσκοπος” alternated with that of the term “πρεσβύτερος”, being identical in content and significance⁵¹. Both however were deprived of the right to ordain others and so to renew the order⁵². This being so, there comes the question as to the persons to whom the apostles gave full authority over the apostolic work, including the right of ordination. At this point Protestant research insisted that the Apostles avoided to consider the issue of succession to the extent that there existed a gap which the Church hastened to fill after their death by promoting one of the “supervising” presbyters to the office of the bishop as we know it later. But if this was the case, then there is no apostolic succession whatsoever in the history of the Church’s life. Protestant theologians arrived at this conclusion by contrasting the so called “permanent” ministers of the local communities (presbyters or bishops, and deacons) to the so called “charismatic” ones, like f.e. the prophets, teachers, apostles (in a wider sense), tongue speakers, interpreters, etc., (cf. Rom. 12,3-8. 1 Cor. 12,1-30. Eph. 4,1-16).

A more careful consideration of the evidence, however, gives a different picture by showing the substantial importance of the “Prophets” and their role in the order and leadership of the primitive church. In their case we observe the connection of the charismatic element to the ordination⁵³. These prophets⁵⁴, differing from those who received the prophetic (teaching) gift occasionally, freely and temporarily, were the apostles’ immediate disciples, collaborators and companions, and eventually successors over wide geographical areas⁵⁵. They were chosen by the Holy Spirit (“through prophecy”) and ordained by the apostles, as in the case of Timothy (1 Tim. 4,14), or by other prophets, as in the case of Saul and Barnabas (Acts. 13,1-3)⁵⁶. They were used as the apostles’ companions in their apostolic missions,⁵⁷ as their emissaries to local communities when facing various problems,⁵⁸ as preachers of the Gospel over large areas, to appoint (ordain) local leaders and organize the local communities,⁵⁹ to communicate the decisions of the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem to local Churches,⁶⁰ etc., Generally speaking these prophets worked closely with the apostles in carrying out the

apostolic work and so shared with them the responsibility in maintaining the faith entrusted to them by the Lord (1 Tim. 6, 13; 14; 20). As long as the apostles were alive they were called prophets because they were singled out by the Holy Spirit to this office. But after the death of the apostles the title “prophet” alternated with the title “apostle” because they succeeded the apostles in their work and status.⁶¹ Occasionally, however, the prophets were indicated by the use of their proper names alone on account of the authority they had gained so far. Here it is interesting also to notice that the title “prophet” is alternated in the Didache with the title “ἀρχιερεύς” (highpriest). This proves beyond any doubt that as immediate successors of the apostles, the prophets had also the fullness of the priestly office.⁶² Finally, from the post-apostolic literature we learn that the prophets were succeeded in their task and work by the “[ἐπίσκοποι]” (bishops) on the local level.⁶³ In this way the unbroken succession of the apostolic office was established and secured in the history of the Church and with it also the continuous celebration of the Eucharist and the other Sacraments through the priestly office, and so Christ’s saving work on earth is perpetuated in history to the end of time, “until he comes again” (1 Cor. 11, 26).

VII. The Meaning and Significance of Ordination.

All church officers, deacons, presbyters and prophets, were installed into office by ordination (“χειροτονία”), consisting in prayer and the laying of the hands of the officer who ordained them upon the appointed person.⁶⁴ The laying on of hands is used in the N.T. on several occasions, like f.e. for the blessing of persons, healing the sick, giving the Holy Spirit after baptism, etc. The practice derives from the O.T. where the most important occasions are the laying of the hands upon the heads of animals offered for sacrifice, to which were transferred the sins of those who offered them (cf. Exod. 29, 15-19. Lev. 16, 21. 24, 14. etc.), and the installment of a person into office (like Joshua by Moses, Num. 27, 18-23), of the Levites (Num. 8, 10), etc. The practice was retained in rabbinical Judaism where the rabbi transferred by ordination the wisdom and the authority which he had received by the same procedure from his own teacher. Thus an unbroken successive line went back to Joshua and finally to Moses who ordained him.⁶⁵ The significance of the laying on of the hands was that the personality of the person who placed them was imprinted upon the person which was ordained.

But while in rabbinical Judaism the person which performed the ordination did it “ipso jure” and thus transmitted by his own initiative his own rabbinical wisdom and authority to the new rabbi, in Christianity ordination was connected with prayer to God or Christ as the most substantial part of the entire procedure (Acts 6, 6. 13, 3. 14, 23). Thus the ordinator proper was not in fact the person who

placed his hands upon the new officer, but God Himself or Christ whose grace and power he invoked. We observe this from the very beginning in the case of Matthias, chosen to replace Judas in the circle of the Twelve (Acts 1,24-25), in the case of the seven deacons (Acts 6,6), and in the case of Saul and Barnabas in Antioch (Acts 13,3). Thus the priestly office was in fact granted to the person ordained by God or Christ himself, while the officer who performed the ordination was merely the vehicle through whom Christ's priestly office was mysteriously given to the novice. Also, while in rabbinical Judaism the laying on of hands was a private affair, in Christianity it had an ecclesiological significance, performed in the presence of the community, to whose service the novice was thus dedicated. This, as we saw, happened in the O.T. at the ordination of the highpriest and the priests (Exod. 28). The presence of the community was a guarantee of the validity of the ordination which thus became a witness to the continuity and unbroken function of Christ's priestly office through a continuous addition of new participants in it.⁶⁶ But let us consider each particular case separately.⁶⁷

The case of the seven deacons can in itself be considered as an imitation of an old custom of the Jewish cities of Palestine to elect seven outstanding citizens to run common affairs on behalf of the community.⁶⁸ Their appointment, however, was not done through ordination. Now, the idea of representation is observed also in the case of the seven deacons. But then the question rises as to whom they were to represent. Several scholars maintained that the deacons were chosen and ordained by "the multitude" of the believers whom they also represented. At first sight, this idea seems to be verified by the expression in Acts 6,6 "These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them". But a more careful reading of the passage gives a different conclusion. It is clear that the task to which the deacons were called originally, belonged to the apostles whom the deacons were to replace in that particular function. On the other hand, the verbs "[επισκέψασθε" and "καταστήσωμεν" in Acts 6,3 define the specific role which the members of the community and the apostles were to play respectively. That is, the community had to elect the deacons and the apostles would install them into office. In other words, installation proper, which included the prayer and the laying on of hands, was exclusively reserved for the apostles whom the deacons had thus to represent in their particular function. Now the question comes up : why, since it was a matter concerning the social activity of the Church, ordination with prayer was necessary? The answer is simple : in the Church all authority and all gifts or functions come from Christ himself and not from the believers. It is Christ who tends and governs his Church as the "chief shepherd" (1 Pet. 5,4) through his apostles and their successors who thus tend the Church in turn "jure divino" as Christ's representatives. Therefore, since every office and function in the Church originate from God, they are carried out in God's or Christ's name. And he who actually appoints a member of the Church

into a particular office or function is God or Christ whose grace and power are invoked by the prayer.

The cases Acts 14,23 and Tit. 1,5 are very clear, as we have already seen, because they both concern the ordination of presbyters in local communities. Difficulties seem to present themselves only in Acts 13,1-3, due to the lack of sufficient evidence. The story tells that five “prophets and teachers” of the Church of Antioch “were worshipping the Lord and fasting” when the Holy Spirit called them to “set apart” Barnabas and Saul for the work to which he had called them, i.e. to missionary work in Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphilia, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and Attalia (Paul’s first missionary tour). Obeying to the call of the Holy Spirit, these prophets and teachers, “after fasting and praying laid their hands on them and sent them off” (13,3). No doubt, those who laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul were Symeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen a member of Herod the tetrarch’s household.

The narrative does not specify which of the five were prophets and which were teachers. One thing is clear, however, that not all of them had both offices, since according to the lists in Rom. 12,68, 1 Cor. 12,28-31 and Eph. 4,10-12, the office of the teacher is lower than that of the prophet which also includes the former. Besides, if all five had the same or both offices, the laying of the hands of the others upon Barnabas and Saul would be meaningless, because as a principle the one with a higher rank blesses or lays his hands on the one of a lower rank (cf. Heb. 7,7). Therefore we must conclude that “prophets” were only Symeon, Lucius and Manaen, and that Barnabas and Saul were the “teachers” of the group. This conclusion is supported further from the information we have about Barnabas⁶⁹ and Saul⁷⁰ before the incident. Indeed, the only activity they both had so far was that in the Church of Antioch described in Acts 11,21-26. According to the narrative, the news that “a great number that believed turned to the Lord” forced the Church of Jerusalem to send Barnabas to Antioch who “seeing the grace of God” and being unable to handle the situation alone, went to Tarsus and invited Saul to come and help him. In Antioch their work consisted in the “παρακλήσις” and “διδασχίη” of those gentiles entering the Church. In the N.T. the word “παρακλήσις” equals to instruction in connection with the kerygma of the Gospel and the overall pastoral affairs.⁷¹ This type of instruction was used in the missionary work which was under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. And this was what happened in Barnabas’ case (and Paul’s) in Antioch (Acts 11,23-24). Perhaps it was thanks to his teaching abilities that he was sent to Antioch by the apostles in Jerusalem and for which he was also “surnamed by the apostles Barnabas which, means, Son of comfort” (“υἱὸς παρακλήσεως”, Acts 4,36. Barnabas’ real name was Joseph).

From the above, therefore, we gather that before the incident described in Acts 13,1-3, Paul and Barnabas had only the office of the teacher, which they

practiced on the local level of the Church of Antioch. But now, commissioned by the Holy Spirit to missionary work in areas where the Gospel had not yet been preached, their task included also the establishment of local churches and their overall organization by the ordination of presbyters, as it is clearly stated in Acts 14,23, a task which could be carried out only by the apostles or prophets, since the “διδάσκαλοι” were confined to the work of the “didache” (διδαχή) on the local level. This being so then, it becomes clear that the prophets of the Antiochian church, Symeon, Lucius, and Manaen, at the indication of the Holy Spirit ordained the teachers Barnabas and Saul to the office of the prophet which in the lists Rom. 12,6-8, 1 Cor. 12,28-31 and Eph. 4,10-12 came immediately after the office of apostle. In these lists we have a priority order of the “κρείττονα χαρίσματα” (higher gifts).⁷²

The above lead us to the further conclusion that Paul’s direct call by the exulted Christ as his “vessel”, “to carry his name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel” (Acts 9,15), did not, obviously, include also his ordination into the priestly office at the same time. He (and Barnabas) received the priestly office in Antioch through the hands of the prophets of that church, acting at the instruction of the Holy Spirit himself, since the Lord had been lifted up from the earth. It is obvious that the prophets, having the fullness of the priestly office, had the right to ordain other persons into that office, even while the apostles were still living.⁷³

Paul’s ordination into the office of the prophet, by means of which he also received the priestly office, is not in compatible with his self-designation in his epistles as “an apostle of Jesus Christ”. His election as an apostle was done by Christ himself, like in the case of the Twelve, the apostolic office being uniquely and exclusively connected with Christ. What happened in Antioch was that his election was confirmed by ordination at the indication of the Holy Spirit who bestows God’s or Christ’s grace upon the believers. On the other hand, Barnabas is nowhere in the N.T. called an “apostle”, in the narrow sense of the word, because he was not elected by Jesus Christ.⁷⁴ However, both Paul and Barnabas became by ordination vicars of Christ through participation in his priesthood. On the other hand also, the ordination of prophets by prophets is a model for the subsequent ordination of bishops by bishops.

Different kind of difficulties appear in the case of Timothy’s ordination, according to 1 Tim. 4,14 and 2 Tim. 1,6. In the first case Paul⁷⁵ writes to Timothy in Ephesus not to neglect the gift he had and “which was given him by prophecy *together with the laying on of the hands of the presbyters*”. At first sight, the conclusion here is that Timothy was ordained by the presbyters. But such an idea comes to contrast with 2 Tim. 1,6 where Timothy is reminded “to rekindle the gift of God that is within him through the laying of Paul’s hands”. In this case the participation of any other person in Timothy’s ordination is excluded. It is very probable, though, that the expression in 1 Tim. 4,14 is equivalent to the rabbinical technical term “Semikhath Zekenim”⁷⁶, indicating the en-

tire ceremony of the rabbinical ordination. And if this is true, as it seems, the expression in 1 Tim. 4,14 indicates that Timothy was ordained by Paul alone during a fixed ceremony. In this case 1 Tim. 4,14 agrees with 2 Tim. 1,6. which explains also why the prayer is not mentioned here, as in the other cases. In any case, the presbyters did not have the authority to ordain at all, but their mention in 1 Tim. 4,14 indicates that they were simply present or participated in the ceremony, during which Paul ordained Timothy.⁷⁷ Anyhow, both texts refer to the same event and person, referred to by the same author, Paul.⁷⁸

According to both texts, Timothy received by ordination “the gift” which 1 Tim. 4,14 specifies “διά προφητείας”, which is similar to that in 1 Tim. 1,18 “κατά τάς προαγούσας ἐπί σέ προφητείας” and which must refer to repeated manifestations of the Holy Spirit to Timothy. These manifestations forced Paul to ordain Timothy and commit to him the “παραγγελία”, i.e. the instructions which follow.⁷⁹ This also means that these manifestations were different from those of the free, occasional and temporary manifestations of the prophetic gift, in which there was no ordination involved.⁸⁰

VIII. The Question of the participation of women in the Priestly Office of Jesus Christ.

In view of what has been said before, about the nature and the significance of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, we may ask the question whether there is any clear restriction in the Bible of the priesthood to men alone or any prohibition against the participation of women to it. The answer is of course negative,⁸¹ but this does not necessarily mean that there are no serious theological reasons which favor the woman’s exclusion from it. It is true that the ancient Church did not reflect on it in a systematic way although she was confronted by the Gnostic Heretics who accepted women to priesthood even to the rank of the bishop, as it is also true that the Church excluded women from it only because Christ appointed only men as his apostles, excluding even his own Mother Mary from it. At this point Jesus Christ’s decision was in line with specific substantial theological considerations stemming from the overall nature of the divine Economy of Salvation which expresses the conditions existing in the Holy Trinity. In this respect two fundamental presuppositions call for consideration here, i.e. a) the ultimate reference of priesthood to God the Father as its source on account of His personal quality of Fatherhood and hence the cause of all, through his own Son, and b) the conception of the woman’s place in the divine Economy on an equal footing with man. Let us see these points in detail.

A.’ In Scripture, God’s fatherhood refers equally to “Theo-logy” and to the “Economy”, being identified to “Principium Divinitatis”. In other words, being a

Father God is the sole reason, source and cause of the life and the existence of everything which exists. In particular, in account of His divine nature, God the Father is eternally and timelessly the cause of the existence of the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity, i.e. of the Son, by birth and of the Holy Spirit, by procession. On the other hand, on account of His divine will and energy, God the Father is the Creator of the entire universe, visible and invisible, in time. Hence the word "Father" is God's personal name revealed in history, exactly as the words "Son" and "Holy Spirit" are the personal names of the second and the third persons of the Holy Trinity, correspondingly. Revealed to the world these names are those by which the three persons of the Godhead became known to it, and by which each person is distinguished from the other two, and also through which their mutual relations, are defined. Each name therefore, indicates the distinctive quality of the person who bears it, i.e. his peculiar mode of existence as well as his peculiar relations to the other persons. This means that no divine person can take the name and the peculiar mode of existence of any of the other two because each name is absolutely connected with the corresponding person and cannot be replaced by any other name.

Things are absolutely clear, therefore, in the Bible, with respect to the Holy Trinity. And so, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament⁸² is "the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1,18) and as such "he reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb. 1,3) because "he is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1,15. 2Cor. 4,4) and Whom "he has made known" (John 1,18) to the world.⁸³ The authority with which the Son revealed God as Father, his own Father, stems from the most intimate mutual relationship that exists between them, a relationship of unity in substance to the extent that only the Son can say "I and the Father are one" (John 10,30) or that "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10,38. 14.20) and therefore "if you know me, you would know my Father also" (John 8,19) and "if you had known me, you would have known my Father also" and "henceforth you know him and have seen him", since "he who has seen me has seen the Father" to the extent that "no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14,7-9).

With respect to the world, on the other hand, and man in particular, we have the contrast between the "fatherhood" of the "gods" of the pagan religions, which man created out of his own imagination and placed them in his social structures, on the one hand and God's fatherhood which He revealed primarily as the Father of His own Son by birth and of men by adoption, on the other. The biblical God never reveals Himself as Mother, or Father-Mother, Brother, or Uncle, as we observe in pagan religions.⁸⁴ This proves how unbiblical and finally unchristian is the attitude of the advocates of the so called "Feminist Theology" who, applying pagan naturalistic principles, attribute feminine names and qualities to God and to Christ, thus re-writing the Bible or rather writing their own

Bible. Naturalistic elements have been replaced in the Bible by the supernaturalistic ones of divine revelation which should be the model in human relationship. In other words, man's fatherhood and sonship must express and picture the divine fatherhood and sonship.

In the context of the divine Economy God's fatherhood is related to man's faithfulness to Him and not to His quality as the Creator of the world. In other words, while God is the creator of everything, including man himself, nevertheless He is nowhere in Scripture presented as the Father of all men, indiscriminately, but only of those who are related to Him by faith and obedience and who thus accept Him as their own God. For instance, in the Old Testament only Israel is called "son" or "child" of God⁸⁵, while God is called the Father of Israel only.⁸⁶ This mutually intimate relationship is based on God's election of Israel as His own "firstborn son" (Exod. 4,22),⁸⁷ as well as a whole series of God's interventions in history in Israel's favor. Nevertheless, this relationship between God and Israel remains a legal one and as such it is subject to change into a substantial one of the divine fatherhood and adoption, which we meet in the New Testament.

Indeed, in Gal. 4,4-7 Paul presents man's adoption by God as the very essence of the divine plan of Salvation. The same picture is given also in Eph. 1,3-5. What follows in both texts is that the achievement of this goal is described as the result of the co-operation of all three persons of the Holy Trinity, in which the Father's will for man's adoption was carried out by the incarnate Son and imprinted within each individual by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus changed within, the individual believers are entitled to call God as their own Father, even by the very same expression by which His only Son calls Him, i.e. "Abba, Father" which expresses their innermost relationship (cf. Mk. 14,36. Rom. 8,15). It is even interesting to notice that even the whole creation awaits eagerly to be redeemed from the corruption and decay imposed upon it by man's fall and sin through man's own divine adoption as a child of God (Rom. 8,21). Therefore, "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8,14) and as such they are "heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ". It is even more interesting to notice that, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ rejected the pride of the Jews claiming "we have one Father, even God" replying to them "you are of your father the devil", simply because they rejected him to be the Son of God" (John 8,41-44). Divine adoption is achieved by way of the Son Jesus Christ so that by adoption men become what Christ is by birth, so that the Son and the sons "have all one origin" and so Christ "is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2,10;11;17).

It must be noticed, however, that man's adoption by God the Father is of an ontological nature in the sense that he participates in Christ's sonship on account of his appropriation of Christ's clean-from-sin human nature (cf. Rom. 6,3-7. Gal. 3,26-28).⁸⁸ On the other hand, adoption as man's condition and God's grace refers to the person, not to nature. If it referred to nature it would coincide

with the naturalistic outlawed of pagan religions where divine fatherhood and man's sonship coincide with God's quality as Creator and man's nature as a creature. It is obvious that this concept annihilates the efforts of the individual, on the one hand, and the importance as well as the necessity of Christ's redemptive work. But what is even more serious, this concept extends the quality of fatherhood to all three persons of the Holy Trinity, something totally foreign to the Bible. We can even go further by saying that if fatherhood and sonship are related to nature, there can be no Holy Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Fatherhood, therefore, is an exclusively personal quality of God, the first person of the Holy Trinity and cause of the other two persons, from Whom also "every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. 3,14-15), and this because there is only "one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4,6. cf. 1Cor. 8,6). This means that being the cause of men, God is also the cause of their existence and life in Him, working out through the Son in the Holy Spirit their anthropological recreation. This further means that God does not only act as Father, but that He is Father in a hypostatic sense because His fatherhood is identified exclusively with His own person and is not transferred to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, since "every fatherhood ... and on earth is named" (Eph. 3,15), it follows that man's fatherhood stems from God's fatherhood, which man's fatherhood expresses and imitates in exactly the same way in which the sonship of the Son is the model of man's sonship both, with respect to God the Father and with respect to the individual human fathers.

Now it is evident that in the root of fatherhood there lies the reality of the "γεννήτωρ" (i.e. originator of generator) which is identified with the fundamental personal characteristics which make up the gender. In other words, as in the Godhead the Son and the Spirit cannot appropriate to themselves the Father's fatherhood and so replace Him in this absolutely personal quality and function of His, in exactly the same way also the woman cannot appropriate to herself the exclusively personal quality and function of man and so replace him in his fatherhood, as man cannot appropriate to himself the woman's absolutely personal quality and function and replace her in her motherhood. Woman can never become a father, as man can never become a mother, although both, man and woman are of the same substance. This is so because, as we said above, qualities and their functions refer to the person (gender) and not to substance. For if they referred to substance they would not be two persons but one, the "[αρρενόθηλος" (male-female) or "άνδρόγυνος" (man-woman) of the Gnostics.⁸⁹ This notion is not only in contrast to the divine model of humanity, but also to the fact that God created two distinct persons as expressions of His own image (Gen. 1,27. 2,21-23),⁹⁰ each with a different quality and function, that of fatherhood and that of motherhood, correspondingly. So, in his personal quality and function man the father images God the Father "from whom every fatherhood, in

heaven and on earth is named” (Eph. 1,14. Cf. 4,6). However, this in no way suggests that God as Father is of male gender, like man. Fatherhood on the divine level is not appropriate to gender, but it is a mode of existence (of being). On the contrary, in humanity fatherhood is not a mode of being, but a potentiality which becomes a condition and a quality in time. But God is always Father and mainly Father, and there was never a “time” when He was not Father.⁹¹ Man becomes a father only when and if he causes birth, and even so he is always the son of his own father. The same principle applies also to woman. Thus, human conditions cannot apply to Divinity, as we can see it happening in the naturalistic outlook of pagan religions and to the so called “Feminist Theologians”, who replace the masculine attributes of the divine Persons in Scripture by feminine or neuter ones.⁹² Rather, human reality must be conditioned by and express the divine archetypes.⁹³ Even though human nature is imperfect and fluid, human fatherhood is still an imitation of God the Father’s perfect fatherhood. And of the two human persons fatherhood is fit to man alone who by construction and gender bears within its function as a generator of life, and so he images in himself, though in an imperfect way, God the Father’s quality and represents Him functionally, while woman, on the other hand, as patristic thought stressed later, images functionally in herself the Holy Spirit. Thus, being the son of his own father, by partition or distribution, man becomes also the father of his own son, with the co-operation woman.⁹⁴ Imaging, however, excludes the possession of these qualities originally and autonomously and allows their possession in communion with them even in a potential way.

This leads us to the heart of the problem because, imaging in himself God the Father in His fatherhood, even in a potential way, man alone can also image Him functionally in himself in His divine offices, the priestly, the royal and the prophetic one, of which God the Father alone is the source and principle and from Whom even the Son received them at his eternal birth from Him (Heb. 5,5-6). This implies that, since God the Father alone is the source and principle of these divine offices, even the Son does not possess them by right; he only possesses them by concession and assignment (Cf. Heb. 5,5-6), and so, too, his own apostles and their successors, up to this day.⁹⁵

The principle of imaging and representation, therefore, which we stressed before, refers all aspects of the divine Economy successively back to the “Principium Divinitatis” of divine fatherhood.⁹⁶ This is to say that as the Son was sent to the world by the Father, Whom he images and represents and in Whose name he acted redemptively (John 5,43. 8,42. 10,25),⁹⁷ so also the apostles were sent to the world by the incarnate Son acting “in persona Christi” and by extension “in persona Dei”. This is why St. Ignatius of Antioch calls them “types of Christ” and ultimately “types of God”.⁹⁸ As a matter of fact this was the way the apostles thought of themselves, i.e. as “God was in Christ reconciling the world

to Himself" (2 Cor. 5,19) and as He dwelt in him "he did His works" (John 14,10), so also the apostles are described by Paul as "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4,1) and as "ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through them" (2 Cor. 5,20).⁹⁹ Through priesthood which they received from Jesus Christ, the apostles continued his redemptive work in the world, which is in fact God's own work, because He is the supreme author of divine Economy.¹⁰⁰ As Jesus Christ led by his saving work "many sons to glory" (Heb. 2,10f) and made them his own "children",¹⁰¹ so also the apostles became "the fathers in Christ Jesus through the gospel" for all those who accepted their kerygma (1Cor. 4,14-15. Cf. 2Cor. 6,13), who thus are the apostles' "children".¹⁰² This is a spiritual kind of relationship, a spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship, because the apostles are the Christians' fathers in Christ, as Paul signifies (1 Cor. 4,14-15). This relationship continues ever since in the life of the Church through the successors of the apostles who likewise share in Christ's priestly office.

From what has been said above, it has become very clear that the restriction of the priestly office to man alone does not imply a violation of the "natural rights" of woman. As a matter of fact, priesthood is not anyone's "right", man's or woman's. Rather, it is only a potential and functional imaging of the divine priesthood of God the Father through Jesus Christ. And as such it can only be imaged by man alone, connected with his potential and functional imaging of the divine fatherhood which cannot be imaged by woman. Woman's role in the divine Economy differs from man's in that she images functionally the role of the Holy Spirit who assists Christ in his saving work in the Church.

Indeed, according to the Bible, Salvation is the work of all three persons of the Holy Trinity, in which the Father wills, the Son carries out or fulfills the Father's will, and the Holy Spirit implements and perfects it within the individual believer. This fundamental reality is the starting point for the typological interpretation of man's and woman's place and corresponding roles and functions within the Church. And it is exactly this typological foundation which defined the doctrine of the ancient Church, according to which priesthood was restricted to man while woman was excluded from it. In this way, the co-operation (*συνέργεια*) of the Son and the Spirit in the work of Salvation, for the realization of the will of the Father, through two different functions and roles is extended and imaged, in a typological way of reference, to the co-operation between man and woman through different functions and roles within the Church where Salvation continues to the end of time (*ἔσχατον*).

According to this typological reference, therefore, Mary the Theotokos lifted Eve's disobedience to God. In other words, as through her disobedience Eve became the cause of her own fall as well as of the fall of the whole humanity in a hereditary way, so also Mary became, through her obedience to the will of God,

the cause of her own salvation as well as of the salvation of all humanity after her because, through the creative power of the Holy Spirit upon her, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God became possible, who thus recapitulated (*ἀνεκεφάλαιωσε*) in himself the first Adam becoming himself, as man, the “last Adam” and so the generator of all those who receive him and are thus saved by him. The Holy Spirit who “moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1,2) and who by his creative power brought the world into being, came also creatively upon Mary whom he cleansed from the original sin and made her able to give birth into fallen creation to God’s Son. Hence, the Holy Spirit who brought creation into existence made also possible its restoration and salvation and so Mary became the “first fruits” of the new humanity. This is why Mary’s annunciation prefigures Pentecost, since the coming of the Spirit upon Mary parallels to the coming of the Spirit to the Church in Pentecost.

Mary’s special functional relation to the function of the Holy Spirit, aiming at lifting the consequences of Eve’s disobedience, proved her to be the recipient “par excellence” of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit as “*κεχαριτωμένη*” (the most gifted one) and therefore the “type” of the charismatic members of the Church. As a matter of fact here lies the typological relationship between the function of Mary’s motherhood and the motherhood of the Church which are both pneumatocentric, for both receive the Holy Spirit by whose energy Christ is born from the Virgin Mary, on the one hand, while the believers are born in the Church as children of the new humanity in Christ, on the other.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit’s peculiar function is typologically imaged in woman’s function within the Church through the Theotokos, likewise Christ’s peculiar function is typologically imaged in man’s function through him. Woman’s typology is pneumatocentric, because she is the recipient of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, while man’s typology is Christocentric, because he is the recipient of Christ’s three offices among which priesthood possesses a prominent place, which as an iconic typology refers to the mystery of Christ. In other words, in contrast to the iconic Christocentric priesthood of the priests in the Church, woman’s pneumatocentric function corresponds iconically to the function of the Holy Spirit which, like woman’s function, refers directly to the mystery of Christ. As such, as the different functions of Christ and the Holy Spirit express the co-operation (*συνέργειαν*) of these two divine persons in the work of Salvation for the realization of the Father’s will, without abolishing their equality in the Trinity as well as in the Church itself, so also the different functions of man and woman in the Church express their co-operation within it, without abolishing their consubstantiality and equality as “images” of the Trinitarian Godhead.

Rooted in this revelatory reality, therefore, Church conscience stressed the peculiarity of man’s relation to the priestly office of Christ, on the one hand and the peculiarity of woman’s relation to the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, on the other, for the realization of the action of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ,

i.e. his Church. Any change or reversal in man's and woman's functions within the Church results in the reversal of the functions and the roles in relation to Christology and Pneumatology. This is exactly what happens in the case of those Christian Confessions which have accepted also women into priesthood.

B.' When we turn to the examination of the N.T. evidence concerning woman's functional role in the divine Economy we observe from the start that views are divided with respect to the interpretation of the same texts. Thus, those supporting the view about woman's functional role in priesthood on an equal footing with man rely heavily on Gal. 3,27-29, while those supporting the view against woman's functional role in priesthood rely on 1 Cor. 14,34-35 and 1Tim. 2,9-15 where St. Paul forbids women to teach in Church during worship, because, in their view, according to 1 Cor. 11,2-16, woman is not created in the image of God, but in the image of man.

Both views reflect a misinterpretation of the texts, however. In particular, with respect to the first one relying on Gal. 3,27-28, it must be stressed that Paul stresses here the ontological nature of the equality between man and woman "in Christ" regardless of sex, ethnic or social origin, because at baptism man and woman "put on Christ" by appropriating to themselves his own human nature clean from sin, and so are united with him and with each other. Through baptism human persons are united with each other into one body, "the body of Christ which is the Church, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1,22-23).¹⁰³ This is to say that all human persons, indiscriminately, receive the same merits of Christ's saving work, because Christ as the last Adam restored humanity corrupted by the fall and sin of the first Adam to its original condition. Restored human nature results in the restoration of the individual as a whole when he appropriates Christ's work by faith at baptism (Rom. 6,1-11).¹⁰⁴ What is different between man and woman is their different place and function in divine Economy, on account of their different qualities peculiar to each,¹⁰⁵ as it will be shown later.

On the other hand, the view that Paul's prohibition of women to teach in Church at worship stems from the misconception that the Apostle did not regard woman as having been created "in the image of God", like man, but that instead she was created in the image of man. This view, supported also by certain Church fathers,¹⁰⁶ is not only foreign to the letter and the spirit of the relevant texts (1 Cor. 14,34-35. 1 Tim. 2,9-15. 1 Cor. 11,2-16), but it also introduces the notion of the ontological difference between man and woman in Christ and his Church, a unity which cannot be thought of unless we accept the principle that both have been created in God's image. As a matter of fact Paul alone of all N.T. authors repeats Christ's saying which confirmed the teaching of Genesis 1,26-27 and 2,21-24 (Cf. 5,1-2. 9,6) that God "from the beginning made them male and female".¹¹⁰ Therefore, we must look for the real reasons behind Paul's ruling that women

must not teach in Church and of his recommendation that women should pay the honor due to man.¹¹¹

Now, of the three texts mentioned above only in 1 Tim. 2,11-15 Paul rules that women must not teach in Church, while in 1 Cor. 11,2-16 he says that “any woman who prays and prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head” (v.5) which is man. He does not forbid women to pray and prophecy at all, like men, but he rules that while they do so, they should put a veil over their head in order not to dishonor their head which is man. Praying and prophesying in Church, therefore, applies equally to all members of the Church, men and women alike. This is in agreement with 1 Cor. 14,1-40 where he speaks about the order that must be maintained in worship during which various spiritual gifts were functioned by all believers, men and women alike, indiscriminately. And it is in this context that the Apostle rules that “the woman should keep silence in the churches; For they are not permitted to speak” (vs. 34-35). What was the reason for this? The answer is given by him : “if there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in Church” (v.35). It is evident that the ruling in v.34 stems from the women’s habit to ask various questions to those who functioned in gifts as a result of which worship was disturbed and order went out of control. This is verified in 1 Tim. 2,11 where he repeats “Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness”.

Consequently only in 1 Tim. 2,12-15 Paul rules that “I permit no woman to teach or have authority over men; she is to keep silent”. The reasons he gives for this are, first, that “Adam was formed first, then Eve”, and second, that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor”. It is obvious that both reasons relate this ruling to that in 1 Cor. 11,2-16, where man’s priority over woman as her “head” is stressed, for the same reason that “man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man” (v. 8. Cf. also v.12 “woman was made from man”). The common denominator of both rulings, therefore, (1Tim. 2,12-15 and 1Cor. 11,8;12) is the divinely appointed place for man and woman in the order of creation before its fall which is now restored in the Church. The word of creation is introduced again by the word of salvation.

More particularly, continuing his instructions to the Corinthians about their proper attitude on several occasions, Paul refers in 1 Cor. 11,2-16 to the behavior appropriate in worship.¹¹² Here he stands on purely theological ground concerning the doctrine of Genesis about the creation of man and woman in the image of God Who is their model.¹¹³ Obviously Paul condemns a Greek custom, according to which, in contrast to the Jewish one, women attended worship services without a veil on their head and with short hair, while men attended them having long hair.¹¹⁴ For Paul this custom is a “disgrace” for both, man and woman, because it unfits the proper behavior towards each other which stems from each one’s specific

place in the order of creation.¹¹⁵ In other words, the root of the matter here is not the custom as such and its origin, upon which modern scholars built their interpretation of the text,¹¹⁶ by applying social criteria to Paul's teaching and so diminishing its value, but rather the fact that this habit reverses the divinely appointed place of man and woman in creation and which reversal is unacceptable in the Church. In fact, for Paul the veil on the head and the long hair are symbols of submission which befits woman, while the unveiled head and short hair are symbols of power and authority which befit man. Their reversal is arbitrary indicating the appropriation of the place in the order of creation belonging to the other sex.¹¹⁷ This initiative dishonors their corresponding head. In other words, if woman appropriates to herself, by her own initiative, the place allotted to man, she "dishonors her head", i.e. man, and if man appropriates to himself, by his own initiative, the place allotted to woman, he "dishonors his head", i.e. Christ "in his humanity".¹¹⁸

Paul's successive description of man as woman's head, of Christ as man's head, and of God as Christ's head (11,3-4) relates the entire issue of man's and woman's place in the order of creation and their respective relationship towards each other, which stems from it, to the very order of the persons of the Holy Trinity and their relationship to each other which stems from it. The order of the persons of the Trinity and their mutual relationship is the model of the order of man and woman in creation and their mutual relationship. As the order of the persons of the Trinity and their mutual relationship cannot be altered, so also does the order of the human persons and their mutual relationship in creation, which is restored in the Church. When f.e. Paul describes God as Christ's head, he definitely means that Christ cannot possibly take God's place and thus become His head and Father, i.e. His reason and cause. If God ceased to be the Father (i.e. cause) of the Son, then Christ would no longer be the Father's Son, and God would no longer be the Son's Father. Reversing the order of the persons amounts to reversing their exclusively personal qualities and so of their mutual relationship which stems from them. Such an idea is unthinkable for Paul, and for the same reason is theologically unthinkable the reversal of the order of the human persons (sexes) which defines their relationship toward each other, on account of their exclusively personal qualities appropriate to their gender. For Paul a specific order of persons exists in both, the Holy Trinity and humanity, which is made in the image of the former. This order consists in a successive dependence which goes all the way back to God the Father, Who is the source and cause of all.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, man's description as woman's head, which sets his priority in the order of creation, and its ultimate reference to the Godhead, is also emphasized by man's description as "the image and glory of God", and by woman's description as "the glory of man" (1 Cor. 11,7). This led many past and recent

interpreters to the conclusion that Paul here denies the creation of woman, too, “in the image of God”.¹²⁰ This is wrong, however. These expressions are similar to those describing man as woman’s head, in proportion to God’s description as Christ’s head. Paul is intentionally accurate here when he describes only man as “the image and glory of God”, and woman as “the glory of man”. The question is not about the ontological difference between man and woman, but rather about man’s place in creation as an image of God the Father, i.e. about his priority in creation as an image of God’s priority in the Holy Trinity. In other words, man reflects on the human level what God is on the divine one. At the same time, however, woman’s description as “the glory of man” defines her place in creation second to man, although she, too, has been created “in the image of God”. The same principle applies in the case of Christ, as far as his place in the Holy Trinity is concerned. For although he is consubstantial with the Father, as “the image of God” (Col. 1,15. 2Cor. 4,4) and the reflection of “the glory of God and bearing the very stamp of his nature” (Heb. 1,3), he never the less occupies the second place after Him, having thus no priority over Him. It is for this reason, i.e. as “the image and glory of God”, that man “ought not to cover his head”, because by covering his head man expresses submission to woman, a thing which distorts the order set by God. Woman, on the other hand, “ought to have an authority over her” (1 Cor. 11,7;10), because she is second to man (1 Tim. 2,11).

Where does man’s priority over woman in creation come from? According to Paul, this comes from the divine act of their creation itself, recorded in Genesis, according to which, man was created first, not woman, who was made for him, and not the other way around (1 Cor. 11,8 “For man was not made from woman, but woman from man”, Gen. 2,22-23) and that woman was originally made a helper for man (1 Cor. 11,9 “Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man”; Gen. 2,18 “Let us make him a helper for him”). In other words, man played from the very beginning the role of woman’s generator, being thus the cause of her life and existence, on account of his quality of fatherhood. This is why man is the “image of God” (the Father) in this context. Having originated from man, however, woman is of the same nature with him, as the Son and the Holy Spirit, on the divine level, are of the same nature with the Father, since they both originated from Him.¹²¹ According to Paul, both man and woman are “from God” from Whom are “all things” (11,12) and after that no human person can come into existence without the co-operation of the two : “Never the less, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man nor man is independent of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman” (11,11-12). The place which each human person possesses in the order of creation corresponds to its own peculiarly personal function which cannot be appropriated by the other since man is the cause of life and woman is his necessary and irreplaceable mate. Thus, they both share the same nature, but differ in function.

This specifies the exact meaning of man's "authority" ("ἐξουσία", 11,10) over woman and woman's "submission" ("ὑποταγή") to man.¹²² Woman's submission is not understood in the sense of servitude to man,¹²³ but in the sense of a free recognition and respect on her part of man's priority in creation, in obedience to God's will. That this is the meaning of man's "authority" over woman and woman's "subjection" to man, respectively, is pointed again out by Paul in Eph. 5,22-23, where he connects creation before the fall to the Church saying, in similar words, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands". Thus the divinely appointed relationship between the two human sexes in creation, before the fall, which was distorted by sin, is restored to its original place in the Church by Christ through the Sacrament of Marriage.¹²⁴ Woman's subjection to man and her respect for him (Eph. 5,33 : "φοβ~ηται") are determined by man's love for his wife who is "the weaker sex" (1 Pet. 3,7), which goes as far as his self-sacrifice for her as an expression of love for his own body: "like Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" and so became "the Savior of his own body" (Eph. 5,23;25).

Of the two ideas of the Genesis narrative mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 11,2-16 (i.e. man's priority in the act of creation, and woman's status as "a helper" of man), the first one is again cited by him in 1 Tim. 2,12-15 : "For Adam was formed first, then Eve", to which he adds the fact that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (v.14). And it is in view of these two facts that he states his ruling in vs. 11-12 : "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over man; she is to keep silent". The first part of this ruling repeats that in 1Cor. 14,34-35, concerning the order in worship disturbed by women when they asked questions to those functioning in their gifts. Woman attempted to be man's teacher once before, when she took the initiative to accept Satan's temptation and drew man also into it (cf. 2 Cor. 11,3), and it resulted in the fall of both, for which initiative she was reproved by God saying "you shall be obedient to your husband, and he shall have authority over you" (Gen. 3,16. Cf. 1 Cor. 14,34). God's reproof reminded her of her place second to man in the order of creation which she had violated and reversed by attempting to become man's teacher which equals to having "authority" over him (cf. Sir. 25,24).¹²⁵ For this reason, woman carries the primary responsibility for the fall. The real meaning of this prohibition, however, does not concern woman's teaching in church worship, where only men are allowed to function in this role, resembling Christ who is the teacher of the Church "par excellence". This kind of relationship between Christ and the Church in this respect must also be the model for the relationship between man and woman.¹²⁶

Indeed, the main picture about Christ which we get in the Gospels is that of the Son of God acting in a threefold capacity, as a teacher, shepherd and highpriest. He entrusted this capacity also to his apostles.¹²⁷ And as we learn from the other N.T. books, besides being the leaders of the Church and presiding over worship, the apostles preached the Gospel “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 4,18. 5,28. 28,31, etc.) and “every day in the temple and at home did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5,42. cf. 4,2) “in public and from house to house” (Acts 20,18,21). Their sense of duty in preaching the Gospel is repeatedly emphasized by Paul who was “set apart for the Gospel of God” (Rom. 1,1)¹²⁸ declaring “if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9,16-18). Therefore, preaching the gospel “in public and from house to house” (Acts 20,18-21), i.e. kerygma and didache, was part of the apostles’ main task which comprised the overall apostolic work. And as the Church expanded outside Judaea, they had to entrust other persons, too, with the same task.¹²⁹ As we learn from the book entitled “Didache” (XI, 1-11), teaching in the Church was the responsibility of the apostles and their immediate companions and successors, the prophets, in the apostolic times. And when the era of the prophets was coming to an end, the author of the “Didache” urged the local churches to ordain “to themselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, not interested in money, truthful and tested, for they also function to you as prophets and teachers ... and are esteemed among you together with the prophets and teachers” (XV, 1-2). The instruction reminds us of Paul who urged Timothy “what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2,2).

The office of the teacher, therefore, is connected with the other two offices, i.e. the priestly and the pastoral, and they are all entrusted by ordination, which was not performed on women because of its vicarious significance with reference to Christ. The christocentric nature of the Church implies that from Christ as her head his offices are entrusted to men, not to women, who thus become his living images. This practice and theology of the primitive Church is recorded in the “Apostolic Constitutions” saying that “since man is the head of woman and he is ordained into priesthood, it is not fitting to violate creation by neglecting the head and come to the body which comes after it. Indeed, woman is man’s body because she was made from his rib, and as such she is subject to him, detached from him for the birth of children. It is God who said “he will be your authority”; indeed, man is woman’s authority because he is her head, too. And since God did not allow women in the past to teach, how can one allow them to be priests which is against their nature? Such an ignorance fits the ungodliness of the Greeks who ordain women priestesses to female goddesses, but it is not in accord with Christ’s ruling” (VII, 28,5. Cf. III. 9,2-4).

IX. Conclusions.

Summing up the analysis of the evidence we conclude the following :

1. According to the Scriptures, priesthood is an office set by God in the context of His plan of salvation aiming at the restoration of His own image and likeness in man which was distorted by fall and sin. To this end, besides the general priesthood of all members of the community, in the sense of their communion with His saving activity in History (“*βασιλειον ιεράτευμα*”), He also established the special priestly office of specific persons who, purified themselves, could work out the purification of all believers and thus draw them closer to God. In this sense priesthood is connected with the reality and the purpose of the covenant.
2. The source and origin of priesthood is God Himself “from whom are all things” (1 Cor. 8,6). He granted it to the mediators of the two covenants, Moses and Christ, which they set it at work in the context of the covenants by a blood sacrifice, i.e. Moses by the sacrifice of an animal (Exod. 24,8. Heb. 9,19-22), and Christ by the sacrifice of his own body on the cross. Moses received priesthood at his appointment as the mediator of the old Covenant, along with the offices of the teacher and the leader of the Israelite community (Kahal Jahwe), while Christ the incarnate Son of God, received it at his eternal birth from God the Father (Heb. 5,4-6), i.e. “not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life” (Heb. 7,16), but he functioned it “in the days of his flesh” (Heb. 5,7) through his own passion and death. Thus, on account of his divinity, Jesus Christ is “a priest for ever”, without beginning and without end, “after the order of Melchizedek”. Christ’s priesthood, in other words, is inherent to his divine nature which means that the nature of the person of each mediator defines the nature of their respective priesthood so that, while the priestly office of Moses was imperfect, temporary and limited in scope, aiming at the “purification of the flesh” (Heb. 9,13) of the members of the old Covenant, the priestly office of Christ the incarnate Son of God is perfect and eternal and effects the forgiveness of sins “for all time” (Heb. 10,14).
3. Each mediator extended his priesthood into the history of the respective Covenant by entrusting it to specific persons whom they consecrated by a sacrifice and ordination. But while in the Old Testament there were many priests in the history of the Covenant, because Moses and his successors, being human “were prevented by death from continuing in office”, in the New Testament Christ the Son of God, having an everlasting life, holds his priest-

hood for ever (Heb. 7,22-24) which thus is “*ἀπαράβατος*”, i.e. not transferable to others. This means that he remains the only highpriest throughout the history of this covenant so that his successors in his saving work hold priesthood only in communion with his own priesthood, not autonomously and independent from him, their relation to him in this function being iconic.

4. In this capacity, Moses, at God’s command, entrusted priesthood by ordination to Aaron and his four sons whom he consecrated as highpriest and priests respectively (Exod. 28-29) and ordered that after them priesthood must be successively entrusted hereditary to the male members of the tribe of Levi. In like manner, Christ the only highpriest of the New Testament entrusted priesthood to his own apostles whom he consecrated at the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, during his Last Supper, which is tantamount to his own sacrifice on the cross offered once for all time. The fact that Christ’s priesthood is everlasting and so not transferable to others, gives to the priestly office of his successors a vicarious significance and creates a relation of dependence on himself, which ultimately goes back through him to God the Father “from whom are all things and for whom we exist”, through Jesus Christ “through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor. 8,6). Thus representing Christ in the full sense of the word and invested with his own power and authority, the apostles became “*jure divino*” the supreme pastors of the Church. And while the Church was confined to Judaea, they handled personally all aspects of her life and activity. But as the Church expanded outside Judaea and her members multiplied, the apostles transferred part of their own responsibilities to others who acted as their representatives and in their name. Their first act of this sort was the appointment of the seven Deacons (Acts 6), whose word was connected with the social activity of the Church serving at the tables of the common meals which followed the celebration of the Eucharist. But when disorders broke out and common meals came to an end, the service of the deacons was transferred from the tables of the common meals to the one table of the Lord in the Eucharist where it remains ever since. A little later, however, after the Church expanded into areas far outside Jerusalem, during her persecution following the stoning of Stephen, and new communities were established, the apostles were practically unable to handle everything in their lives. So, they entrusted the pastoral duties to the Presbyters who acted in this capacity in the name of the apostles as their representatives. The presbyters were appointed by ordination and their duties referred to all aspects of the life of the local communities (worship, didache and administration) except to the right of ordination of other presbyters. Nevertheless, the Church’s constant and rapid expansion necessitated the ordination of other persons with responsibilities similar to those of the apostles themselves. These persons, called Prophets were the immediate

companions of the apostles and came after them in the order of offices, having also the right to ordain other prophets as well and presbyters in local communities. These prophets differed from those functioning occasionally in the prophetic gift (1 Cor. 12-14), were indicated (elected) by the Holy Spirit and ordained either by the apostles or by other prophets. Having thus the fullness of the priestly office, these prophets are called “[αρχιερείς” by the author of the “Didache” and succeeded the apostles, in the function of the apostolic work, in large geographic areas. And when their era was approaching the end, the prophets, as the “Didache” reports, ordained bishops in small geographic areas, thus securing the continuity of priesthood in the history of the Church, and with if the celebration of the Eucharist till the second coming of Christ, in accordance with his command (1 Cor. 11,25-26).

5. With respect to the participation of women in the priestly office of Christ, the New Testament says nothing either in its favor or against it. Nevertheless, their exclusion from it was not due to social conditions and conceptions prevalent in the primitive church, as “feminist theologians” maintain, but is grounded on substantial theological issues which the Church was not compelled to explain, although she lived and experienced them in her everyday life. Such issues are the Christocentric nature of priesthood, on the one hand and the divinely appointed place of man and woman in the order of creation before its fall which is now restored in the Church, on the other.
6. With respect to the first issue, it is important to realize that in his peculiarly personal function as “Father”, i.e. as cause of life on the human level, man images in himself God the Father Who, on account of His divine nature, is the cause of the existence of the Son, by birth and of the Holy Spirit, by procession, while on account of His divine energy, He is the cause of the existence of all creation. God’s fatherhood being the source “of every fatherhood in heaven and on earth” (Eph. 3,15. cf. 4,6. 1 Cor. 8,6), is imaged in man’s fatherhood who in this capacity is also the cause of woman, from whom she is made. On the human level, God’s fatherhood is realized by his adoption of individuals in Jesus Christ so that they become “sons of God”, in a soteriological sense. This is the ultimate goal of the divine plan of salvation worked out by Christ (Gal. 4,4-7. Rom. 8,14-17) and after him by his apostles who became the “fathers in Christ through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4,14-15, etc.), of all believers. Thus of the two human persons, only man can image God in the capacity in his peculiar quality of fatherhood.
7. With respect to the second issue, it is also clear that though ontologically of the same nature, nevertheless man and woman occupy, by divine appointment, different places in the order of creation. This order stems from the facts a) that man was created first by God, then woman; b) that woman was made from man as of a father and projector; and c) that woman was originally made

as man's "helper" in their goal to realize God's plan. Under these circumstances man is "the head" of woman, as Christ in his human nature is man's head, and God is Christ's head. The ultimate reference of this order to the Godhead makes it inviolable at all bevels, divine and human, and at the same time it defines, inviolably, too, the mutual relationship between persons in divinity and in humanity. Thus man has priority and therefore authority over woman in creation, as God has priority and therefore authority over the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Trinity. As the Son is "the reflection of the Father (Heb. 1,3. cf. Col. 1,15. 2Cor. 4,4), so also man is "the image and the glory of God" (1 Cor. 11,7), while woman is "man's glory", as coming second to him in the order of creation. In this sense, of the two human beings, man alone can come to communion with God's divine offices in Christ, like priesthood, and function in them, imaging in himself, in creation, God the Father in the Godhead. Woman, on the other hand, must be subject to man, like the Son and the Holy Spirit are subject to the Father from Whom they receive their existence.

Nevertheless, this divinely set order and relationship was violated by woman through her initiative to accept Satan's temptation and draw man into it, too, at the fall (1 Tim. 2,14). Woman's initiative was an act of authority over man for which she was reproved by God (Gen. 3,16), Who with this reproof reconfirmed her original place second to man as his "helper" and subject to him, in creation. It is for this reason that she is not allowed by Paul to teach in the Church at worship (1Tim. 2,12), in which God's order in creation before the fall is restored by Christ. Since teaching in the Church belongs primarily to Christ in his prophetic capacity (office), like priesthood and pastorate, which he received from his Father at his eternal birth from Him (Heb. 5,4-6), only men can teach in the Church and function in this office, together with the other offices. This is the reason why Christ appointed only men as his apostles on earth, to function as priests, teachers and pastors in the Church. Given the Christocentric nature of these offices (Cf. 1 Cor. 12,5), it follows that only the male members of the Church, whose head is Christ, are eligible to participate and image in themselves, in their functions, God the Father in Christ. On the contrary, women can image in the Church the function of the Holy Spirit, functioning themselves in the various spiritual gifts, like Mary the Mother of Christ who was the "κεχαριτωμένη" par excellence. As the Holy Spirit is Christ's "helper" in realizing his saving work within each individual believer, so woman is man's "helper" both in creation and in the Church, helping the male priests to carry out their work.

References

1. See f.e. Irenaeus, Haer. I, 13,2-3. III, 23;25. Epiphanius, Haer. 49,2-3. Cf. also 78,23. 79,1-3. Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 35,3. Tertullian, De Praescr. Haer. 41,5. De Baptismo 17,4. Cyprian, Epist. 75,10.
2. F.e. see what is said on this by Epiphanius, Haer. 79,3. Generally speaking, concerning these “Feminist Organizations” we can still apply the comments of St. John Chrysostom, On Priesthood, 3,9 : “Divine law excluded them (i.e. women) from this function, but they try to put themselves into it by force; and since they are unable to achieve it by themselves, they use others; in this way they have acquired such power that they approve or disapprove of priests as they will and so things turned upside down”.
3. See f.e. canons 19 of the Council of Nicea; 11, of the Council of Laodicea; 15, of the Council of Chalcedon; 14, of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.
4. Cf. the main article in “The Orthodox Observer” (published by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, in New York), May 11, 1988, p.12 (The same in English on p.16), about an unnamed lady.
5. Cf. 1 Cor. 11,26. 10,16-17. Rom. 6,3. Gal. 3,27. Col. 2,12;19. Eph. 4,5. James 5,14f.
6. Rom. 6,1-11. Cf. Matth. 28,19-20. John 3,3f. Gal. 3-27. Col. 2,12-15. 3,1-4. Heb. 10,15f. 1 Pet. 1,3-8. 3,21.
7. More on this in my book, The Unity of the Apostolic Church, Athens² 1984, p.194f (in Greek).
8. See the comments by Didymus of Alexandria and Severianus of Gabala in J.A.Cramer, ed. Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum, Hildesheim 1967, vol. VIII, p. 53f. Cf. C.S.Voulgaris, A Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter, Athens ²1984, pp. 145-154 (in Greek).
9. Cf. Exod. 6,7. 19,5-6. 23,22. 24,7. 33,13. etc.
10. Cf. f.e. Gal. 3,19. Rom. 3,20. 4,15. Heb. 9,15. etc.
11. According to the Apostolic Constitutions, II, 26,3-4, these three ranks correspond to the three ranks in the N.T.
12. Cf. G.Schrenk, “ἱερός, etc.”, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (ThDNT), III, 221f.
13. Exod. 28,41. 29,22-34. 32,29. 40,12-16. Lev. 8,22-33. Num. 3,3. etc.
14. Exod. 28,36. Lev. 10,10. 21,6.
15. Cf. Cyrill of Alexandria, De Adoratione et cultu..., XII. Migne, P.G. 68,805 “Moses also was a priest (“ἱερούργος”).
16. Exod. 28,1 “Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests”. Cf. Heb. 7.
17. Cf. Cyrill of Alexandria, Op. cit. XI. 760 “And those with Aaron bring the gifts placed on their own hands, and Moses receives and offers the sacrifice”. See also 761

- “Those with Aaron bring the gifts for sacrifice, but Moses, representing God Himself, receives them, signifying by this, too, God’s presence”.
18. See O.Procksch, “ἴαριος, etc.”, ThDNT, I, 88f., 113f.
 19. Cf. Cyrill of Jerusalem, Catechism, X, 5 “There are many titles for our Savior. But in order not to think that the many titles correspond to many Sons, too, as the heretics err saying that different is the Christ, and different is Jesus, and different is the door, and so on, Faith provides security to you saying rightly in one Lord Jesus Christ. Though there are many titles, there is only one subject. So the Savior becomes different to every one for every one’s best interest. Thus, to those in need of gladness, he becomes the vine; to those who want to enter, he is the door; and to those who need to offer their prayers, he is the mediator highpriest. Again, to those in sin, he becomes the sheep which will be slaughtered for them; he becomes everything to every one, himself remaining in substance what he really is. But though remaining and truly possessing the unchangeable quality of sonship, he takes care of our sickness as the best doctor and compassionate teacher”.
 20. Cf. f.e. Matth. 26,39;42;44 par. Rom. 5,19. Phil. 2,5-11. Heb. 5,8.
 21. Cf. Matth. 16,21 par. 17,22-23 par. Lk. 12,50. 17,25. 18,31-34.
 22. Matth 20,28. Mk. 10,45. Cf. 1 Tim. 2,6 “a ransom for all”. Cf. also Rom. 5. 2 Cor. 5,14;18 etc.
 23. I strongly support a pauline authorship for the Epistle to the Hebrews, written shortly before Paul’s release from his prison in Rome (60-62 AD), thus being, too, a prison epistle (the last one). It was addressed to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, with particular reference to those “zealous for the law” (Acts 21,20f), stressing the end of the first Covenant with its institutions, in order to prevent them from falling back into Judaism (10,26-39. 12,22f. 13,10-14), as well as in order to win back his own place in their respect (13,18-19) in view of their accusations against him in the past, as a traitor of the religion of the fathers (Acts. 21,20-24,22). See extensively on this my recent Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Athens 1993 (in Greek).
 24. See more in my book, The Fulfillment of the Divine Economy of Salvation in Christ according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Athens 1985, pp. 73f, 99f. (in Greek).
 25. Cf. B.F.Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London 1904, p.124f. J.Moffatt, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, New York 1924. p.23, etc., On the contrary, P.N.Trembelas, Ἰπόμνημα εἰς τὰς Ἐπιστολάς τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης, Ἀθήναι 1956, vol. 3,p.76f, while thinking that the expression “Thou art my Son” of Ps. 2,7 refers to Christ’s eternal birth from the Father, the subsequent expression of the same verse “today I have begotten thee”, he things that it refers to the exultation of Christ’s human nature!
 26. This is also suggested by P.N.Trembelas, Op. cit., who says that thus God expresses His love towards Christ in an official and panegyric way, as well as to-

- wards Christ's appointment to messianic and highpriestly offices. In addition to this, according to Trembelas, God expresses His approval for Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
27. See more on this in my book, *The Perfection of the Divine Economy of Salvation in Christ...*, pp. 30-33.
 28. Cf. Theophylact, In Heb. V. Migne, P.G. 125,241 : "Paul joined together at this point what is said in both Psalms, as if he wanted to say : Do not think that the expression "You are a priest forever" is said about anyone else, but about the one Who was born before "Eosforos"; and he is no one else except the one about whom the second Psalm says that he is born today; because, before "Eosforos" indicates his eternal birth, while "today" means from the beginning, i.e. from the time of the Father's origin. It is evident that the second Psalm refers everything to Christ".
 29. Cf. Oecumenius, In Heb. VI. Migne, P.G. 119,321 "Christ is first highpriest because he did not enter priesthood by his own initiative, but was instead ordained by the Father"; "God who said this ordained him as a priest".
 30. Cf. Justin, Dialogue, 86,3 "Likewise he (the Son) received from the Father the offices of the king and of Christ and of the priest and of the angel (messenger) and everything else which he has or had".
 31. Cf. Theodoret, In Heb. Migne, P.G. 82,725 "because he did not hand the priesthood over to descendants".
 32. Crysostom, Interp. in Heb., Migne, P.G. 63,98 "because we ignore the end and the beginning of both (i.e. of Christ and Melchizedek); in the case of Melchizedek, we ignore them because they have not been recorded, while in the case of Christ, (we ignore them) because he does not have them". Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio IV, 21 "Christ resembles Melchizedek because he is without mother for our sake and without father in our human way; and without genealogy from above".
 33. Oecumenius, Op.cit., "that is, continuous, without successors, endless".
 34. Chrysostom, I bid., Migne, P.G. 63,105 "Showing that he is one, and that he could not be unless he is immortal. As there are many priests because they are mortal, likewise the one is one because he is immortal". See more in C.S.Voulgaris, Commentary, ad loc.
 35. Cf. Heb. 4,10. 6,20. 8,1f. 9,11f;24f. 10,12;20.
 36. Heb. 9,12;14. 10,19;29. 12,24. 13,12;20. John 19,34. Acts. 20,28. Rom. 3,25. 5,9. Eph. 1,7. 2,13. Col. 1,20. 1 Pet. 1,2;19. 1John. 1,7. Rev. 1,5. 7,14. 12,11.
 37. Matth. 26,26-30. MK. 14,22-24. LK. 22,15-20. Cf. 1Cor. 10,16-17. 11,23-25. John. 6,27-40.
 38. See more in M.A.Siotis, *The Divine Eucharist. The New Testament information about the Divine Eucharist in the light of the interpretation of Church writers, Thessalonica 1957 (in Greek)*. C.S.Voulgaris, *The Unity of the Apostolic Church*, p.415f.

39. M.A.Siotis, Op. cit.
40. M.A.Siotis, *Ibid.*, It must be noticed that because the Eucharist has a capital importance in the New Covenant, being its Sacrament "par excellence", the early Church was performing all other Sacraments, too, during its celebration.
41. Matth. 28,19-20. MK. 16,15;20. LK. 24,47. John. 20,21. Acts 1,8.
42. MK. 3,14-15. Matth. 10,5-42. John. 20,23. Cf. Matth. 18,18. 1Cor.5,3f. 2Cor. 2,5f.
43. LK. 10,17. 24,47. Acts. 3,6. 4,7;10;17;18. 5,28;40. 8,12. 9,27-28. 16,18. 19,13, etc.
44. LK. 24,25;27;44-48. Eph. 3,1-12. Col. 1,21-25. etc.
45. Cf. MK. 9,37. LK. 9,48. Matth. 15,24. LK. 4,43. 7,3. etc., John 3,17. 5,36. 6,29;57. 7,29. etc.
46. Gal. 1,1;15. Eph. 1,1. 1Tim. 1,1. Col. 1,1. 2Tim. 1,1. Tit. 1,1.
47. 1Cor. 4,1. Cf.2Cor. 5,20. Gal. 4,14. Similar characterization is given by Paul also to the "ἐπίσκοποι-πρεσβύτεροι" in Tit. 1,7.
48. Acts. 2,42;46. 20,7. 27,35. 1Cor. 10,16-17. 11,26-28. Cf. also the expressions "ἵεροθυμαδόν" and "ἐπὶ τό αὐτό" indicating worship gatherings, Acts 1,15. 2,1;44;47. 1 Cor. 7,5. 11,20. 14,23.
49. This interpretation Belongs to St.John Chrysostom, In Acts, Hom. XIV,3. Migne, P.G.60,116, and is authorized by the XVI canon of the Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople running thus : "Since the book of Acts handed down that the apostles consecrated seven deacons... we, having fixed the mind of the fathers in the apostolic saying, found that its purpose was not the deacons' service at the Sacraments, but their service at the tables ... John Chrysostom the teacher of the Church, interpreting it says the following ... concerning which office they had, and what kind of ordination they received. Did they have the office of the (present day) deacons? But this did not exist in the churches. Did they have the office of the presbyters? But there were no bishops yet, save the Apostles alone. Therefore, I think that the title indicates neither the deacons nor the presbyters. For this reason we also declare that the seven deacons in question must not be considered as serving the Sacraments, in accordance with the above interpretation. Rather, they were appointed to serve at the common meals of those who came together ..." Cf. Minutes of the Holy and Ecumenical Councils, Mount Athos 1986, vol. III, pp.685-686 (in Greek).
50. Rev. 4,4;10. 5,1-14. 7,11;13. 11,16. 14,3. 19,4.
51. Cf. Acts 20,17;28. Phil. 1,1. 1Tim. 3,1-2. Tit. 1,5-9. 1Pet. 5,1-4.
52. See below on the "prophets".
53. Cf. the study of V. Phidas, Church Order and the Order of the Prophets , AD 70-100, Athens 1984.
54. Such as Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Luke, Mark, Apollos, Silas, Tychikos, Artemas, Creskens, Gaius, Erastus, Epaphras, Zenas, Trophimus, Symeon Niger, Lukius, Manaen, etc.
55. F.e. Trophimus in Ephesus, Titus in Crete and Illiricum, Creskens in Gaul (South-

- ern France and Spain), Erastus in Achaia, etc.
56. See V.Phidas, op. cit., p. 133.
 57. F.e. Timothy, Titus, Silas, Sosthenes, as Paul's companions, or Silvanus and Mark, as Peter's.
 58. F.e. Timothy and Titus, in Corinth, etc.
 59. F.e. Timothy and Tychikos in Ephesus; Titus, Artemas, Zenas and Apollos in Crete; Cf. note 43 above. The fact that the presbyters were also ordained by prophets, indicates that they did not have the right to ordain prophets in return. See V.Phidas, op. cit.
 60. Like Jude, Basrabbas and Silas, Acts 15,22f.
 61. See Didache, XI, 3-12.
 62. Didache, XIII : "... to the prophets; for they are our highpriests" ([αρχιερεῖς]).
 63. Didache, XV, 1-2. See more in V.Phidas, op. cit.
 64. Acts 6,6. 13,3. 1Tim. 4,14. 5,22. 2Tim. 1,6.
 65. The collection of the sayings of Jewish rabbis from 300 BC to AD 200 known as "Pirque Abboth" begins as follows: "Moses received the law on Sinai and handed it over to Joshua, and Joshua handed it over to the presbyters, and the presbyters handed it over to the prophets, and the prophets handed it over to the men of the Great Synagogue".
 66. See more on this in M.A.Siotis, Die Klassische und christliche Cheirotonie in ihrem Verhaltnis, Athen 1961.
 67. Acts 6,1-6. 13,1-3. 14,23. 1Tim. 4,14. 5,22. 2Tim. 1,6. Tit. 1,5.
 68. Cf. H.Strack - P.Billerbeck, Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch, Mönchen 1922-23, vol. III, p.641. E.Meyer, Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums, 2.Stuttgart-Berlin 1921, vol. III, p.155.
 69. See M.A.Siotis, The Work of Mark and Barnabas and the Unity of the Apostolic Church, Athens 1971.
 70. Cf. my book on the Chronology of the Life of Paul, Athens ²1983.
 71. Cf. O. Schmitz, "παρακαλέω, etc.", ThDNT, V, 793-799.
 72. Cf. also 1Cor. 14,1. Eph. 2,20. 3,5. 4,11. Rev. 18,20. Paul's ordination is also stressed here by John Chrysostom, Interp. in Acts, Hom. XXVII, 2. Migne, P.G. 60,206.
 73. Contra V.Phidas, op.cit., who suggests that while the apostles were alive, only they could ordain prophets.
 74. This title is indirectly given to Barnabas only in Acts 14,4 and in 1 Cor. 9,5-6, due to Paul's presence with him.
 75. I fully support the pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. Cf. my Chronology of the Life of Paul, p.93f.
 76. Bab. San. 13b.
 77. Theodore of Mopsuestia gives a different explanation saying "he means the college of the apostles who were present with him (Paul) and placed their hands together with him, while he, as is evident, performed the ordination; he called

- them all “presbyterium” honorarily” Cf. J.A.Cramer, ed., *Catena Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*, Hildesheim 1967, vol. VII, p.36.
78. Cf. V.Phidas, op.cit., p.133.
79. The verb “παράτιθημι” is here used in the sense of the transmission of the tradition, as in 2Tim. 2,2.
80. Cf. Rom. 12,6. 1Cor. 12,10. 13,2;8. 14,6. 1Thes. 5,20. Acts. 19,6. 21,9. etc.
81. The only indirect confinement of priesthood to men alone can be regarded its entrusting to the male firstborn ones of the tribe of Levi in Num. 3,12 and 8,16.
82. Cf. Psalms 2,28,39,44,109, etc., 2Kings 7,14. 1Chron. 17,13. 22,10. 28,6. Isa. 7,14. 8,17-18. 11,1f. 53,1f., etc.
83. Cf. Matth. 3,17 par. 17,5 par. 8,29 par. 16,16. 27,43. Lk. 1,32;35. John 1,34. 10,36. 11,4. 17,1. 19,7. etc., Also Matth. 11,27. 24,36. Lk. 10,22. John 3,16;17;35;36. 5,19;21;23;26. 6,40. 14,13. etc., Mk. 14,36. Lk. 11,2. Rom. 8,15. Gal. 4,6. etc.
84. See W.Marchel, *Abba Pere. La prière du Christ et des Chrétiens*, Paris 1971, p.33f.
85. E.g. Exod. 4,22. Deut. 1,31. 8,5. 32,5f;18. 2Kings 7,8;14. Isa. 43,6-7. 63,16. 64,7. Jer. 31,9. etc.
86. E.g. Deut. 32,7. Ps. 103,13. Tob. 13,4. Mal. 1,6. 3,17. Isa. 63,16. 64,7. Jer. 3,19. etc.
87. Deut. 7,6-8. 14,1-2. Isa. 1,2. etc.
88. Cf. John 1,11-13. 3,3-8. 1John 3,9. 4,7. 5,4;18. James 1,17-18. 1Pet. 1,3;23. etc.
89. See Irenaeus, *Haer. A*,1,1. 11,5 Hippolytus, *Haer V*,6,7. VI,18. Epiphanius, *Haer 31*,1. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio XXXI*,7.
90. J.N.Karmiris, *The question of the Priesthood of women*, Athens 1978.
91. Cf. Theodoret, In Ephes. Migne, P.G. 82,529 : “God is mainly Father and truly Father. He did not become Son first and then Father, but He is always Father, and Father in substance; the other fathers, no mother whether physical or spiritual, receive the title from above. God calls fathers on earth, the natural fathers”.
92. Bibliography on this issue is very extensive.
93. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio XXXI*, On the Holy Spirit, 6: “We should not think we can necessarily transfer the earthly names and affairs to the Divinity, because, according to a higher relationship, the Son is Son and we cannot indicate otherwise the consubstantiality with God. You must not also think that because God is also called Father He is male, too, according to the word”. Cf. also 10: “It is very shameful, and not only but leniently vain, too, to imagine the realities above on the basis of those down below, and the immovable ones on the basis of the movable substance”. See also Athanasius, *On the Nicene Council ...*, 11. *Ad Serapionem ...*, 16 etc.
94. Cf. Athanasius, *ibid.*, “when man becomes a father, he is also the son of another father; and when he is called son, he became also someone else’s father. Thus the names father and son cannot derive mainly from men; rather, they are parts of each other; and he who is born has also a part of his own father so that he will

- be able to become the father of someone else. But this is not so with reference to God because God is not like man since His essence is not partitive”.
95. Cf. Mk. 3,13. Lk. 6,13. John 6,70. 13,18. 15,16;19. Acts 1,2;24. 1 Cor. 1,27. etc.
 96. Cf. 1Cor. 3,21-22. 8,6. Eph. 3,15. etc.
 97. Cf. John 6,40. 8,18-19. 10,18;30-38. 14,6-11. 15,10-23. 17,21;24.
 98. St. Ignatius calls even the bishop “a type of the Father”, cf. Ephesians 3,2. 4,1. Trallians 3,1. Smyrnaeans 8,1-2. Cf. also Isidore of Pelusium, Epist. 1,136. Migne, P.G. 78,272. Very interesting is also the description of the bishop in the Apostolic Constitutions, II, 26,4 : “He is the servant of the word, the guardian of knowledge, the mediator between God and you in our prayers to Him; he is the teacher of our faith, your father after God because he regenerated you for adoption by water and Spirit; he is your lord and leader, your king and ruler, your God on earth after God Himself, for which reason he must cherish the honor due to him on your behalf, for the bishop must preside over you honored with the honor which comes from God”.
 99. Cf. 1 Thes.2,2;4;8;9;12;13. Rom.1,1;9.15,16;19. 1Tim.1,11.
 100. Cf. John 4,34. 5,36. 10,25-28. 17,4. etc.
 101. Cf. Matth. 9,2. MK. 2,5. 10,24. John 13,33.
 102. 1Cor. 4,17. Phil. 2,22. 1Tim. 1,2;18. 2Tim. 1,2. 2,1. 1Pet. 5,13. 1John. 2,1;12;28. 3,7;18. 4,4. 5,21. Gal. 4,19. 1Thes. 2,7-11. Tit. 1,4. Philm. 10.
 103. See extensively in C.S.Voulgaris, The Unity of the Apostolic Church, Thessaloniki 1971, p. 108f, 126f, 200ff.
 104. Cf. St.Basil, Epist.262,1:»We ourselves know and are conscious that every human person is equal to all according to nature”. Cf. also Ibid., Hom. in Ioulita martyr, 2, and Gregory Nyssen, Hom. I in Gen. 1,26.
 105. Cf. Gregory Nyssen, On man’s creation, 16.
 106. See f.e. Diodorus of Tarsus, In Genesis. Migne, P.G. 33,1564: “What is the reason, therefore, that Paul calls man an image of God and not woman, too, since according to the soul’s reason man is God’s image? ... Therefore, since the one who does not have to cover his head is God’s image, it is evident that woman who covers her head is not God’s image, though she is of the same soul...” Theodoret, In 1Cor. 11,7 :”Man is an image of God neither in body nor in soul, but only in authority. He is called God’s image because he has been given authority over all things on earth. On the contrary, woman, placed under man’s authority is his glory, like an image of the image. Of course, she also has authority over everything else, but she is instructed to be subject to man”. Cf. also Chrysostom, In Gen. Hom. VIII, 4. Ibid., In Gen. Oratio II,2. Cyrill of Alexandria, Interpr. in 1 Cor. 11,7. etc.
 107. This notion is suggested by Cyrill of Alexandria, op. cit.
 108. According to Prof. M.A.Siotis, The New Testament on the Equality of the two sexes, Athens 1982, p.2, note 33, “The formation of Eve out of Adam’s rib shows the

- identity of the species, the anthropological unity between male and female, and the strong personal attraction between them aiming at their mutual understanding and completion of the one by the other”.
109. Gal. 3,27-29. 1Cor. 12,12f. Cf. M.A.Siotis, op.cit., p.18, note 29 : “The equality between man and woman cannot be possibly understood unless we accept the fact that she, too, has been created in the image and likeness of God, a fact which is the presupposition for the recognition of women as saints by the Church of Christ”.
110. Matth. 19,4f. Mk. 10,6f. Eph. 5,31.
111. 1Cor. 11,2-16. Eph. 5,22f. Col. 3,18-19. Tit. 2,5. Cf. 1Pet. 3,1-6.
112. The notion of several modern interpreters that this pericope is a later interpolation shows their inability to grasp the real theological background of Paul’s thought on the issue. Cf. f.e. H. Conzelmann, A Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Philadelphia 1975, p.182f. R. Oster, “When man wore veils to worship. The historical Context of I Corinthians 11,4”, NTS 34 (1988) 481ff, and the bibliography cited there.
113. Gen. 1,26-27. 5,1-2. 9,6. etc., That a similar concept occurs also in Platonic and Stoic Philosophy (Cf. H.Conzelmann, op.cit.), does not diminish the value and the originality of the biblical text.
114. Cf. Chrysostom, In 1Cor. Hom. XXVI,1. It is possible also that this custom has been imported from pagan worship where women attended without a veil.
115. Cf. Theodoret, Interpt. in 1Cor. 11,13-15 : “... it should be regarded as a dishonor to God Who gives the hair when woman comes without the proper shame and honor”.
116. A review of the most important interpretations of 1Cor. 11,2-16 can be found in L. Mercadante, From Hierarchy to Equality : A Comparison of past and present Interpretations of 1 Cor. 11,2-16 in relation to the changing Status of women in Society, Vancouver 1978. Cf. also R.Oster, op.cit.
117. Cf. Chrysostom, In 1Cor. Hom. XXVI,5 : “Many and different symbols are given to man and to woman. F.e. to the first is given the symbol of authority, while to the second is given the symbol of submission ... And since they are symbols, man and woman sin when they confuse the order and God’s order, and transgress His boundaries, which results to man’s coming down to woman’s meanness and woman’s revolt against woman by her form ... Hence, reversing these terms you can see how many harmful things take place ... The transgressor confuses everything and betrays the gifts of God and throws down the honor given to him from above; not only man, but woman, too. For it is a great honor to her to maintain the original order, while it is shameful to revolt against it”.
118. Theodoret, Interpr. in 1Cor. 11,3.
119. 1Cor. 8,6. 11,3;12. 3,21-23. Eph. 3,14-15. 4,6. etc.
120. For those Church fathers supporting this idea, see note 106 above. For the views

- of recent interpreters cf. E. Lohse, "Imago Dei bei Paulus", in Libertas Christiana : F. Delekat zum 65. Geburtstag, hzsg., E. Wolf - W. Matthias, München 1957, p.122-135. F.W. Eltester, Eikon im Neuen Testament, Berlin 1958. J.Jervell, Imago Dei : Gen. 1,26f. im Spöjtudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen, Göttingen 1960. G.Kittel, "εἰκῶν", ThDNT, XI, 396-397. Cf. also the Commentaries on First Corinthians.
121. Cf. Photius, in J.A.Cramer, ed., Catenae Graecorum Patrum, vol. V, p.208 : "God the Father is Christ's head as his generator and projector and homoousios; man is woman's head, because he, too, is her generator and projector and homoousios with her. The analogy is consequent and proper; ... God allowed man to have authority over the other creatures but kept him under His own power and authority. He did not place another Lord and ruler over him".
122. 1 Cor. 14,34. Eph. 5,22f. Col. 3,18. 1 Tim. 2,12. Tit. 2,5. Cf. 1Pet. 3,1;5;6.
123. Cf. Chrysostom, In 1 Cor. Hom. XXVI,2 : "If Paul had in mind to emphasize authority and submission, he would not speak about woman, but rather about lord and servant. If woman is subject to us, she is so as woman, i.e. as free and equal in honor. The Son, too, though he became obedient to the Father, he did so as Son of God, as himself God".
124. Cf. Theodoret, In Genesin, Migne, P.G. 80, 128 : "The creator of the world decided to join the two sexes into harmony. To this end he created Adam from the earth and formed woman from Adam in order to show the identity of nature and put in them a natural attraction for each other. While these things have been so ordered and men fight against women and women fight against men, what would they do if God had formed woman in a different way? Hence it was wise to divide them and join them again, because marriage joins the sexes into one, for it is said that the two shall become one flesh. That this is so, it becomes evident from the result. For intercourse produces through marriage one fruit from both which, planted by man and nourished by woman, becomes effective by the Creator of the world".
125. This is how Church fathers interpret 1 Tim. 2,12. Cf. Didymous Alexandrinus, In Genesis (Toua), 192, 218, 238, 246. Chrysostom, In 1 Tim. Hom. IX,1. Migne, P.G. 62,544f. Theodoret, Interpr. in 1 Tim. 2,12. Migne, P.G. 82,801. Oecumenius, Interpr. in 1 Tim. Migne, P.G. 119,156. Theophylact, Interpr. in 1 Tim. Migne, P.G. 125,40.
126. Cf. Theophylact, Ibid., Migne, P.G. 125,37. Oecumenius, Ibid., Migne, P.G. 119,156.
127. Cf. Matth. 10,5-6. Mk. 6,7. Lk. 9,1-2. Cf. also Matth. 28,19-20. Mk. 16,15. Lk. 24,47-48. John 20,21. Acts 1,6-8. 10,42. etc.
128. Cf. Eph. 3,7. Acts 15,7. 20,24. Rom. 1,16. 15,16;19. 1Cor. 15,1. Eph. 6,19. 1Thes. 2,2;8;9. 1Tim. 1,11. etc.
129. Cf. Acts. 13,1-3. 1Cor. 12,28f. Eph. 4,11. James 3,1. Rom. 12,7. Heb. 13,7.