

# Teacher to Teacher

**Practical Notes**  
for College Teachers and Study Group Facilitators  
For Use with *Exploring Scriptural Sources*  
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Dear Case Study User,

I have found that teaching with Case Studies offers me a much greater opportunity to interact with adults (both young and old) in the classroom. When Sheed & Ward asked me to take my methodology and to make it available for a wider audience, they also asked me spell out some of the ways in which I interact with my students while using my Case Studies.

Accordingly, in what follows, I offer you a set of practical notes that reflect my own use of ~~Exploring Scriptural Sources~~ in the context of an undergraduate class for adults which is entitled, ~~The Church~~. I have also used some of these Case Studies in the M.Div. classes that I offer. In both contexts, the Case Study Methodology enables students to dig deeply and personally into areas which they may know something about but which they have never really investigated. Graduates of The Athenaeum of Ohio sometimes tell me, "You were my best teacher." When I probe this a bit, they usually speak of my contagious enthusiasm for learning and of their experience with the Case Studies. Relative to the latter, they often say, "The Case Studies taught me how the bible really functions in a faith community, and how theology gets changed because people change." Quite so! This is what they were designed to do. . . .

These same notes could be adapted for use within parish-based small faith communities or an adult education program. Again and again, I have discovered that adults do like to take charge of their own education and transformation. The use of my Case Studies in parish-based programs bears this out. While I have not yet had the chance to moderate a group myself, the feedback that I receive from moderators is that the participants feel that, for the first time, they are getting a grip on how to deeply hear and existentially apply the Christian Scriptures to their lives. RENEW, for instance, does a splendid job at creating a climate of reflection on the Scriptures in a group setting; yet, in terms of content, it is weak stuff. Hence, in those instances where a renew group is already functioning, the Case Studies bring about a whole new level of learning to back up their reflecting. One person reported to me, "Finally, I have the sense that we are not the blind leading the blind."

Get ready! When adults figure things out for themselves, this leads to a deep learning that, not unexpectedly, almost always translates into changing their lives. In my setting, participants are constantly telling me at the beginning of each session how they went on to do this or do that as a direct result of the last Case Study. In fact, they often want to go out and convert the world by simply telling others what they have learned. Thus, from time to time, I have to remind them that they came to these deep discoveries about the church and about themselves by

route of a prolonged investigation. Simple "telling" someone may not do the trick. What amazes me is that, given the time, they could easily reconstruct the entire route whereby they arrived at a discovery for someone who was attentive and sympathetic. And this is possible years after having done a Case Study. This is what I mean by "deep learning" and how it is especially important to adults who, for the most part, forget anything that does not become important for them. All real learning is deep, personal, and transformative.

Before I developed these Case Studies, I used to repeatedly run up against students who would object to what I was presenting in class. Why? Because I would be telling them things which they never heard before and they would be naturally prone to judge its worth on the basis of what their former mentors and pastors had said on the same subject. Hence, in those instances where I was not a greater "authority" on the subject than those other "authorities" whom they were relying upon, a clash would develop. Now that I am using Case Studies, such objections have disappeared. Why? Because now students find out HOW one arrives at an answer to a significant question and the AUTHORITY becomes themselves interpreting the text. Now I don't get in the way but only facilitate their learning.

As for the length of the Case Studies, some participants complained at first because other teachers in the undergraduate program usually don't ask adult learners to spend a solid two to three hours preparing for each class (of 2.5 hours). Yet, when the complainers actually experienced what was happening to them, they wanted to milk each Case Study for all its worth. I frequently have to tell such "zealots" to go more quickly, to spend less time "milking" every clue in the text, and not to neglect their other course(s). Other problems and hints for responding to them are spelled out below in

### **Presenting Case One.**

Having taught high school students for seven years, I would judge that the Case Study methodology would be very effective for juniors and seniors. Within this setting, however, the Case Studies most probably should not be used as a steady diet. High school students, for the most part, have had little experience of an investigative and open-ended approach to the teaching of religion. Some of them may fear that they will not be learning anything unless the teacher takes charge since their experience with student discussions is that, more often than not, it ends up being a waste of time. In a high school setting, a case might have to be divided into three parts for use in three 50-minute sessions. At each session, I would suggest that some time be given to exchange in dyads or triads right at the beginning of each session. This should serve not only to stimulate probing but also to bring along those who may feel that "this is beyond them." So too, in the high school setting, care ought to be given to supporting any and every contribution which students offer. Even ideas which at first sight may appear to be "off the wall" often conceal a gem when seen from the viewpoint of the student. The teacher can tactfully point out, however, that their modern point of view was not shared by the first-century hearer. Hence, listening to the Christian Scriptures is like having a foreign exchange student in class. They think, speak, and value

differently.

Every teacher presents their own story, their own emphasis, their own methodology even while they may be using my textbook, ~~Exploring Scriptural Sources~~. Nonetheless, we are always in a position to learn from each other. For those who are curious, therefore, as to what goes on when I use my own textbook, I have gathered together my working class notes and presented them here for you. If you ever want to share your own experiences with me, I would be glad to hear them. Please call me at 937-778-9123 or email me at [Milavec@woh.rr.com](mailto:Milavec@woh.rr.com).

Fraternally,  
Aaron Milavec

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The Athenaeum of Ohio  
LPMP, Fall of 1996  
Tuesdays, 7:15-9:30 p. m.

## LPC 124: Church

### I. Course description

This course is designed to equip lay people with a historical and theological understanding of the nature and mission of our church. Special attention will be given to "our roots," i.e., the experience and practice of the developing church of the New Testament and early patristic era, and to our contemporary vision, i.e., the self-understanding and plan for renewal spelled out by the bishops of Vatican II. This course will encourage participants to fashion an informed judgment and a pastoral awareness of what the church was, what the church is, and what the church ought to be.

This course will extend the New Testament investigations begun in LPC 122 and compliment LPC 126 which is being taken simultaneously. In this course, the sacramental nature of the church as a whole will be emphasized. As for the individual sacraments, only Ordination will be considered in detail, with Eucharist being a close second. A systematic treatment of baptism will be an option for those seeking college credit. Other interested persons, however, are free to participate.

## **IIa. Course objectives**

This course intends to provide future lay leaders with an accurate and informed understanding of what Catholics believe about our church: its nature, its origins, its hierarchical organization, its ministries and ministers, its internal and external mission, its essential marks, its infallibility, its ecumenical aspirations, its future.

## **IIb. Learning objectives**

As a result of this course, participants will gain the skill to present, in speaking or in writing, an accurate and informed understanding of each aspect of the church specified above from a three-fold vantage point: (a) What is my initial experience and understanding of this aspect of our church? (b) How can this aspect be illuminated by specifying its historical roots and its development in the hands of our spiritual ancestors? (c) What did the Fathers of Vatican II express as their own pastoral and theological understanding?

## **III. Topical outline and assignments**

The topics for each class session are indicated below. Following each session, a DIRECTED READING (=DR) and a WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (=WA) are indicated which form the minimum preparation for the forthcoming session. Lectures will not duplicate the material in the DR, but will evaluate, interpret, and apply the ideas therein. Each WA will involve an exploration and/or personal reflection which will be examined during the following classroom session.

9/28 Orientation: Introducing ourselves as having changed; the experience and the theology of a changing church; different measures of historical fidelity before and after Vatican II; test case one: the number of Sacraments; test case two: the Jewishness of Jesus and the origins of the church; triads: what all this means for you and for your church today; walking through the course and playing Sherlock Holmes

WA [for the forthcoming session]: Case One: How Conservative Peter Became the Daring Innovator

10/5 Peter as faithful and innovative; what it meant to "follow Jesus"; the election of the Gentiles and the rejection (?) of the Jews; what ~~ecclesia~~ meant in Paul and Origen; what all this means for you and for your church today

WA: Case Two: How Jesus Came to be Chosen as Highpriest  
DR: ~~Lumen Gentium~~, sec. 1-11

10/12 Early Church: how and why Jesus and his disciples were not regarded by their contemporaries as "priests"; how the Eucharist developed a sacrificial character and gave rise to "priests"; what all this means for you and for your

church today

WA: Case Three: The Transformation Effected by Ordination  
& Case Five: Whether the Twelve Fancied Themselves as  
Bishops

10/19 Institutional Development I: the nature and function of clerical  
ordination; what modern theology regards as the three essential elements in every  
ordination; the diversity of ministries and institutional organizations within the NT  
era; comparing and contrasting how hierarchy was understood in the third and the  
thirteenth centuries; what all this means for you and for your church today

WA: Case Six: Collaboration as the Hallmark of Peter's Authority

10/26 Institutional Development II: how and why local churches organized  
themselves into larger networks; the special functions of bishops, archbishops,  
patriarchs, and their associated synods; nature of collegiality as seen in the  
ministry of Peter; origins of the papacy as we now know it; what all this means for  
you and for your church today

WA: Take-home midterm exam

WA: Case Four: When Jesus Sided with the Women

DR: ~~CDF Declaration on the Question of the Admission of  
Women to the Ministerial Priesthood~~

11/2 no class

11/9 Women: Their image and function within the Church

DR: Bishop Untener, "Local Church and Universal Church"

WA: Case Nine: The Papacy: Past, Present, and Future

WA: ~~Declaration of Religious Freedom, sec. 3~~  
Analysis of ~~Lumen Gentium~~, sec. 12-13, 25, 27.

11/16 Who Decides What God Wants?-- the discernment of truth; the  
interrelation of local church and universal church; collegiality in practice; function  
and meaning of "infallibility" and "loyal dissent"; Church as "holy" and "flawed";  
Church = Sacrament of our encounter with God; what all this means for you and for  
your church today

WA: Case Eight: The Kingdom Come and/or Going to Heaven

DR: ~~Gaudium et Spes~~, sec. 57-62 & 91-93

11/23 no class meeting

11/30 The Church's Ministry in the World and for the World: When the Gospel  
sets Christians against the world; Church = Herald of the Kingdom of God; what all  
this means for you and for your church today

WA: Take-home final exam

WA: A Critical Survey of Vatican II Texts w/r Ecumenism

12/7 The Ministry of Reconciliation: Jews, Orthodox, and Protestants in dialogue with Roman Catholics; Church = Sacrament of unity; reconsidering the case of Martin Luther; The Future of the Church: how will it be one, holy, catholic, apostolic?

#### IV. Textbooks

Due to the extensive use of the Vatican II documents and of the New Testament during this course, participants are requested to bring these texts to all class sessions.

Catholic Bishops of Vatican II  
1963-65      ~~The Documents of Vatican II~~ (any edition).

CDF = Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
1976      ~~Declaration on the Question of the Admission of  
Women to the Ministerial Priesthood.~~

Milavec, Aaron  
1994      ~~Exploring Scriptural Sources. Rediscovered  
Discipleship~~ Vol. I. Kansas City: Sheed & Ward.

#### V. Means and criteria for evaluation

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 33% midterm take-home exam
- 33% final take-home exam
- 33% written assignments

Participants taking this course for college credit will be given an overall letter grade. Participants not seeking college credit will be given an overall "satisfactory" evaluation if they have a cumulative grade of "B" or better.

The written take-home exams will require one hour. A sample exam is attached to this syllabus. The criteria for its evaluation are indicated thereon. Upon completing the exam, participants will be invited to mail their exam to me or to bring it to my mailbox such that it arrives before noon on day of our class meeting. In this case, I will read and return their exam during the last class session. Participants who do not want this service can simply retain their exams, give them to me on Tuesday evening and expect to receive them back the following week.

Individual written assignments will receive my comments and suggestions but not an individual letter grade. Since the material of the written assignments has a critical bearing upon the topic being treated in the class session for which it is assigned, the grade for assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each late or grossly incomplete assignment. Hence, one can expect an "A" for ones written assignments only if all written assignments are completed prior to and turned in during the class session. In the case of a foreseen absence, assignments still need to be delivered before or during the class session.

## **VII. Advice to Participants**

Due to the concentrated nature of this program, anyone absent from two sessions, for whatever cause, effectively misses one-fourth of the class time. In such cases, credit for the course cannot ordinarily be given.

During each session, there will be some time devoted to personal reflection and exchange. Of necessity this time will be limited. Outside of our sessions, participants are encouraged to prayerfully reflect upon the themes of the course and to explore their own experiences/attitudes/conduct relative thereto. Journal keeping and exchange with one's mentor have been identified by former participants as effective methods for personalizing what one has learned.

The agenda for each session will incorporate a ten-minute break around 8:20. Hot and cold drinks are available.

Participants would be advised to obtain a learning partner early in the course. Minimally, such a learning partner would be willing to collect handouts and to deliver assignments in those instances when you are prevented from attending. If you do not live near your learning partner, exchanging stamped self-addressed envelopes could be a great benefit should an unforeseen sickness/emergency occur.

Should you need to reach me during the time of this course, please feel free to telephone at home (513) 791-2899. I can be reached evenings save for Wednesdays. Written inquiries or messages can be sent to me at The Athenaeum; 6616 Beechmont Ave.; Cincinnati, OH 45230, or placed in my mail box in the faculty lounge. I intend to arrive fifteen minutes early for each of the sessions for the purpose of meeting informally with those who elect to come early. I am willing to stay behind after each session as well.

## **VIII. Bibliography**

During the course of this program, participants will be advised as to additional readings and resources. Beginning with the second session, selected books from The Athenaeum library will be made available for one-week usage by interested participants. Books that have been checked on the attached bibliography will be those that will be available here at the St. Richard Center.

## A. Opening Session

### Materials to Bring

Aquinas, ~~Summa Theologica~~ III (on sacraments)  
bell, small metal (for use by class bell ringer)  
~~Baltimore Catechism~~  
class list (copy for class treasurer)  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
Manns, ~~Martin Luther~~ (Crossroad, 1983)

Note: Each session is divided roughly into two hours with a ten-minute break between. The bold numbered headings represent the main division in the class. These I write on the chalkboard ten minutes prior to each session. I also use newsprint on a stand that has a set of summary statements and/or outlines that I use (a) to wrap up a class session and (b) to rapidly review at the beginning of each new session. In what follows, I will simplify by leaving these two functions out of the class outline. My students know, however, that a three-minute opening and closing summary can be found on the newsprint (one to three pages per class session).

### 1. Opening: Getting to know you

I take the first half hour of class to set the mood for everything that will follow during the next ten weeks. As part of this, I consider it critical to have my students speaking up in class and claiming part of their story, more especially, the story of how they have first discovered God and how they are changing. This sets the mood and climate for the kind of participation that I will expect when we begin, at the second class meeting, to pool results regarding the Case Studies.

I begin something like this:

The Dutch priest and theologian, Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx, is fond of speaking of the church as the sacrament of our encounter with God. True, because of the church one learns to encounter God. But it is not the abstract or global church but the local church. In my case, I first encountered God at Holy Cross Church in Euclid, Ohio, where I grew up. How about yourself? If you would claim a particular church as the locus for your own experience of God, what would that church be? [Then I go around the room and let people name their church in which some encounter with God has taken place.]

Every infant is a natural atheist. Infants, it will be remembered, touch and taste their way into the world. They roll cans across the kitchen floor. They pick up the dog's bone and the stray pencil off the floor and innocently taste them to discover what these things are. For an infant, God never shows up, however, for God can't be touched and tasted. About the time an infant is three or four, on the other hand, they generally manage to catch their first glimpse of God. I remember when I caught my first glimpse of God. It happened on a Sunday morning. My mom used to get me ready to go to church and then my dad would hold my hand and we would walk

together in silence over the four blocks that separated our home from Holy Cross Church. My dad was not much of a talker, but when we would walk together to church, he was especially quiet. Then, when we finally arrived, I noticed that all the people in the church were also very quiet. In 1943, Catholics in my neighborhood considered it irreverent to talk in church. Slowly this great silence was washing over me. At one point, I asked my dad, "Why aren't people talking?"

My dad responded, "Their listening to God."

"Where's God?" I responded.

Then my dad pointed to the small, gold-plated box on the altar in front of our church and very solemnly said to me, "God is there in that gold box on the table."

From that point onward, I was also trying to be very silent in order to hear the same God that my father heard. In fact, since my dad made absolutely no reference to God in any other place or any other circumstance, I grew up thinking that God stayed in church all the time and, for those who were very quiet, they could hear him. Modest beginning, to be sure. But you have to admit that one has to begin somewhere, and I was on my way to catching my first glimpse of God.

Now how about yourself? You, too, had known a time when God was totally absent. Then, in some place and in some circumstances, some significant adult in your life got you to notice "God." How did this take place? Who can remember and tell us something of how it was for them? [Then I get three or four people to tell their stories. I get their names and use their names frequently. In each case, in my comments, I make sure to reward them for telling their story since my goal is to enable everyone to get accustomed to talking in a significant way about themselves in my class.]

From this point, I move on to talk about how, upon growing older, I changed and my experience of God also changed. Here again, I am disclosing something of myself such that the participants will be comfortable with doing the same in just a moment. With adults, I find it best to model the kind of sharing/input that I am looking for; just describing it does not go over well.

One repeatedly outgrows earlier images of God as one has fresh encounters. Even after 40, I explain how I formerly thought that one entered into a plateau and then simply repeated oneself for the rest of one's life. But it just isn't true. Just the opposite: "To live is to change and to grow perfect is to have changed often" (Henry Newman). Then I invite everyone to say a few words about how they have changed in the last two years or how they are in the midst of an important change right now. [In doing this, I model it first such that people get the idea to keep it short and to present it in the third person using their name three or four times in doing so.]

Finally, I get the class to designate a treasurer and a bell-ringer (who makes sure that a signal is given such that the ten-minute break in the middle of class remains ten-minutes).

\*\*\*\*\* (This signals the ten-minute break)

**2. Method used in this course**

- a. Overall purpose (as in Preface)
- b. Self-discovery for adult learners
- c. Walk through syllabus

**3. The measure of historical fidelity**

- a. Before 1960: semper ubique eadem
- b. After 1960: Newman, "To live . . . ."
- c. Test cases: historical change in the church
  - (1) Number of sacraments (as in the Introduction)
  - (2) Catholic biographies of Martin Luther (Manns)
  - (3) Jesus in the synagogue
    - Jesus lived and died as a Jew (doc)
    - Jesus left his disciples as Jews (Luke 24:52)

The materials above form part of the aids offered to teachers and group moderators. As such, one can use and modify them freely for ones private and professional use. However, one may not duplicate, distribute, or sell any part of the above materials without the expressed permission of the author.

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## B. How I Present Case One

### Materials to Bring

Baltimore Catechism  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
VCR and TV; video copy of "The Chosen"

#### 1. Opening

a. Before class, I circulate around the classroom. My purpose in doing so is (a) to get myself in the habit of calling participants by their first names and (b) to get a feel for the variety of experiences that various participants had while doing the first Case Study. During the class itself, I will use this to determine what corrective advice I need to give and what participants I can point to as illustrating particular "successes" or "problems." Everyone likes to be recognized--even those who are insecure or who are having problems. This signals to all concerned that they will not and cannot get lost in the crowd in this class.

b. Since Case One deals with a specification of "Torah" and with "the Jewish identity" of Jesus and his disciples, I find it helpful to have a VCR present and to show the class the three minute clip from "The Chosen" wherein Daniel, an orthodox Jew, brings his friend, Reuben, to participate in the Hasidic Sabbath service and torah discussion afterward. The film clip allows one to hear a Hasidic rabbi present a parable about a captain (God) throwing a rope (Torah) to a drowning passenger. Based upon the celebrated novel by Chaim Potok, this 1981 film dramatically presents how Torah and Jewish identity go hand in hand. In so doing, it provides an excellent introduction to Peter's crisis in Acts 10.

c. As an alternative opening, I tell the story of how fifteen years ago I was invited to be a guest professor at a Lutheran College.

In my freshman class in New Testament, I spent the first week talking about how the Gospels were created and how they came to be translated. Now, in the second week, were beginning a systematic investigation of Mark's Gospel. I read to them: "And they [Jesus and his disciples] went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered a synagogue and taught" (Mark 1:21). Then I asked, "Why didn't Jesus wait for Sunday and go to pray and teach in a Christian church?"

My question was greeted with stunned silence. Finally, a young woman raised her hand hesitatingly and said, "Wasn't Jesus a Jew?" Now when someone asks me a question by way of answering a question, I'm curious as to what they think. In this case, the young woman admitted that she regarded Jesus as having been a Jew. I asked the class how many of them think of Jesus as having lived his life as a Jew. Five out of thirty raised their hands. At that point, I knew that my real task had begun.

I then take the Baltimore Catechism and point out that there is not a single question in the whole catechism that makes any reference to Jesus' Jewishness. In

fact, the history of salvation is presented according to the following schema:

- (a) Creation and the fall of the angels [lesson 4]
- (b) Creation and the fall of man [lesson 5 & 6]
- (c) The Incarnation & Redemption [lesson 7 & 8]

What is missing? Two thousand years of redemptive history in which Jews, beginning with Abraham, committed themselves to listen and to do Torah. According to the Baltimore Catechism, it would appear that this has no bearing upon God's plan of redemption: nothing of importance happens between the fall and the incarnation.

## **2. Jesus as a Jew for Jews: exclusion principle**

### **3. Walk through Case One--Acts 10: What did you discover?**

Even if a student has done Case One and has read through the summary at the end, still it remains necessary to use 30 to 45 minutes of class time to walk through the events in Acts 10. I begin by reading the text, "Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour" (10:9b). Why the housetop? Why the sixth hour? What does this say about Peter? Again and again, I invite the participants to consider themselves as detectives who are puzzling over the clues offered by the text.

In walking through each Case Study, it would probably be tedious to go from line to line or from question to question. Participants have already seen the details. During the class session, one has to try to gain a synthesis of the main threads making up the fabric of the Case Study. Going too slow or getting caught in the middle at the end of the session is very dissatisfying for the participants. Thus, one has to pick up the main threads and leave the smaller threads to fall in place on their own. Hence, one should be able to walk through the entire Case Study in the course of 25-35 minutes.

Even wrong hunches can be praised and used as a point of departure for learning. For example, one student said, "Peter chose the housetop because he wanted to be closer to God." My response: "This a good hunch. Let's explore it. If Jews felt that elevation was of importance in bringing them closer to God, how do you suspect they would construct synagogues?"

All in all, my purpose is to get a dozen people actively pushing the evidence of Acts 10 and thinking with me as the method and message of Peter's conversion is slowly worked out.

Near the end of the session, I spend some time getting a handful of "positive" and "negative" reactions to the case study method itself. Some people do "get stuck," get "overly conscientious," feel "unsure of themselves." For those who "get stuck," I emphasize that this method encourages them to get stuck in the problem, such that they come to class actively seeking a solution to problem that has gripped them. As for those who are "overly conscientious" and spending enormous amounts of time, I advise them to budget their time such that they arrive at each class having seen the end of every case. Sometimes this will mean

settling for a first impression or letting something go and coming back to it if one has time later. As for those who are "unsure of themselves" (especially, the quiet, non-participating students), I comment that many are "holding back" their good ideas and next time I expect them to also "pull their weight" in the process. It's not important to be correct as it is to be engaged in making your own learning happen.

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### **3. Repercussions for me and my church today**

a. This is where the textual discoveries meet their present situation. I begin, "If Acts 10 is part of our history as the church, what repercussions does this have for you and for your church today?"

From time to time, I have students form dyads or triads for two minutes to brainstorm this question. Then I insist upon getting a good half-dozen responses. More often than not, I do not process or evaluate their applications but simply acknowledge them and, on occasion, get a quick show of hands of how many would endorse "Peggy's idea." In so doing, I discover what my students are finding important and this gives me cues as to what to emphasize in future classes.

b. Invariably, for some, this case opens up the startling realization that Jesus did not train his disciples as Yes-men committed to some wooden repetition of what he himself had said and done. Rather, he trained them to follow God even when, as in this case, it meant deviating from the expressed training that they had formerly received from him. This thought invariably opens up some very passionate discussion and exchanges on the very nature of Christian formation within the churches and the central role that Jesus supposedly has in all decisions made by Christians. These, needless to say, are sensitive issues and not everyone in a given class will even be ready to entertain them. For those who do, however, I strive to support their quest by repeated appeals to the evidence of the text.

### **4. Images of Church**

- a. Paul's
- b. Matthew
- c. Origen

### **5. How to use the Vatican documents....**

- \* authority of these texts
- \* table of contents
- \* naming and contrasting the two constitutions on the church

## C. How I Present Case Two

### Materials to Bring

Baltimore Catechism  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
Swaggart, ~~Catholicism and Christianity~~  
Vatican II documents

#### 1. Opening

I hold up my copy of Swaggart's ~~Catholicism and Christianity~~ and my Baltimore Catechism for the class to see. These two volumes do well to present "apologetic Catholicism" in confrontation with "apologetic Protestantism." It is important for everyone to know, to begin with, just why it is that Catholics affirmed that "Do this in remembrance of me" was understood to imply that Jesus had, prior to the Last Supper, ordained his disciples as priests. If he hadn't, the disciples would have objected, "We can't do this. We are only laymen and not priests." Their lack of objection, therefore, was seen by Catholics as evidence that they knew full well that they could "do this" (namely, "say Mass") because Jesus had already explained to them about priesthood. Conservative Protestants, taking the Christian Scriptures as the absolute norm for what the church was to believe and to do, found no evidence for this Catholic priesthood. Then, following Swaggart, one can show that the Twelve are being commissioned by Jesus to preach the Word of God and not to be "priests." According to the Letter of Hebrews, only Jesus is. . . . Thus, I use the former Catholic-Protestant confrontation to frame Case Two. In the end, I will come back and show how both arguments are defective. . . .

#### 2. Walking though Case Two (as above for Case One)

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#### 3. How the Eucharist developed a sacrificial character and gave rise to "priests"

#### 4. What all this means for you and for your church today

Just before leaving, I invite everyone to assist at the Eucharist this coming Sunday within the spirit of the early church and to offer their sacrifice with that of the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary. Not everyone will do this; but, for those who do, it can lead to some marvelous stories of grace.

## C. How I Present Case Three and Five

### Materials to Bring

Baltimore Catechism  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
CDF Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (copies for class distribution)  
chess set and board  
Vatican II documents

#### 1a. Opening

Set up the chessboard before class in a place where as many as possible can see it. If necessary, have someone vacate his or her seat in the middle of the classroom and set it up there. Your purpose is to focus attention and to create a mystery.

In starting the class, say nothing. Pick up a black and white pawn, place them behind your back, and then bring out your closed hands in front of you and wordlessly offer your hands to someone. If the person chooses, you will know that they understand "the ritual" whereby a chess match begins. If not, go to someone else who knows what to do. Begin the game (using as few words as possible). Make four or five moves.

Now step back. Ask questions. What is happening here? What are these wooden figures? What are they called? What is the purpose of holding them concealed in my hands? What is happening on the board? Who is the stronger player?

Get as many people involved as is practical. Your purpose is to show that everyone "sees" the same thing but, some, thanks to their training and experience, habitually "see" more! One can, so to speak, even create a certain hierarchy of powers of "seeing":

- (1) Those who "see" only carved wooden pieces on a board
- (2) Those who can name four or five pieces
- (3) Those who know how all the pieces move and "capture"
- (4) Those who understand "checkmate" as the final goal
- (5) Those who can decipher how strong an opponent is

Finally, discuss how someone learns to "see" more and more, and, in the end, to become a chess master. Talk about the formation of Bobby Fisher. Get across the idea of progressing to more and more accomplished teachers.

Then directly couple this with Origen's notion that "faith" is a way of "seeing" and a power of "doing" which is acquired within the Christian community in the same way as one acquires the art of medicine. Relate this to Origen's model of church (using the parable of the Good Samaritan). Explain how Christianity can

be understood as those who practice the art of "seeing" God's activity and purposes in the world and of "skillfully acting" in harmony with God. Further explain that every community has, according to Origen, a hierarchy. The bishop within the local church, Origen understood as the one most advanced in this art and, as a consequence, capable of being the teacher/trainer of all. See Appendix A: Origen Notion of "Bishop"

### **1b. Alternative Opening**

If you have acquired any art (playing the violin, ice skating, gardening, pottery, canoeing, golfing), bring in something that can be used to exhibit the art. In each case, you want to develop the basic ideas that were played out in the example above.

### **2. Walking through Case Three (as in Case One above)**

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### **3. Walking through Case Five**

### **4. What all this means for you and for your church today**

At the end, one needs to relate this back to the opening. Show how, in the early church, the ministers in the church were those older and wiser and more accomplished in the craft to which the whole community was devoted. With time, however, empowerment and ministry became the private reserve of a privileged elite, and there was little or no expectation that the ordinary Christian was expected to do anything more than benefit from the mysterious powers of the "priests." At this point, one might contrast ministry in the third century as having an Eliza Doolittle cast, while, in the thirteenth, ordinations (and baptism and confirmation) took on a Cinderella cast. See Milavec, *To Empower as Jesus Did*, pp. 15-17 and 24-31. Also see Appendix B: The Clericalization of Ministries.

## D. How I Present Case Four

### Materials to Bring

CDF Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood

Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)

chess set and board

newspaper clippings on women's ordination (optional)

VCR and TV, video of "A Day in the Life of the Catholic Laity of America"

[Order #168-7 VHS from USCC; 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20005-4105]

### 1. Opening

a. Open the class by conducting a survey. Distinguish between two issues: (1) the theological issue: "Whether a woman could be ordained?" and (2) the pastoral issue: "Whether it is wise to introduce the ordination of women into the American Catholic Church today?" Get a hand vote on both these issues and indicate the results on the board. Then compare and contrast this with the (1977-1985) results of Dean Hoge, a sociologist at the Catholic University of America, and the 1974 results of Andrew Greeley, director of the National Opinion Research Center.

Year	% Catholics Favoring the Ordination of Women
1974	29%
1977	36%
1979	40%
1982	44%
1985	47%
1992	
1994	

The survey of bishops conducted by Fr. Sweeney, S.J., showed that, in 1985, only 11% of the U.S. bishops favored the ordination of women to the presbyterate and only 30% favored their ordination to the diaconate. However, the U.S. bishops have gone to bat for women in opposition to the Vatican on a number of occasions. For example, when the Vatican made provisions for women as readers, they said that "**when a qualified man is not available**, the Conference of Bishops may permit a woman to proclaim the readings prior to the Gospel, **while**

**standing outside the sanctuary"** (~~New Order of Mass~~, sec. 66). The U.S. bishops, however, scrapped the directives shown in bold and ruled to the contrary as follows:

Women who read one or the other biblical reading during the Liturgy of the Word . . . should do so from the lectern or ambo where the other readings are proclaimed. The reservation of the single place for all the biblical readings is more significant than the person of the reader, whether ordained or lay, whether man or woman (~~General Instruction~~, no. 272, 1971).

b. Some say that women in the church has "a natural right" to ordination. Show the problem with this line of thinking. Consider how "all men are created equal" was understood differently by Jefferson (who had and continued to have slaves on his plantation), by civil rights activists in the 60s, and by the Women's Movement today. If this issue is going to be decided in the church, it must be decided on the basis of religious criteria: What would Jesus have us do? To get at this question, the records of Jesus must be investigated. . . .

## **2. Walking through Case Four (as above for Case One)**

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## **3. An Open Forum: Arguments in Favor and Disfavor of Women's Ordination**

At this point, I review the major arguments of the CDF document (as in the opening of the Case Study). Then I pose various questions in turn: Are there yet stronger arguments which the CDF document overlooked? Are their flaws in these arguments? How would one argue in favor of women's ordination? An open forum follows. I try to take the arguments put forward on both sides and to strengthen them; then, I try to get someone to "see" the flaw in even the best arguments. In the end, my hope is that the material of the Case Study will be brought forward and intelligently used to discern the depths of the issue. All in all, I find this session to be serious "fun" and to give persons on both sides a real run for their money.

One can use some of the material found in newspapers relative to this issue. For instance, the National Catholic Reporter (19 Nov 93) reported that Bishop William A. Hughes of Covington, KY, gave a public talk to FutureChurch. The bishop said that women's ordination and a married priesthood should not be ignored as a possible solution to the Church's "steadily worsening" (p. 7) priest shortage. Relative to women's ordination, the bishop said that the challenge is twofold:

One is the difficulty the church faces if it deprives itself of the gifts and talents of these individuals. The second is the potential loss of (leaders) to the church as they see they cannot become full participating members (p. 7).

On the other side of the issue is a letter to the editor written by Marie Schmidlin of Cheviot, OH. She writes:

To me, the idea of women priests did not originate with the shortage of priests but began at the time of the entrance of Women's Liberation. It has been smoldering ever since. As to the shortage of priests, prayers for vocations are more powerful than disobedience to his vicar [the pope].

Women priests amounts to a sense of pride of accomplishments and of advancement in the hierarchy of the church.

The priest at the altar acts "in persona Christi" (in the person of Christ). How then can a woman act in the person of Christ? A woman was not crucified to redeem us but was destined to be the handmaid to the Lord in God's plan of creation.

It seems sacrilegious to place a woman as a priest at the foot of the altar. Cannot our Catholic women accept their role as handmaids and be happy in doing so?

#### **4. Closing video**

A video was prepared for John Paul II's visit to the United States in 1987. This short video (15 min.) presents a splendid cross section of "A Day in the Life of Catholic Laity in America." I would advise using only a key segment. Major Michelle Gaboret, the woman career officer in the U.S. Army who is preparing herself for lay ministry in the church, presents a very short (2 minutes) and very powerful message:

There are many women who are qualified for ministry, and it is the challenge of the Church to find ways and means to use the talents and abilities of these women. If the Church does not find a way to use their talents, it is the Church's loss (Major Michelle Gaboret).

## E. How I Present Case Six

### Materials to Bring

Baltimore Catechism  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
letters to the editor regarding papacy (optional)  
Vatican II documents

### 1. Opening

While the topic here is Peter as a model for all ministry (both lay and ordained) within the church, it still remains true that the papacy has historically claimed "Peter" as its role model and first exemplar. Accordingly, one cannot review the character of Peter's ministry without, at the same time, gaining insights into what ought to be the character of the papal ministry in the modern Church.

After bringing this to the attention of my students, I also make them aware that, even among Catholics today, there are "minimalists" and "maximalists." Then I cross over to one side of the front of the classroom and ask participants to repeat what Catholics favoring the "maximalist" position are saying. I begin with the bulletin referred to in the introduction to the Case Study itself and a letter to the editor. I make sure that I hear three additional voices from the class. Then I move over to the opposite side of the classroom and invite participants to hear what Catholic "minimalist" are saying. Here again, a letter to the editor helps to get the class warmed up.

Once the Catholic "minimalist" and "maximalist" positions have been heard, then I invite everyone to leave their seats and take their place on the spectrum--thereby indicating where they stand on the issue. I also take my position on the spectrum.

This exercise allows the teacher and students to graphically see where participants stand. Sometimes I have the ends of the spectrum talk to each other for three or four minutes.

### 2. Walking through Case Six (as above for Case One)

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### 3. What all this means for you and for your church today

After participants have had their turn, I usually add two of my own if they were not already mentioned. These are as follows:

- a. Consultation and collaboration were the hallmarks of Peter's exercise of

authority in the early church. A papacy which takes Peter as its normative beginning would, therefore, have to exercise its authority in the way in which Peter did. The same holds true for bishops, pastors, catechists, choir director, etc.

b. Perfection and failure go together in the way that the early church remembered Peter. Not even Jesus supposed that Peter would be discharged once he began to "think the thoughts of men rather than those of God." Nor did the early church think it had to conceal Peter's failing or to whitewash his image. Thus, in the contemporary church, we can accept pastors (even a pope) who are less than perfect. . . . We can also be honest about the failures of our religious leaders and not fall into the trap of thinking that loyalty to the Church requires that we hide the failings of our pastors (the pope included).

#### **4. How did the bishop of Rome become the Universal Bishop?**

This story takes one beyond the early church, yet, here again participants want and deserve an abbreviated version of how one moves from Peter to the present-day papacy. I make a big-leaps picture:

- a. From Jerusalem to Rome
- b. From bishop to arch-bishop
- c. From arch-bishop to patriarch (the major five)
- d. From pentarchy to pope (of the Western Latin Church)
- e. And in the future. . . .

## F. How I Present Case Seven

You will note that I do not present Case Seven in the classroom. If I did, it would be useful to rent the video, "Jesus of Nazareth" (MTV 1977) directed by Franco Zeffirelli, and to begin the class by showing the scene wherein Jesus is baptized by John.

## VI. College Credit

Participants taking this course for college credit will be expected, in addition to the minimal requirements specified above, to make a specialized study of baptism. This study should, at least, have the following elements:

(a) Find a learning partner.

(b) Do Case Seven: The Transformation Effected by Baptism. Since only a few will be doing this case, please be so kind as to indicate (in the margins) any errors or improvements in the text itself which occurs to you as you read it. When completed, before going on to (c), meet with your learning partner and share/discuss your results. Make changes or additions to your Case Seven in red ink.

(c) Read Joseph Martos, ~~Doors of the Sacred~~, pp. 163-201; Aaron Milavec, ~~To Empower as Jesus Did~~, pp. 163-170b; and especially ~~The Rites~~, pp. 20-29, 188-191, 298-299 [The two latter sources have been included as an appendix to Case Seven.]. Out of this background, create a continuation of the "catechism" on baptism which includes questions like the following. If possible, type your catechism double-spaced with a two-inch right margin. You are free to rearrange, revise, or add to these questions.

Q9. When and why did the practice of having an extended catechumenate prior to baptism originate?

Q10. Briefly describe this catechumenate.

Q11. Given the normative tradition of the catechumenate and of adult baptism with its manifest "conversion of life" and "personal act of faith," how did it come about that the pastors in fourth century began to encourage child baptism and, later, even infant baptism?

Q12. Since there was no evident "conversion of life" and "personal act of faith" on the part of these infants, what reasons were given whereby baptism could be justified?

Q13. When and why did the adult catechumenate disappear? What were the consequences of its disappearance?

Q14. When and how did it come about that "baptism," "confirmation," and "eucharist" were perceived as three separate and distinct sacraments as opposed to being three moments in the rite of initiation as practiced by all Christian in third century?

Q15. How and why did the sixteenth century followers of Luther come to perceive and to practice baptism differently from their Catholic counterparts?

Q16. How and why did Vatican II reinstate the RCIA, the preferential use of full immersion, the administration of confirmation with baptism (in the case of adults)?

Q17. How are the renewed rites of infant baptism and confirmation to be understood and celebrated so as to express the fact that "those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation" (Rites:298).

Catechism answers should be clear and to the point. Use your own words and avoid long citations. Even in the case of ~~The Rites~~ and the Scriptures, quote briefly and sparingly or not at all. Don't be tempted to try to tell everything that you've learned. On the other hand, don't be so brief or vague as prevent someone with a modest background from gaining a satisfactory response to your question. When in doubt, have someone in your immediate circle read what you've written and see if they understand it.

(d) When both you and your partner have completed your catechisms, make duplicates and exchange them with each other. Add comments and suggestions in the margins of the catechism you receive. Note especially where the language is unclear or misleading. Suggest how to rephrase or improve in the margins. When finished, give your marked copy back to your learning partner and, if considered helpful or necessary, talk through your suggestions. Upon receiving the marked copy of your catechism, you may want to rewrite and retype your catechism if either the number of suggestions or their importance strikes you as warranting such measures. Minor suggestions do not merit a rewriting.

(e) Finally, gather together your Case Seven and your catechism (both the original marked copy and your revision, if you did one) and give them to me. These are due on or before two weeks following the last class.

## G. How I Present Case Eight

### Materials to Bring

Baltimore Catechism  
Christian Scriptures (RSV or NRSV)  
newspapers or issues of Time/Newsweek illustrating the evils within our society  
Vatican II documents

### 1. Opening

Option One [folksy]: "When God gets up in the morning, the first thing he does is to brush his teeth and brew a cup of fresh coffee. Then he settles down in his easy chair and begins to browse the morning paper. As he does so, he gets a worried look on his face. . . . From time to time he groans. Then he mutters to himself, 'Ooooooooooooo, this is not what I intended it to be!' . . . 'Ooooooooooooo, this is not what I intended it to be!'"

"What does God read about in the newspaper that makes him say this???"

Option Two [rabbinic]: "There is a rabbinic story that is told by way of explaining how it is that God made the world good and, yet, there is so much human suffering because it is an unfinished world. The story goes like this:

A qualified tailor needs two weeks to produce a perfect suit. So what did the Master of the Universe do? He went ahead and worked by himself for one week. At the end of that week, the universe was quite incomplete. Yet, at the end of that first week he created his special creatures, the ones made in his "image and likeness," so that, together, creation might be perfected during the second week. We are now living during this second week of creation.

Then I pose the BIG QUESTION: "So the world has an unfinished character. This is not the best world, the perfect world, the final world. What is it about your own experience in this world indicates to you that we are living in an imperfect world?"

Whether using option one or two, the purpose is to get a good dozen notions of how your students register evil in the world. When someone offers a generality, press for particulars. Enlarge upon the cases yourself imaginatively drawing out the human suffering. Use two or three stories in the newspapers to illustrate the specific imperfections of this world which cause human suffering. Maybe even have a student making a list on the board. Then, when the full weight of personal and social suffering is felt, ask the focal question: "Do you believe that the measure of evil in the world today will increase or decrease for your great

grandchildren?"

Take a hand count: "How many believe that the measure of evil that will inflict your great grandchildren will increase?" Draw an arrow going upward on the board and write the number. "How many believe. . . decrease?" Draw an arrow going downward. . . . "Finally, how many believe that the measure of evil will mildly fluctuate and remain, for your great grandchildren, just about what it has been for you?" Write this number in the middle.

"Now, what if Jesus were here and had his place in that desk [point out the empty desk]; how would he have voted in this survey?" Field some responses. . . . In the end, give your own opinion: "On the basis of what I hear in the Gospels, I believe that Jesus would have been decidedly optimistic. And why? Because he believed that the Kingdom of God was close at hand! What is this Reign of God that Jesus was so passionate about? To answer this, we have to go to the records of Jesus and search through them with the aid of our case study. . . ."

## **2. Walking through Case Eight**

Walk through the headings of the case study allowing students to share their findings at each turn.

At some point someone will surely acknowledge that they were disturbed or surprised to find that Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God is coming to us, the living, and that he never had anything to say about "souls going up into heaven after death." This is a very delicate issue and many will find themselves unsettled by it. Two approaches that I have found successful are the following:

(a) THE ROUTE OF COMPARATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY: Emphasize that Jesus lived within a Jewish milieu that put little stock in the existence of an immortal soul. For them, if there was to be life and the fullness of life, then it had to be human life. Jesus deliberately took the best moments in human life--the wedding banquet--as his favorite metaphor for the future that the King has intended for his children. As for death, Jesus and his contemporaries took for granted that "thou art dust and unto dust thou shall return" (Gen and traditional Ash Wednesday). Buried in the womb of the earth, however, Jesus and the Pharisees believed that the dead "were asleep" awaiting the final resurrection. Their names had been written in the book of life. On the last day, God would raise them to life.

Once the Jewish message of Jesus, however, moved out into the Hellenistic world, it was bound to get revised due to the wide-spread belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Plato, for instance, when he was about to undergo a state execution which required him to drink hemlock, sat around rhapsodizing on how his soul would finally be released from its bodily prison in order to take flight to that heavenly realm where it would resume the bliss that it had known prior to its incarnation in the flesh. In face of such a wide-spread vision of the future, it was inevitable that the Greek Church Fathers would try to honor this belief while, at the same time, insisting that the state of soul after death was incomplete. We were not meant to be angels. Sanctification and eternal life must touch the body and the soul. Hence, for the Church Fathers, Plato's faith in the immortality of the soul was

not enough. To this had to be added the hope of Jesus, namely, that the resurrection of the dead and the renewal of all of creation was the future that the Father had in store for those who love him. In sum, therefore, the church has always tried (not always with great success) to correct and to balance an overemphasis upon the soul seeking bliss in heaven with the Jesus message of the hope that this earth and this society and this body can be redeemed from all forms of evil and thus reproduce the Paradise (the original Garden).

(b) THE ROUTE OF METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE: Emphasize that future of the world collectively and the future of the individual after death are mysteries and that, when it comes to mysteries, we have no option but to speak in metaphors. In the world in which Jesus lived, there were no Fourth of July celebrations or birthday parties or trips to Disney World. There were weddings however. These were the times when neighbors forgot their petty quarrels and joined together to celebrate. . . . For Jesus, the Kingdom of God was like a king who made a wedding feast for his son. Or again, it is like the girlfriends (the virgins) of the bride waiting with their lamps for the bridegroom to finish his bachelor's party and to come so that the wedding can begin. For Christians in the middle ages, the great moment and expectation was that the individual would finally come face to face with God in heaven after death. When I was eight years old, my mother died. I sorely missed her. When I would come home to an empty house at noon on schooldays and remember how she would listen to my stories and to make me a hot lunch, I missed her even more. Then I wanted to go to heaven so bad! Not to see God, mind you, but to be reunited with my mother. What I was doing was revising God's future so as to include the realities which touched me and meant the most for me. All of us have to do this. In the end, however, the future of the world and the future of the individual after death remain profound mysteries. No one has seen the future. No one has gone to heaven and returned to talk about it. Yet, to believe in God is to trust that the hopes and yearnings of the human heart are not in vain. That, in the end, God is committed to remove human suffering wherever and whenever it exists. Thus, in the Book of Revelations (a book filled with all sorts of metaphors for the future), God finally comes and takes his throne in the middle of Jerusalem and proceeds to wipe away tears. This image of God wiping away tears is metaphorical, imaginative, and true. Our God is a God like this. To take all the particulars as literally true, however, would be a mistake of misplaced concreteness. To ask, for instance, how large God's throne is or how long one would expect to wait before it was one's turn to be healed by God are foolish questions. In the end, with Paul, we must end up saying that "eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God has in store for those who love him." Jesus' longing for the wedding banquet, the ten-year-old boy expecting to be united to his mother, God wiping away tears in the middle of the world--all of these are true and all of these are metaphors. For us, the task is to choose our own and to hold on to them and to live by them since they contain a great truth for us and a great truth about God as well.

### **3. Repercussions for me and my church today**

## Appendix A: Origen Notion of "Bishop"

Origen never found an occasion to prepare a systematic analysis of ecclesiastic authority. Nonetheless, this issue is incidentally addressed throughout his writings. As a result, Origen provides a scattered set of clues relative to the theory and the practice of the episcopal office in the 3rd century. A brief overview of his views follows.

Origen's understanding of episcopal authority rests upon the presupposition that every Christian is called to be perfect. Even though it may not be true, as Eusebius asserts, that Origen was the pupil of Clement while he grew up in Alexandria, nonetheless, it is clear that the ideal image of the Christian gnostic found within Clement dominates Origen's thoughts and feelings as well. Origen joins with Clement, consequently, in proposing time and time again that the road to perfection is a long arduous attainment which gradually purifies and redirects the whole person in harmony with the standards and wisdom of God.[1] It is no surprise, therefore, that recent converts begin with only a superficial perception of the literal meaning of Scripture and, only after being guided through progressive stages, gain a discernment of the hidden mysteries of God's wisdom and guidance which lie concealed behind these words.[2] In parallel terms, it is no surprise that these same converts begin with only a physical fear of the torments of the damned, and, only after they have made a certain progress toward Christian perfection, relish wisdom and the divine standards of excellence for their own sake.[3]

Origen, along with most other Fathers of the Church, takes it for granted that the novice advances securely precisely because he/she has a capable spiritual guide who is further advanced on the route. Just as a student cellist submits to the direction of ever more proficient mentors according to the progress made, so too, the Christian within the congregation expects to find ever more proficient guides among the ordained clergy to stimulate, to guide, and to correct him/her along the way. Within this spiritual hierarchy, Origen specifies the bishop as the one who ought to be manifestly most advanced and, as a consequence, most capable of discharging the office whereby he functions as the enlightened mentor for all those in his congregation who are at various other stages on the route toward perfection.[4]

According to Origen, the Church stands as the roadside inn wherein humankind, which has been grievously wounded by the vices and delusions of this world, finds safety and healing.[5] Those who enter the Church are brought there by Christ, the merciful Samaritan, who, unlike the Torah-priest and the Prophet-Levite, did not pass humankind by, but out of compassion stopped and "went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine"(Luke 10:34). Once brought into the inn, Origen assures us that Christ, for an entire day and night, stays by the bedside using his healing art so as to further effect the treatment that he began on the route. Finally, being forced to leave, the master

Physician turns his patient over to the innkeeper giving him the solemn charge of conscientiously continuing the healing process that he himself has begun until such a time that the patient is entirely cured. The innkeeper, in Origen's reckoning, is none other than the bishop of the Church. He is the one who has witnessed Christ's healing art during the short time that he was on earth. He is the one now charged to exercise this same ministry until Christ returns again on the Last Day for the purpose of repaying him for all his efforts on behalf of the wounded. On the basis of this metaphor, Origen makes clear that the bishop stands within the Church as one who has been trained in the art of healing and has been charged by Christ to exercise this art for the benefit of all. As such, Origen presupposes that the bishop's authority rests upon his tested skills in apprenticing others into the selfsame perfection of life which he himself embodies.

Someone who would be cured by a physician must, in faith, accept his diagnosis and assiduously follow the program for healing which has been prescribed. So, too, someone who would participate in an art or a science must submit themselves to be trained under the direction of those who competently exercise that particular art or science.[6] Since Christian perfection is an acquired art achieved by virtue of human efforts harmonized with "the ceaseless working of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in us,"[7] it follows that faith functions as the necessary disposition whereby the neophyte surrenders to the discipline of the bishop and his assistants for the purpose of acquiring the very skills which distinguish them as masters in the art of Christian living.[8]

In Origen's day, the adult catechumenate testified to the fact that there were no instantaneous and effortless transformations of life.[9] The success of this transformative process required that the candidate entrust him/herself to a teacher, an exorcist, deacons, presbyters, and, finally, the bishop who supervised the final Lenten intensive wherein the catechumens assembled in the "house of God" each morning before going to work. During these early morning hours, the personal instructions of those bishops which have come down to us contain explicit warning not to expect an instantaneous or effortless transformation due to some supposed power of the rite itself.[10] Quite to the contrary, the Church Fathers emphasized that the Holy Spirit does not force her entry into the soul and that immoral tendencies do not instantaneously die in the water immersion to be miraculously supplanted by the dispositions of Christ. On the contrary, purification is presented as a gradual process requiring persistent efforts both before and after baptism. At one point, Origen likens Christian transformation to the gradual process whereby crushed grapes ferment into wine.[11] At another point, Origen interprets the whole of the Christian life as beginning with the passage through the Jordan, a symbol of baptism, but continuing during the forty years under the instruction and discipline of God in the desert wandering prior to the final combat which will win the promised land.[12] At still another point, Origen calls to mind that the Logos had to pass through 42 stages in gradually "descending into the Egypt of this world." [13] Christians, having been met in the depths of their degradation, are now certain that the route is secure for them to ascend, stage by stage, in order to attain "the place from whence he descended." [14]

A skill which is gradually acquired is only gradually lost. Origen has no

room for the medieval notion that, due to a single mortal sin, one's cumulative sanctifying grace can be suddenly lost. Quite to the contrary, when Origen wishes to illustrate how Christians, due to neglect, might lose their graced perfection, he deliberately sets about describing the comparable case of how a master physician or geometrician might lose his acquired art:

Suppose . . . one had become gradually acquainted with the art or science, say of geometry or medicine, until he had reached perfection, having trained himself for a lengthened time in its principles and practice, so as to attain a complete mastery over the art. To such a one it could never happen, should he lay down to sleep in the possession of his skill, that he would awake in a state of ignorance . . . . According to our point of view, then, so long as that geometer or physician continues to exercise himself in the study of his art and the practice of its principles, the knowledge of his profession abides with him [undiminished]. But, if he withdraws from its practice and lays aside his habits of industry, then, by his neglect, a few things at first will gradually escape him, then by and by more, until in the course of time, everything will be forgotten and be completely effaced from memory. It is possible, on the other hand, that when he has first begun to fall away and to yield to the corrupting influence of a small negligence, he may . . . recover that knowledge which hitherto had been only slightly obliterated from his mind.[15]

Origen's illustrative case study makes it clear that Christian perfection can only be gradually lost due to neglect of its practice. The resumption of dedicated efforts, accordingly, can suffice to regain those habits of understanding and judgment which have been effaced due to negligence.[16]

Origen is so consistent in the application of his principle of gradualism as to envision that progress and education will take place, even in the world to come: Although an individual may depart from this life less perfectly instructed . . . , he will be capable of receiving instruction in that Jerusalem, the city of the saints, i. e. , he will be educated and molded, and made a living stone, a stone elect and precious, because he has undergone with firmness and constancy the struggles of life . . . . There he will come to a truer and clearer knowledge of that which here has been already predicted, namely, that "man should not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God." And this is to be understood as referring to the princes and rulers who both govern those of lower rank and instruct them and teach them and train them in divine things.[17]

In effect, therefore, Origen envisions a heavenly hierarchy based on the same standards which ought now to prevail among the earthly hierarchy: each one who is endowed with spiritual attainments ought to be appointed to the corresponding position in the Church so that he might render a willing and capable service to those less advanced on the way. Finally, at the time of the consummation of all things, Origen speculates that the Lord Christ, who is King of all, will take his place within the kingdom and personally undertake the training of

those who have sufficiently advanced so as to profit from his most exalted wisdom.

In effect, Origen's presentation of Christian perfection as a acquired art now comes into full focus. On earth and in heaven, nothing is attained effortlessly and instantaneously. Relying upon the grace of God, each one progresses securely and gradually under the mentorship of spiritual masters who themselves exhibit more advanced skills in the very art that one is acquiring. The bishop, presbyters, and teachers in this scheme of things, represent the foremost exemplars and insightful mentors who serve those who are less advanced. According to this horizon of understanding, the source of the bishop's authority cannot accordingly be sought within his consecration or his juridical standing within the community. On the contrary, it is precisely because a presbyter is recognized as an accomplished guide and as a worthy spiritual father prior to his consecration that he is consecrated as bishop.[18] As such, the charism of the man crowns the episcopal office with dignity; the office does not confer the charism.

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#### NOTES

(\*) This is taken from Aaron Milavec, "The Office of the Bishop in Origen," ~~Raising the Torch of the Good News~~. Ed. by Bernard P. Prusak. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988) 13-24.

(1) Origen repeatedly characterizes Christian perfection as a gradual attainment. See, e.g., ~~Princ.~~ 2.11.5-7. For a careful study of the stages of perfection spelled out in various works of Origen, see Karen Jo Torjesen, ~~Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis~~ (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 85-109. Also see Torjesen's paper presented in the volume noted above.

(2) ~~Princ.~~ 2.4.8.; ~~Hom. in Num.~~ 27.1; ~~Commentary on the Song of Songs~~ 3.

(3) Origen thought that texts which suggest the "eternal torments" of the damned (e.g. Matt 18:8) had a certain pastoral efficacy for those who, at the initial stages of conversion, were only motivated by the avoidance of pain (~~Cels.~~ 3.65f & 78f). In point of fact, Origen speculated "that every sinner kindles for him/herself the flame of his/her own fire and is not plunged into some fire which has already been kindled by another" (~~Princ.~~ 2.10.4). This internal flame, Origen identifies as the perturbations caused by the divinely induced awareness of one's shameful, unholy deeds and their attendant disorderly passions. In this fashion, God's justice in the world to come is not viewed as vindictive but as being the healing remedy to burn away one's iniquities. For a more comprehensive study of Origen's thought in this area, consult Jacques LeGoff, ~~The Birth of Purgatory~~ (Chicago: University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 53-55.

(4) ~~Comm. in Matt.~~ 14.22 & ~~Cels.~~ 3.48. Joseph Wilson Trigg, in his recent book, ~~Origen~~ (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), and in his article, "The Charismatic

Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership," Church History 50 (1981) 5-19, seems to suggest at times that the source of the bishop's authority is his "intellectual achievement" while at other times he emphasizes that it is "a radically charismatic" gift entirely outside of human mediation. In my conversations with Trigg, I discovered that he wished to regard charismatic authority as rooted within achieved spiritual insight and holiness of life. In those instances where he denies "human mediation," it is more by way of showing that the ordination rite cannot confer that spiritual insight and holiness of life which are the ground of the bishop's authority.

(5) Hom. in Luc. 34.

(6) Even in the domain of the physical sciences, post-critical philosophers of science acknowledge (a) that positivism, objectivism, and pragmatism present elliptical and misleading notions of science and (b) that every scientific domain functions as a "fiduciary framework" which can only be assimilated through a process of self-donation which enables one to be apprenticed in modes of thought and judgment which are not instinctively one's own. See, for example, Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp.264-298. Augustine, in his prologue of On Christian Doctrine, considers those Christians who would bypass human teachers by claiming that the Holy Spirit alone as their teacher. To those who make such a claim, Augustine retorts that, to be consistent, such persons should never presume to teach anyone what they have so acquired but to send inquirers directly to the same Holy Spirit which was their source. Augustine then goes on to demonstrate that just as each of us learns to read from teachers, so too it is providential that God provides teachers who offer the skills whereby Christians might learn to read the Word of God in order to arrive securely at discerning the hidden sense without any error.

(7) Princ. 1.3.8. Origen finds no incompatibility in asserting that the transformation of our lives is, at one and the same time, due to divine initiative and human initiative. Origen, it will be remembered, does not live in a world which distinguishes events which are caused by God from events which are caused by Nature. Every "natural event" is fashioned and interiorly guided by the cosmic Logos. The work of personal sanctification requires a realignment of human efforts with this selfsame Logos in whose "image and likeness" humans were initially crafted. As a master physician makes interventions, not by way of creating or designing the healing process, but by way of discerning how to enhance processes which are already operative before, during, and after his intervention; so, too, the spiritual physicians within the Church use their art by way of enabling and assisting what God is already directed toward accomplishing within each individual soul.

(8) For the uninitiated, faith functions primarily as the disposition of self-surrender which accompanies the spontaneous admiration with which the novice regards the functional skills of his/her self-chosen master. For an analysis of how the function of faith changes and how critical powers are related to faith, see Aaron Milavec, To Empower as Jesus Did (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), pp.193-198.

(9) Every prophetic historical movement thrives by virtue of having mastered the art of imparting a new consciousness to its participants. Christianity was no exception to this rule. The design and artful implementation of the adult catechumenate during the first five centuries effected such human transformations. As the adult catechumenate disappeared and as infant baptism shortly after birth became the familiar practice, however, the traditional forms of efficacy once manifestly evident within the manifest conduct of the adult catechumens gave way to a spiritualized and hidden efficacy within the soul of the infant. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, spoke of the faith and virtues imparted to the soul of an infant as not being evident since it is as though such effects are asleep (*Summa Theologica* 3.69.6). The door was thus open for imagining that the rite, in and of itself, effected an instantaneous and effortless transformation since intentional effort and willing cooperation could not be imputed to infants.

(9) More appropriately, Paul emphasizes "faith in Christ" which Origen understood as meaning subjection to be influenced by and to reside within the wisdom, righteousness, and person of Christ as the Logos. Faith is never specified as propositions about Christ which warrant intellectual assent.

(10) Cyril of Jerusalem (d.386), e.g., in his instructions to catechumens does not hesitate to cite failures and to incite candidates thereby to renew their efforts for self-transformation. "If you just continue in your evil disposition," he warns, "you cannot expect to receive God's grace for even though the water will receive you the Holy Spirit will not" (*The Catechetical Lectures* 4).

(11) ~~Series Commentary on Matthew 16 & Commentary on the Song of Songs 2.~~

(12) ~~Hom. in Jos.~~, introduction.

(13) ~~Hom. in Num.~~ 27.3.

(14) ~~Ibid.~~

(15) ~~Princ.~~ 1.4.1. English tr. by Alexander Roberts et al., eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926). Minor changes in grammar and punctuation have been effected in order to accord with contemporary usage.

(16) Origen compares the deliberate attention and practice of someone intent upon accomplishing the superhuman feat of tightrope walking with those efforts deployed by someone intent upon acquiring the virtues required for blessedness. See ~~Cels.~~ 3.49.

(17) ~~Princ.~~ 2.11.3. Cf. also ~~Princ.~~ 2.11.6f & 3.6.9.

(18) During this period, the consecration or ordination of a bishop was not understood to confer special supernatural powers. In most instances, bishops

were selected from among those persons who had completed their catechumenate within the community and had, over a period of years, distinguished themselves in various other ministries. Within this arrangement, there was little room for a mystification of the rite of consecration since ideally the wisdom and grace of the episcopal candidates were well-recognized both before and after the rite. The rite served to confirm the choice of the community and to transform his functional identity vis à vis the community. The invocation of the Holy Spirit served to emphasize that the new bishop was charged with going beyond the wishes of his electors and his own personal preferences in order to serve as a discernor and spokesman for what God calls his community to believe and to do.

## **Appendix B: The Clericalization of Ministries.**

Note: If you have not yet done the sleuthing for Case Three, I would urge you to do that first and then to return here. What follows here is a sequel to Case Three. The material of Case Three took you to the point of discovering how firstly Jesus and then others as well came to be understood as "priests" within the Jesus movement. The questions and answers which follow here deal with how, due to subsequent developments, the lay character of all church ministry eventually gave way to a professional class of ministers who regarded themselves as distinctly different from lay persons. In a word, one is dealing here with the "clericalization" of ministries.

The second and third volume of these Case Studies will treat in depth this issue. A brief overview is here offered for those who can't wait.

Q1. How and why was support of the clergy introduced?

A1. Jesus maintained the Jewish practice of never charging fees for learning Torah: "You received without pay, give without pay" (Matt 5:8). Nonetheless, hospitality to travelers and especially traveling prophets/teachers was taken for granted: "The laborer deserves his food" (Matt 5:10). There appears to have been some abuse in this matter since the church order of the DIDACHE (mid-first century) specifically warns that traveling prophets/teachers are not to stay more than three days and "if he asks for money, he is a false prophet" (11:6). Paul, in an earlier generation, took pride in having worked at his trade even while traveling "that we might not burden any of you" (2 Thess 3:8) and "to give you in our conduct an example to imitate" (3:9). By the third century, just about every community resorted to practice of giving full financial support to the bishop and his family such that he could devote himself full-time to his ministry (a) of counseling and reconciling (judging) and (b) of nourishing his own life through the diligent mediation of the Scriptures (so that, he, in his turn, could nourish the life of all through his own expositions of those selfsame Scriptures). Since the bishop in this same period was beginning to be regarded as the community's "high priest," reflection upon the Hebrew Scriptures led the Christians to regard this voluntary support as akin to the tithing practiced by the Jews of old in favor of their priests. Widows and orphans were also provided for in the same way. All other ministers (presbyters included) had to earn their own living by farming or practicing a trade. Following upon Constantine's gradual favoritism of the Christian Church, bishops were given the status of official civil judges for anyone who would bring their case to them. Ever since the time of Paul, Christians had been accustomed to bring their disputes to the community for settlement (1 Cor 6:1ff). In time, bishops and presbyters came to fill these functions. Constantine recognized the bishops as being free from pressure and bribery and accordingly gave them official status as civil judges. With this office came a civil salary and a civil insignia (the pallium and stole).

Q2. When and why did the bishops begin to wear a distinctive garb?

A2. Needless to say, neither Jesus nor his disciples ever wore any distinctive garb. For any minister to have done so within the early centuries would have been out of harmony with the Jesus tradition and quite dangerous during times of persecution. Once the bishops became civil judges, however, they were expected to wear the Roman insignia of office at public functions. As the liturgy gradually became a public function, bishops began, for the first time, to wear their civil insignia during the Eucharist. As late as 428, we know that Pope Celestine wrote to some bishops in southern Gaul for the purpose of reminding them that they are to be distinguished from other Christians by their life and their teaching, NOT BY THEIR DRESS. None the less, by the end of the 5th cen., clerics in many parts of the Empire took to wearing a long robe as a sign of their status in society rather than the short tunic worn by ordinary citizens. Variations upon this long robe have persisted down to the 20th century. As the bishops of the middle ages became de facto civil rulers, the distinctive and luxurious dress of princes was adapted for ecclesial use. It has only been in the last thirty years that the pope and bishops have sharply simplified and abandoned some of the ostentatious and luxurious adornments in dress and in style of living.

Q3. How did the holiness required of the clergy gradually come to be understood as distinct from the standards of holiness required of lay persons?

A3. Initially, everyone in the churches was bound to the same standards of Gospel holiness. What distinguished the clergy, therefore, was precisely the fact that they had manifestly achieved that likeness to Christ which served (a) as a contagious example for all and (b) as a source of authority whereby one further advanced guides and sustains the efforts of those who are less advanced. Hence, clergy were expected to be more advanced IN THE ONE STANDARD OF HOLINESS which applied to all. The emergence of monasticism in the 4th century gradually had the effect of isolating certain mandates of the Gospel (e.g., "Go sell all you have and give it to the poor") as characteristic of a HIGHER LEVEL OF PERFECTION. Monasticism was a lay movement without official authorization. In time, however, monastic holiness gradually became the standard of priestly holiness. Many factors contributed to this: (a) the practice whereby local communities sometimes bypassed their own presbyters in favor of appointing a local monk of evident spiritual advancement for the office of bishop; (b) the fact that many areas (e. g. modern England, Ireland, France) were originally evangelized by monasteries which became the parish churches; and (c) the 10th cen. reform of Cluny which provided generations of reform-minded popes and bishops which sought to offset the widespread secularization of the clergy. In the end, therefore, lay persons were taught to believe that their engagement in the world distracted them from prayer and study and that it would suffice if they kept the ten commandments and received the sacraments worthily. The clergy, however, had to retire from the world as far as possible in order to achieve the HIGHER STANDARD OF HOLINESS required by their clerical state of life. Poverty, chastity, and obedience increasingly became the evangelical counsels which determined the spirituality of the clerical state. The priest was trained to imitate Christ since he would be given the powers to act "in the person of Christ" (esp. when saying, "This is my body," and "I forgive you your sins"). The lay persons could hardly be understood to imitate Christ since they were involved in

worldly pursuits, involved in sex (with their marriage partners), and involved in doing their own will. The best that seemed possible for lay persons is that they would keep the ten commandments, minimize their engagement in the world, and frequent the Sacraments as often as possible. In so doing they might thereby save their souls and be granted a low place in the world to come.

Note: the Saints held up for admiration in this era were the virgins, confessors, martyrs, monks, and a few holy kings/queens. This is so much the case that most Catholics cannot even name a lay person who was canonized for their outstanding sanctity. In the early church, Paul does not tire of calling all the members of the community "the saints" (e.g.: Rom 1:7, 8:27, 12:13, 15:25f, 15:31, 16:2, 16:15).

Q4. How did all the ministries in the church come to be understood as clerical such that lay persons were understood not to be called to any ministry?

A4. In the early church, all ministries were considered as lay ministries. There was no level or grades within Christianity. All were called to discipleship. All were given the entire Gospel to live by. All were trained in the fullness of the Jesus tradition -- there was nothing set aside for upper-level or higher-grade persons. With time, however, it was natural that certain members of the community would have taken on specialized tasks (a) to which they had a gift and (b) which they performed in the name of all. By the third century, for example, the deacon/deaconess is specifically charged with the collection of the offerings of the community and with the just distribution to all those who were in need. During the first century, everyone was charged with giving alms (Matt 6:3) -- "Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you"(Matt 5:42).

With time, however, as the community grew, it was impossible for any individual to know precisely who was receiving too much community assistance and who was being entirely overlooked. Deacons/deaconesses arose as those charged to perform the ministry of almsgiving in the name of the entire community." The Father wants his bounty to be shared by all," the DIDACHE declared. Deacons/deaconesses were thus ordained to represent the community in distributing the tithes offered by individuals for such distribution.

With the fourth century, one finds a new development. All the formal Eucharistic ministries were organized in terms of grades leading up to the office of bishop. This undoubtedly was modeled after the grades of civil service then in practice within the Roman Empire. As such, each grade was pragmatically seen as a necessary step for those who would aspire to advance to the next higher grade. A typical set of graded ministries would be as follows: porter, lector, acolyte, exorcist, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter, bishop. In earlier times, no one would ever have thought that a deacon had to be a lector or exorcist at some earlier period in order to advance to the rank of deacon. Nor, in actual fact, did presbyters usually emerge from among the deacons; they usually emerged from among the teachers (a grade not even included in the Eucharistic ranks). Now, however, movement was regularized. This gave the distinct impression that the highest grade of ministry was that of bishop and the lowest grade was that of

porter.

As privilege and power was effectively added to rank and as a distinct legal separation was made between clergy and lay, the Middle Ages fashioned a system in which the ONLY MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH WAS CLERICAL MINISTRY (conveniently divided into eight ranks or grades). Meanwhile, since all official ministry was effectively reduced to the production of the Sacraments, even the eight ministries named were reshaped so as to lose touch with their earlier job descriptions. Deacons, for example, no longer visited homes and no longer distributed the goods of the community -- they had special vestments which entitled them to stand, first in line, behind the priest saying Mass and to perform special liturgical duties (e. g. reading the Gospel). ALL THE CLERICAL MINISTRIES HAD EFFECTIVELY BECOME SACRAMENTAL IN SCOPE.

Q5. How did the clerical ordination come to be understood as having special supernatural powers?

A5. Within the early centuries, those who were manifestly gifted by nature and grace were ordained for office within the local community. The laying of hands was not understood as conferring supernatural powers but as officially declaring the ministerial status of the one being ordained. The invocation of the Holy Spirit was seen (a) as crediting what the Holy Spirit had already done in calling/preparing this person for ministry and (b) as calling forth that same Spirit to inform the official ministry which would flow from this ordination.

The election by the community did not mean that clergy were to be "crowd pleasers" or impose "their own ideas" on the community. Quite to the contrary, the bishop, presbyter, deacon/deaconess had to be one who spoke and acted "in the Spirit of Christ" so as to pray/lead/judge all things in this Spirit. Clergy had to sometimes practice "tough love" in resisting/challenging false standards and false acting on the part of some or all the members of the community. Hence, the invocation of the Spirit firmly directed both candidate and people to the source of true ministry.

During the 4th century and following, the clerical state was gradually surrounded by clerical privileges (e.g. tax exemption) and clerical power (e.g. civil judge). During the middle ages, the consecration of a bishop effectively conferred the powers to rule and judge in both ecclesial and secular matters. Parish priests, for their part, while they had little or no civil status, were increasingly understood as receiving the spiritual power "to impose penances and to forgive sins" with an authority of Christ himself. The enactment of the Mass, meanwhile, had become the exclusive reserve of the priest for he alone was understood to have "the supernatural power" to make Christ present upon the altar. As a result of all these factors, ordination was perceived as conferring special supernatural powers which could not be approximated in any way by any lay person.

Q6. How was ordained ministry understood differently during the Patristic Era compared with the Middle Ages?

A6. In the Patristic Era, the bishop and presbyter were the spiritual guides and models for the entire community in its quest for holiness. Preaching, teaching, spiritual counseling, reconciling were their principal functions. Clergy who showed themselves unworthy or indisposed to continue such a ministry either resigned their office or were deposed -- returning to the lay state. Clergy who shifted to another community could not presume to continue their ministry therein and automatically returned to the lay state.

In the Middle Ages, the community no longer sought spiritual guidance and no longer required manifest holiness of their clergy. It sufficed that they had the power "to forgive our sins" and "to bring our needs to the attention of God" through the rightly performance of the sacramental rites. Since the Spirit of wisdom and holiness was not strictly required for the efficacy of the Sacraments, ordination was regarded as conferring a permanent power which could not be taken away. A whisky priest was thought to be just as efficacious for forgiving sins as a saintly priest. A priest who shifted to another community was presumed to be fully a priest; he only had to have the permission of the local bishop to lawfully administer the Sacraments in his territory. Even deposed priests were regarded as having priestly powers; they were restricted however in so far as they could not lawfully use them.

### **Appendix C: Outline of Future Volumes**

There follows a tentative outline for the three future volumes which are in preparation. Users of these Case Studies are invited to make suggestions to the author regarding what they and their students or group members would like to see treated in these volumes. Suggestions on what is working and not working would always be graciously accepted.

Thank you,  
Aaron Milavec

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