THE SACRED MINISTRY

There has been much debate and argument about the structure of the sacred ministry within the church and the authority of the Holy Spirit in confirming those who have been chosen or elected. Diarmaid MacCulloch writes that there must have been, from post-Apostolic times, a universally recognised, single authority in the church, able to take major decisions.[1] Apart from Orders, these rulings would have included: the application of canonical status to chosen sacred manuscripts; a uniform direction in Christian teaching and the establishment of creedal statements of doctrine. It seems likely that there was also a recognised structure or set of texts associated with Christian worship. Such a 'catholic' church saw a marked increase in authority, credibility and coherence by the early years of the second century. By the year 200 there existed a mainstream Catholic Church which took for granted the existence of a threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. There would be few challenges to this pattern of church order for the next thirteen hundred years. MacCulloch suggests that the presidency of the *πρεσβψτεροι* (*presbyteroi* – often translated as 'elders') by James the (so-called) brother of Jesus, and the selection of *διακονοι* (*diaconoi* – or deacons, as defined in Acts 6: 2-5) led inevitably to the later grades of bishop, priest and deacon. However, Henry Chadwick reminds us that the apostles were not the only ones in the early church to receive the gifts of the Spirit; prophets like Agabus and various teachers were likewise gifted.[2]

Churches in Antioch and Jerusalem established parallel, ecclesiastical hierarchies which resonated with their Judaic past, with its High Priests, Priests and Levites. Elsewhere the church developed along more Hellenistic lines, much of it thanks to the work of Saint Paul and his associate missionaries. In his first letter to the Christian Church in Corinth Paul suggested one possible configuration; 'God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues' (1 Cor 12: 28). Saint Paul observed that the Corinthian Church especially prized the gift of 'speaking in tongues'. He could not afford to deny that this ecstasy was a genuine manifestation of the Spirit, but persuaded the Corinthians that was the least in a graded order of supernatural gifts.[3] Another pattern emerges from his letter to the Church in Ephesus, 'The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers' (Eph 4: 11). However, these professions should not be considered as

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[1] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, (London: Penguin Books – trading as Allen Lane, 2009), 130.
[2] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 45. In reference to Agabus, Chadwick quotes two references from Acts: Acts 11: 28 and Acts 21: 7. The second mention is, in fact, in Acts 21: 10.
[3] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 46.

rigid, technical definitions but more as modes of missionary organisation that required a local church to be dynamic and always prepared to adjust and improvise in the face of changes in circumstances. MacCulloch understands that some sort of standardisation did emerge from this fractured pattern with the titles *presbyteros* (presbyter) and *episcopos* (overseer) becoming almost interchangeable in their meaning and usage.[4]

Clayton Jefford argues that ecclesiastical leadership and the subsequent Christian tradition of a three-tiered hierarchy of bishop, presbyter and deacon is largely dependent on Ignatius (d c107).[5] Most vital of these positions to Ignatius was the bishop, who embodied the presence of God among his people; 'He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God'.[6] Simon Tugwell quotes from Eusebius, who argued that Ignatius had created a strong, central government in Antioch, the greatest city in Roman Syria.[7] Ignatius believed that there could be no genuine church apart from a properly constituted structure. In his Epistle to the Trallians he wrote, 'let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church'.[8] To the Smyrnaeans he wrote,

> Follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptise or to hold a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid.[9]

Ignatius battled against both Ebionite and Docetist heresies and believed that the true faith could only be preserved through a firm and structured leadership.

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[4] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, 131.
[5] Clayton N Jefford, 'Ignatius and the Apostolic Fathers', in D Jeffrey Bingham (ed), *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 109.
[6] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chap IX – Honour the Bishop. Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-smyrnaeans-longer.html.
[7] Simon Tugwell, *The Apostolic Fathers*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 105. Eusebius claimed that Ignatius was the second successor to Saint Peter as Bishop of Antioch, although there is little if any evidence that Peter was ever Bishop of that city.
[8] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, 3: 1, Translation by J B Lightfoot, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-trallians-lightfoot.html (Accessed 07/07/10).
[9] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8: 1-2, Translation by J B Lightfoot, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-smyrnaeans-lightfoot.html (Accessed 07/07/10).

The *Didache* (thought by many to date from the late first or early second century) gives clear instruction on the use of the title 'prophet' to those who had a pedagogic ministry and it offers methods for the identification of false prophets.[10] There are instructions contained within the *Didache* to appoint bishops and deacons, 'worthy of the Lord' (15: 1). The only reference to 'priests' is in the instructions that the 'first-fruits' should be given to the prophets, 'for they are your chief-priests' (13: 4). There is also some disagreement between the local ministry and peripatetic prophets but this controversy ceased at the church became established. In his first epistle to the Church in Corinth, Clement made a number of references to both bishops and deacons; there were a few references to priests, but mostly in the context that Christ is our Great High-Priest. Clement equally saw the three-fold ministry as archetypical of the Jewish system of High Priests, Priests and Levites. Robin Ward suggests that the comparison of Christian and Jewish ministries became especially important within the church in Rome.[11] There is little evidence for the establishment of any form of monarchical episcopacy, except that which developed in Rome. The ecclesiastical authorities there clearly determined early that their church had Saint Peter as its founder and that he was, in some way, the most prominent of the apostles.[12] There is no scriptural evidence that Peter, during his lifetime, had a prominent leadership role; on the contrary, the book of Acts makes it clear that both James and Paul played important parts in the early church.

There are several instances in the Acts of the Apostles where acceptance, approval or authority is given to others through tactile contact, through the laying-on-of-hands. The seven deacons appointed to feed the Greek widows were, 'set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them' (Acts 6: 6); Simon the magician and others in Samaria were initiated into the church through the laying-on-of-hands of the apostles Peter and John (Acts 8: 18); Barnabas and Saul were set apart for missionary activities through this action (Acts 13: 3). There is also an instance of the healing of the father of Publius through the laying-on-of-hands (Acts 28: 8). Yet, nowhere is there any suggestion of the employment of this praxis for the purposes of maintaining an apostolic succession. There is no suggestion in scripture that the commissions and consequent authority given to the disciples, first through the sacrament of sufflation on the evening of the day of resurrection (John 20: 22), and later with a rushing wind and tongues of fire at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2: 2-3), was passed on to any other individuals.

[10] See translation by J B Lightfoot, chapter 11, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-lightfoot.html (Accessed 02/06/10).
[11] Robin Ward, 'The Ordinal', *Faith and Worship*, Vol 65, 2010, 55.
[12] The Roman hierarchy undoubtedly quoted Matt 16: 18 as their authority.

Despite this, it was clearly understood that false prophets would appear within the church; indeed Jesus predicted that this would happen (Matt 7: 15; 24: 11; 24: 24; Mark 13: 22). There is evidence that the apostles identified false prophets (Acts 13: 6; 2 Pet 2: 1). Did the early church determine that the truth could only be revealed be the maintenance of a formal, successional procedure? Revealed wisdom shows that a structured order that comprised bishop, priest and deacon was eventually established and that this ecclesial arrangement has been maintained in the principal churches of both East and West for two millennia. It is argued by those in the Anglican Communion that the succession was not broken at the time of the Protestant Reformation. It is, of course, counter-argued by churches, denominations and sects that have, through partition and division, no direct historical links with the apostles that the whole concept of a succession is mythical and nonsensical.

G D Carleton wrote the bold statement that, 'Our Lord has established an organised ministry in his Church'.[13] Using twenty scriptural references he built an hierarchical structure, from the appointment of the apostles as Christ's representatives, to the appointment of elders (priests?) by Titus at the request of Paul (Tit 1: 5). Carleton clearly distinguished between the gifts of the Spirit (as listed in 1 Cor 12: 28) and those conveyed by apostolic laying-on-of-hands.[14] He clearly stated that, 'every bishop rightly consecrated can trace his spiritual lineage back to the apostles ... at every period of the Church we see the greatest care taken that there should be no link missing in the chain of succession'.[15] Since, as has been premised, there is no absolute Biblical evidence for this practice, it must be assumed to be part of the tradition of the church. As Richard Hooker made clear in the sixteenth century, the doctrine of the church is based on tradition as well as scripture and reason.[16]

By contrast, MacCulloch, referring to the successional understanding of the Roman Catholic Church, writes that, 'there is no evidence that Peter had actually played the role of bishop in the Church in Rome and the names traditionally provided for his successor bishops up to the end of the first century are no more than names ... they are probably the result of later second-century back-projection to create a history for the episcopal succession in the era when episcopal succession had become significant.'[17] The church in Rome did lay claim to being the burial place of two of the apostles (although there was no historical evidence that either Peter or Paul died in

[13] G D Carleton, *The King's Highway*, (Norwich: The Canterbury Press – trading as Tufton Books, 2001), 116. This work was originally published in 1924 by the Church Literature Society.
[14] Ibid, 118.
[15] Ibid, 121.
[16] This is often referred to as Hooker's 'three-legged stool', a doctrine that he expounded in '*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*'.
[17] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, 135.

that city). However, by the end of the second century the Bishop of Rome began using excommunication as a method of dogmatic and doctrinal control. Victor I (d 198) began the processes of papal supremacy by ending the long-standing practice of sending Eucharistic bread and wine that he had consecrated (the *fermentum*) to other Christian communities in the city. These communities historically included Gnostics, Montanists and Monarchians; they were, by this action, effectively divorced from the mother church. Victor assembled an early Council of Rome and through it required bishops in Eastern churches to follow the Roman lead of keeping Easter on a Sunday, not on the Jewish Passover date of 14th Nissan as had previously been the tradition. By the third century the Bishop of Rome was consolidating his position as principal within the western Church. The title 'papa' came into use in the reign of Marcellinus (d 304) when numbers of pilgrims to the city began to expand. Marcellinus was accused of apostasy by the Donatists (he was said to have offered incense to Roman, pagan gods) and rivalry over the superior position of Rome was countered by Cyprian of Carthage on behalf of the North African Church. Despite having many martyrs, the African Church did not possess any counter-weight to Rome's two apostles. It was at this time that the Roman bishop appealed to Matt 16: 18 (Christ's pronouncement that in Peter was a rock on which he would build his church). MacCulloch suggests that, 'Rome's place in the Christian Church remained subject to many accidents of history...'[18]

By the early fourth century, before the Council of Nicaea (325), the overall structure of the church had begun to follow civil lines. Dioceses became aligned with city territories, each governed by a bishop. The episcopacy within larger metropolitan areas, which often comprised a number of dioceses, had authority over subordinate bishops, some of whom were called suffragans. The title 'metropolitan' first appeared in the fourth canon of Nicaea. Principal among the responsibilities of metropolitans has been the presidency of provincial synods, the care of vacant sees and the consecration of bishops. There were many disputes in the Western Church between metropolitan bishops (often called archbishops) and the reigning Pope; in these the latter was generally victorious. In the early Middle Ages no archbishop could exercise his authority until granted a pallium by the Holy Father. This woollen neck-piece came to symbolise the plenitude of the pontifical office. In some parts of the Western Church, typically in North Africa, the metropolitan was the most senior bishop, by years of consecration. In other areas he was

[18] Ibid, 137.

elected from among the collegiality of bishops. Metropolitan bishops are commonly given the title of Archbishop, or Primate, or, as in the Scottish Episcopal Church, Primus.[19]

In the Eastern Church the three-fold priestly order was extended by the appointment of patriarchs, who had responsibility for each of the ancient sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem. This title was later used for the spiritual leaders of autocephalous Orthodox Churches, such as that in Greece and, later, in Russia. Lower in the hierarchy the office of exarch was established. An exarch had jurisdiction over a number of metropolitan sees. At no time did the Eastern Church determine the need for a supreme head, analogous with the Pope.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation much though was given to any scriptural evidence for the foundation of the church's ministry. As has been made clear, there are no exact definitions in the Bible of the various priestly functions. Meanings of, and differences between, the words *presbyteroi* and *episcopoi* have never been clearly established and many argued that the roles associated with those priestly functions, certainly after the death of the apostles, could not be accurately determined. This dispute can, perhaps simplistically, be divided between two principal protagonists: Martin Luther, who originally dismissed the role of bishops but later incorporated them into his church; and John Calvin, who accepted as a cardinal principle of his Reformation the concept of 'the priesthood of all believers'. In Lutheranism, holy orders are not limited to bishop, priest and deacon, but can include: preachers, governmental officers and widows. The resultant position within the world-wide Lutheran churches is that some countries believe that they ordain (consecrate?) bishops in the apostolic succession (such as Norway, Sweden and Finland) while others do not emphasise this doctrine (Denmark and Latvia). Even in those Lutheran churches that subscribe to the apostolic succession, there is much confusion about what is meant by that phrase. To many the idea of apostolicity is simple a submission to the teaching of the original apostles, as recorded in scripture. This stance is essentially embodied in the doctrine of *sola scriptura*.

Robert Williams accepts that the authority of Christian ministers, and of bishops in particular, is derived from their connections with apostolic tradition, apostolic succession and holy scripture.[20] The historicity of successional claims is shrouded in mystery in the sub-apostolic church but when the issue reappeared in the nineteenth century researchers turned increasingly to two works by Eusebius, from the fourth century; works that gave the earliest extant records of names and dates. These were the *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History*. A common feature in the

[19] From *primus inter pares*, = first among equals.
[20] Robert Lee Williams, *Bishop Lists: Formation of Apostolic Succession in Ecclesiastical Crises*, (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), 1f.

establishment of the legitimacy of a social institution in the ancient world was to cite an unbroken succession of leaders from the time of the founder. This practice was applied, *inter alia*, in Greek philosophy, Roman government and the Jewish priesthood. These ideas were perpetuated in the Christian church in the form of what were called 'bishop's lists'. Early ecclesiastical writers used these lists to combat heresy and schism, in proving the titles of 'legitimate' bishops over competing claims of authority.

The Church of England has always maintained that its bishops are within the apostolic succession. However, there is much debate as to whether the services contained in the Ordinal (including the Consecration of Bishops) are regarded as sacramental. The Evangelical wing of the church maintains, along with most Protestant churches, that the sacraments comprise only those directly ordained by Christ (the Dominical Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist). Despite her claim to have apostolic order and succession, there have been claims that, since the Reformation, priestly orders in the Church of England are invalid. This accusation, particularly from the Roman Catholic Church, culminated in the Papal Bull *Apostolicae Curae* in which Pope Leo XIII, in 1896, declared all Anglican orders, 'absolutely null and utterly void'. The principal objection of the Vatican authorities to Anglican orders was based on their understanding of the 'Intention' found in the Ordinal. Furthermore, they concluded that material changes in the rite used in Anglican episcopal consecrations caused them to be invalid, and that any priesthood that devolved from them would be equally unacceptable since it differed materially from that in the Roman Catholic Church, which was deemed to be a sacrificial nature. Anglican ordination was seen to be merely a form of ecclesiastical appointment, accompanied with a blessing; it did not confer, in the RC view, a sacramental conferral of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Pope Leo maintained that Anglican ordination rites after the middle of the sixteenth century did not make it sufficiently clear as to which order of bishop or priest a man was being ordained, also they did not mention any special grace or power associated with that position. The Roman Catholic Church claimed that the episcopate should be seen as a 'high priesthood' and that the presbyterate should have conferred on them, 'the power of offering and consecrating the true Body and Blood of Our Lord,' in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

While the matter of the content and structure of the liturgies contained within the Ordinal have never been resolved, a new factor has entered into all consecrations since the 1930s. Old Catholic bishops (of the Union of Utrecht), whose consecrations the Roman Catholic Church recognises as valid, have been co-consecrators of all Anglican bishops (in the so-called 'Dutch-touch'). In an attempt to nullify the effects of *Apostolicae Curae* it has been the practice of

Anglicans to validate their consecrations through the inclusion among the consecrators of those bishops that have Old Catholic connections. Timothy Dufort has argued that, through this procedure, all Anglican orders are now valid.[21] In more recent times the whole question of the validity of Anglican orders has become confused by the acceptance in some provinces of women and active (non-celibate) homosexuals into the episcopacy.

In 1896 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a statement to counter the arguments set forth by Pope Leo XIII in *Apostolicae Curae*, entitled *Saepius Officio*. In this they argued that, if Anglican orders can be deemed to be invalid, then this condemnation must apply equally to Roman orders. It stated:

> For if the Pope shall by a new decree declare our Fathers of two hundred and fifty years ago wrongly ordained, there is nothing to hinder the inevitable sentence that by the same law all who have been similarly ordained have received no orders. And if our Fathers, who used in 1550 and 1552 forms which as he (the Pope) says are null, were altogether unable to reform them in 1662, (Roman) Fathers come under the self-same law. And if Hippolytus and Victor and Leo and Gelasius and Gregory have some of them said too little in their rites about the priesthood and the high priesthood, and nothing about the power of offering the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Church of Rome herself has an invalid priesthood...[22]

John Hunwicke reflects on changes in Roman Catholic thinking since Vatican II.[23] The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), then under the distinguished authority of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), made it clear that, 'in every valid celebration of the Eucharist the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church becomes truly present'. Much, of course, hangs on the interpretation of the word 'valid'. The CDF allowed that there were separated communities, outside the control of Rome. It accepted that these churches had valid sacraments but argued that they had a 'wounded existence'. It also saw that this separation impaired the very unity that Rome sought. It asserted that the fullness of Catholic life and the orders which are part of it are not to be found in 'non-Catholic' ecclesial groups. To those churches that are outside the ambit of Rome the objectionable phrase is, 'the orders which are part of it'. These words seem to mean either that it is only in canonical union with Rome that valid

[21] Timothy Dufort, *The Tablet*, 1982, May 29, 536-8.
[22] Ref: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucbgmxd/saepius.htm (Accessed 10/06/10).
[23] John Hunwicke, *Are Anglican Orders valid?*, Ref: http://www.northernbishop.com/articlesnews/otherarticles/dutchtouch.htm (Accessed 14/06/10).

orders exist; outside Rome clerical orders are contrary to the faith and to the magisterial declarations of the Catholic Church.

The Council of Trent determined that the most important matter in any sacramental act was that of 'intention' of the celebrant or officiant. By this was meant the intention to be of the mind of the Church, to do as the Church does. In the seventh session it was determined that, '*Si quis dixerit, in ministris, dum sacramenta conficiunt et conferunt, no requiri intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit ecclesia; anathema sit* (if one shall say, that in ministers, whilst they complete and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention, at least of doing what the church does, let him be accursed).[24] Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) criticised this doctrine, with the words, 'It is not possible for any one to be sure with the certainty of faith that he has received a true sacrament, as a sacrament cannot be celebrated without the intention of the minister, and no one can see the intention of another'.[25] In his view this provided grounds for uncertainly and apprehension, especially in the matter of consecrations and ordinations. In the twentieth century, Anglo-Catholic theologian Eric Mascall has argued that, 'the chief handicap with which an Anglican is faced in discussing the Roman Catholic case against Anglican Orders arises from the fact that he can never be quite sure what that case is going to be'.[26] The Roman Catholic perception fails because the Anglican sacramental action (the imposition of hands) is deemed to be faultless; attempts to show that the form (the words) is in itself inherently inadequate have never held water; and however heretical some Anglican bishops (may) have been, this, in itself, has no effect upon the validity of their sacramental actions. This argumentation seems to prove the validity of Anglican orders, but it has not persuaded the Holy See to rescind *Apostolicae Curae*.

Gregory Dix believed that a continuum existing, whereby the Eucharistic action of a particular church at a particular time was accumulated into and connected with the depth of meaning attached to the Eucharistic action of the universal church at every celebration since the crucifixion.[27] He wrote, 'prayer said by the bishop or his authorised deputy takes up the corporate official act of his church into corporate act of the whole Body of Christ, head and members together as the Son of Man' (= 'the people of the saints of the Most High') 'comes' from time to the Father.' Did this imply that Dix was clearly of the opinion that Anglican orders were valid, or did it mean that the Eucharistic continuum of which he wrote only applied if the orders of the

[24] Council of Trent, 7th Session, Canon xi, 3rd March, 1547.
[25] Robert Bellarmine, *Disput. de Justif*., Lib iii. Chap 8, Sect 5, 488.
[26] Quoted by John Hunwicke, loc cit.
[27] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: Dacre Press, 1945), 271.

celebrant were valid? It is impossible to know. Dix had definite leanings towards Rome; he celebrated the Roman Mass in Latin, certainly within his Benedictine Community at Nashdom.[28]. Dix stressed that the Church of England, which he clearly saw as part of 'Christ's Church', had maintained the three-fold order of bishops, priests and deacons from apostolic times, and he quoted the Preface to the Ordinal in the Prayer Book to substantiate this point.[29] He suggested that this Preface had been subjected to considerable deliberation both in and outside the Church of England: inside because church members have observed a variety of ideas in its ministry, a ministry that was thought by many to have been abolished at the time of the Protestant Reformation; and outside because of the debates about union of the church with other Christian bodies. The results of these discussions have been various. In some parts of the Eastern Church, Anglican orders have been accepted, in others no decision has been made about them. They have not been formally rejected by any. Many Protestant churches and denominations have repudiated the role of a separate priesthood that maintained any sort of sacerdotal power conveyed by ordination; thus have rejected Anglican orders outright. The Roman Catholic view is that the titles of bishop, priest and deacon as employed in the Anglican Church mean something recognisably different from what they have always meant to them, 'from apostolic times'. This perceived difference led eventually to *Apostolicae Curae*. Dix made it clear that, in his opinion, this was not a new decision (in 1896) and that the Roman Catholic Curia had never accepted Anglican ordinations as equivalent to their own, from the end of the sixteenth century.[30] He asked why Pope Leo's decision was of any consequence to Anglicans. He wrote, 'Some Wesleyans in the USA have Superintendents whom they style 'Bishops' though neither they nor anyone else supposes that these are 'Bishops' in the same sense as those of the Roman or Eastern Churches. But they go on quite happily leading their spiritual lives as Wesleyans without worrying about that. Why shouldn't we as Anglicans do the same?' The answer that he gave concerned the fundamental differences between Protestant and Catholic understanding of Christianity.[31]

Dix believed that the most important and profound difference was to be found in the single Reformation word 'Justification'. Dix defined Justification as, 'a technical term for the

[28] Dix celebrated (probably illegally!) using the English Missal while Rector of Saint Mary and All Saints, Beaconsfield, while standing in for his brother Ronald who became a Forces' Chaplain at the outbreak of World War II. See: Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 1995), 56.

[29] This Preface is entitled, 'The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons according to the Order of the Church of England'. These services could, perhaps, better be listed in the order, 'Consecrating, Ordaining and Making'. In today's more egalitarian church no candidates for the sacred ministry are Made or Consecrated; all are Ordained.

[30] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, (London: Dacre Press, 1944), 19.

[31] Ibid, 20.

fundamental process in the religious life of any Christian man or woman'. Man is born in a state of alienation from God and therefore prone to sin. Despite this propensity to sin, man is brought into union with an infinitely holy God through redemption by Christ. Justification of a sinner through Christ happened through man's total surrender to one idea and to the emotion it evoked. It happened completely within a man's mind, without any involvement of the church or her sacraments in the operation of redemption and sanctification. Justification, said Dix, concerned the very heart of the Christian religion and was the root cause of the violent differences between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. Dix explained this:

> True, Protestants could not help seeing that the New Testament represents our Lord as having instituted the Church and appointed his Apostles to act in the Church in his Name and Person. It also records that he deliberately ordered and instituted certain external actions and signs for His followers as having a vital relation to their *being* his. Neither of these facts was easily reconcilable with the doctrine of 'Justification by faith alone' which insisted not only that a man needed nothing more but actually could do nothing more than *know* the story of redemption in the first century AD and put his entire trust in that. Yet the New Testament made it impossible not to retain the Church and the Sacraments in some sense. Protestants therefore kept them both, but they were forced to empty them of much of their Scriptural meaning. (Dix's italics)[32]

Protestantism retained the concept of church, despite its incompatibility with Protestant thought, but the idea of the church as the Body of Christ, with all that that entailed, was seriously impoverished. Protestants had every reason to see the church as a voluntary organisation with which the justified individual could dispense if it appeared not to support his purpose, or to refashion if by so doing it better proclaimed the interpretation gospel that the individual had perceived in the scriptures. Such a church made no reference to Christian obedience. Dix claimed that such thinking led directly to an untrammelled religious individualism and insensitivity to schism. It led to the repudiation of authoritative standards of doctrine other than 'the Scriptures', and these as individually interpreted. Dix explained that, in the Protestant mind, the church's sacraments were emptied of their scriptural and spiritual significance. A few, like the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends (the Quakers), abandoned the sacraments completely;

[32] Ibid, 23.

others accepted only those of Dominical origin.[33] Over time they became simply optional appendages to the practice of Protestant piety.

Protestant teaching thus had a dramatic effect on the church, its sacraments and, thereby, its orders. The Receptionist view is that the sacraments do not convey grace to those who receive them, they are merely tokens that the recipient had obtained grace, albeit in a wholly individual way. A corollary of this argument was, according to Dix, that there was no need for a priesthood of men to act in the name of Christ or to perform the corporate actions of the church in relation to its individual members.[34] Dix saw the Protestant concept of ministry as, 'men set apart to fulfil the function of proclaiming the fact of the Redemption accomplished in the first century AD which challenges individuals to make the saving act of faith'.[35] This ministry is essentially for preaching. Dix quoted Luther who argued that, 'Ordination is a solemn ceremony for the appointment of public preachers in the church'. Dix saw in the Protestant usage of Baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies procedures for preaching with symbolic actions. Thus it was fitting that these services should be conducted by those to whom preaching licences had been given. In conducting this public worship the preachers exercised no supernatural power or authority derived from Christ, this was merely performed by ordained ministers to maintain good order in a Christian society. Dix admitted that it was more in the Calvinist tradition for disciplinary authority to lie in the hands of the preaching ministry, but allowed that some Presbyterians, especially those in Scotland, derive their ministerial authority from ordination at the hands of other ministers, not from congregational choice and selection. By the middle of the sixteenth century Protestantism and Catholicism were essentially seen as two separate religions.

The Church of England, which had abandoned papal authority in favour of a royal mandate, had to decide where it stood on the matter of Protestant teaching and its associated sacramental theology. A series of 'Articles of Religion' were formulated: ten in 1536; increased to forty-two in 1552; then reduced to thirty-nine in 1563. Article XXV states:

> Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in Him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance,

[33] The five minor sacraments of the historical church were disregarded by the Protestant Reformers. John Knox irreverently referred to them as, 'the Pope's five bastard sacraments'.
[34] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 28.
[35] Ibid.

> Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not the like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, have they a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

While declaring that the five minor sacraments have been derived from a corrupt understanding of apostolic teaching, this Article makes it crystal clear that the Dominical sacraments are effectual signs of grace. In the words of Thomas Aquinas, 'they cause the grace which they signify'.[36] As a sop to the thinking of John Knox, who insisted on the inclusion of the so-called Black Rubric in the Prayer Book of 1552, which, while permitting reception of the sacrament when kneeling, forbade any adoration or worship, Article XXV states that the sacrament is not be gazed upon or carried about. Article XXVI also contains elements that counter Protestant fundamentalism. In discussing the unworthiness of ministers it makes it clear that, while they have, 'chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments'; yet 'forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the word of God and in the receiving of the sacraments'. While these are statements that few serious Protestants could accept, they indicate the doctrine of the nascent, post-Reformation Church of England. This sacramental theology is paralleled in the Catechism. A sacrament (of which only the two Dominical ones are deemed generally necessary for salvation) is defined as, 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof'.[37] It seems clear from the foregoing that the post-Henrician Church of England was not as overtly Protestant as most of the continental Reformers would have wished. Even under the influence of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, Cranmer's first revision of the Prayer Book (1552) was far more sacramental than parallel liturgies in Switzerland and Germany. There were clear indications that Eucharistic rites thought to have been attributable to the Fathers were maintained, although some counter-Catholic revisions are evident. Dix saw Cranmer and his colleagues as,

[36] Quoted by Dix. Ibid, 30.

[37] It is interesting to reflect on the use of the word 'generally' in the Catechism. Does its inclusion imply that there may be circumstances where other sacraments (from the five referred to as minor) may be valid and efficacious?

> genuine Protestants, sincerely desirous of introducing Protestantism of the Swiss or 'extreme left-wing' variety into the Reformed Church of England ... any attempt to explain this as due to confession of mind or feebleness under the pressure of foreign refugee scholars and the governments, or even deliberate concealment of their real opinions, cannot be sustained by the evidence ... they were outspoken, conscientious and brave men who died for their beliefs.[38]

Dix made it clear that, while Cranmer *et al* were able to influence the liturgical forms in the Prayer Book very considerably, especially in subsequent editions, they did their work opposed by the vast majority of clergy and laity. While they lamented that they were unable to take their revisions as far as they thought they should, they never risked any submission of these to the church for discussion and acceptance (or otherwise). The resulting liturgy was thrust upon the Church by the direct authority of Acts of Parliament, aided though the legislative processes by members of a Privy Council which exercised a semi-despotic authority under the regency of the boy-king Edward VI. Other revisions were forced on an unsuspecting church by Royal Proclamations, very much in the mode and manner of Henry VIII.

The Elizabethan Prayer Book (1559) contained six changes to the Ordinal and, again, these were never considered by or consulted on by Convocation. Cranmer and his close advisors composed services in the Ordinal (and elsewhere in the Prayer Book) which the government, albeit without Parliamentary debate or vote, compelled the clergy to use. There were no doctrinal pronouncements and no sanction was ever obtained from the Church. The only method employed by Reformers under Edward VI was *fait accompli*. The single exception to this absence of ecclesial oversight was thought to be the introduction of Cranmer's XLII Articles of Religion (1553). These were published as having been agreed upon by the Synod of London. However, at his trial Cranmer admitted that they had never been submitted to that body, or any other.[39]

The theological consequences of this absence of ecclesial sanction to new rites and service orders were profound. They could be used by the church willingly or unwillingly, but the church could not declare the 'intention' with which they were employed. As Dix commented:

> It is a commonplace of all theology, Roman or Anglican, that no public formulary of the Church be or ought to be interpreted by the private sense attached to it by the compilers. Its own contents and any

[38] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 31.
[39] Edward Pusey confirmed this in Tract 81 (*Catena Patrum*. No. IV – *Testimony of Writers in the later English Church to the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. with an historical account of the changes in the Liturgy as to the expression of that doctrine.*). 1st November, 1837, Ref: http://anglicanhistory.org/tracts/tract81.html (Accessed 03/07/16).

> official authoritative comment made upon it by the Church corporately are alone what determine its meaning.[40]

Cranmer was not seen by the Church of England as an authoritative source of doctrine, as Luther was to Lutheran Churches, and as Calvin was to Calvinism: the church was Anglican, not Cranmerian. The Church of England could only be committed to what it corporately and commandingly agrees was officially its policy. It was never obligated to any rites forced upon it by the state.

In his XLII Articles, Cranmer had denied that the church's sacraments have their effect *ex opera operato*. He had rejected infant baptism and refuted any form of Real Presence in the Eucharistic sacrament. The first opportunity given to the Church of England to express its doctrine came with the publication of the XXXIX Articles of 1563 (Cranmer died at the stake in 1556). These Articles were composed by the Church in Convocation and were prescribed by Act of Parliament in 1571. They comprised part of the Elizabethan *via media* and were loosely phrased to allow a variety of interpretations; they were not intended, in this version, to provide the clergy with a dogmatic definition of the faith. In general they repudiate Protestant teachings and practices but are also condemnatory of much of the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

A new Article (XXXVI) defended the Edwardine Ordinal against Protestant claims of superstition. It stated that any who had received Holy Orders using Cranmer's liturgies had been, 'rightly, orderly and lawfully consecrated and ordained'. Such doctrinal affirmations make it clear that it is entirely the intention of the church that gives validity and authority to what it does; it does not matter what the theological thinking was behind the construction of the service orders. Making comparisons between orthodox and heterodox persons and rites, Dix explained that:

> [rites] compiled by [for example] Nestorian and Monophysite heretics are in themselves quite valid and Rome therefore accepts the orders of those ordained by them in these heretical churches as valid orders. Because Cranmer never received from the Church of England any confirmation whatever of his personal opinions about ordination, his personal opinions are entirely irrelevant.[41]

It is against this background of liturgical revision and re-ordering of the church's sacraments that the post-Reformation Ordinal was viewed by the Catholic Church. *Apostolicae Curae* was a ruling by an influential authority, but was only pronounced after serious deliberation. Those in

[40] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 33.
[41] Ibid, 35.

the sacred ministry of the Anglican Church have always received episcopal ordination, enabling them to celebrate the Eucharist at the church's altars. This enabled all who came to participate in that sacrament of being, in full reality, part of the Catholic Church. Dix argued that, if Pope Leo was correct in his Bull, then the Anglican Church must disband until its senior clergy could obtain valid orders, wherever these may be available. The Eucharistic worship of the church must cease because it is not valid unless celebrated and consecrated by a valid priesthood.[42] Dix concluded, 'We cannot just ignore *Apostolicae Curae*, if only because it puts us as Anglicans in such an awkward dilemma – if the Pope was right about the facts'.[43]

Paul Rust makes it clear in his essay that Pope Leo XIII had no argument about the validity of those in the Church of England who were consecrated and ordained in the years between 1534 and 1550; the years of the schism between Rome and Canterbury, and the publication of Cranmer's first Ordinal.[44] Cranmer repudiated the Catholic doctrine of a sacrificing priesthood. Every Catholic ordination rite is comprised of prayers which express the priestly power of offering and of consecrating the Body and the. Blood of Our Saviour in a genuine sacrifice. These prayers nowhere suggest the Protestant doctrine, embraced by Cranmer, that the Eucharist is merely a Communion service. Thus the form of the Ordinal, apart from not accepting that the conferring of Holy Orders was a sacrament (cf Article XXV), nowhere gave any indication of the power that was conferred to the ordinand. Pope Leo therefore determined that Anglican orders were invalid because of defect of Form and defect of Intention. In arriving at his momentous declaration, Pope Leo carefully weighed earlier evidence from Popes Julius III (1487-1555), Paul IV (1476-1559) and Clement XI (1649-1721). These were all believed to have condemned as invalid all orders that resulted from the use of the Anglican Ordinal, compared with validity lawfully promoted by the Roman Pontifical.[45]

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[42] This definition of 'validity' affects those many Christian denominations that make no claim to the Apostolic Succession nor may have three-fold orders, yet which offer their congregations The Lord's Supper, in some guise. While not 'valid' in any absolute sense, these sacraments are doubtless efficacious to their recipients. It is not for mortal man to determine what God may or may not do with his sacraments.

[43] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 36.

[44] Paul R Rust, *Leo XIII's Decision on Anglican Orders: The Extrinsic Argument*, Ref: http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=6237&CFID=41852338&CFTOKEN=44636664 (Accessed 24/06/10).

[45] During the reign of Queen Mary (1553-1558) Pope Julius III, in an attempt to regularise the status of Anglican clergy, through Reginald Cardinal Pole (1500-1558), the Papal Legate and successor as Archbishop of Canterbury to Thomas Cranmer, found himself with no less that ten different classes of clergy; from those who were ordained before 1534 and the breach with Rome and those who had been ordained under the 1552 rite by bishops who had themselves been consecrated under the 1552 rite. Pole applied for faculties to correct these errors and eventually received an extension to his legatory powers, 'to exercise a dispensing and reconciling power in the cases of those who had been ordained without the observance of the accustomed form of the Church'. No mention was made of re-ordination, conditionally or unconditionally. Dix asserted that by so doing Julius III had accepted as valid both the 1550 and 1552 Ordinals. See: Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 72f.

Gregory Dix commented that the principal change in the 1662 Prayer Book Ordinal was to the wording of the form; in the change of, 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you remit ...' to, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins you remit ...'[46] Dix argued that Pope Leo's contention was that, in the years between 1550 and 1662, a valid episcopate had been lost to Anglicanism, and that even if the latter rite was more in keeping with Catholic doctrine, there were no 'valid' bishops to effect ordinations or consecrations.[47] He reduced the grounds for *Apostolicae Curae* to just two: defective in Intention and defective in Form in the 1550 and 1552 Ordinals. He suggested that the Papal Bull insinuated that the Anglican Church intended to institute an entirely different ministry while retaining the titles of bishop, priest and deacon.[48] In refuting this assertion he claimed that the Preface to the Ordinal (in both 1550 and 1552) contained a statement of unambiguous clarity of the Intention of the rite. Dix quoted from this:

> It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons: which Offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public *Prayer*, *with Imposition of Hands*, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority. And therefore, *to the intent that these Orders may be continued*, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England, no man (*not being at this present Bishop, Priest, or Deacon*) shall not execute any of them except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted according to the Form hereafter following (Dix's italics).[49]

Dix thought it unbelievable that *Apostolicae Curae* made no reference to the existence of this Preface. Whatever had been the Intention in the past (before the Henrician schism) was undoubtedly the Intention to be continued. The Preface makes it clear that such conditions had obtained, 'from the Apostles' time'. He was similarly scathing about the supposed grounds for condemnation under the aegis of Form. *Apostolicae Curae* argued that the rite did not state the order of priesthood being conferred and failed to mention the 'grace and power' of the Order; that of, 'consecrating and offering the true Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Eucharistic sacrifice'. Dix argued that it was not necessary to quote the title of the Order conferred, although it was

[46] A similar change was made to the Order for the Consecration of Bishops.
[47] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 68f.
[48] Ibid, 81f.
[49] *Book of Common Prayer*, Preface to the Ordinal.

named sufficiently in the two versions of the Ordinal under consideration (nine times in the case of Priesthood). Dix quoted a wide range of early ordination rites that made no overt reference to power being bestowed on the ordinand, including several Western sacramentaries and several Greek and Mozarabic liturgies.[50]

In conclusion it must be made clear that theologians, liturgists and ecclesiologists will continue to fulminate over the validity of Holy Orders; indeed they may debate interminably the meaning and significance of the word 'validity'. It seems to me that the debate does not revolve around Form and Intention, but merely on a belief in the Apostolic Succession. The priestly orders of the Anglican Church church are valid because all of the bishops in that church have, through tactile contact, through the laying-on-of-hands, had episcopal authority laid upon them in an unbroken line and process since apostolic times. All of the priests ordained by these bishops are and have been warranted to consecrate valid sacraments, and it is those sacraments that the Church, through faith, receives. Other Christian churches, denominations and sects will no doubt claim to have valid, 'priestly' orders, even though Anglican and Catholic (and Orthodox) churches might dispute these. Yet, if they deem their orders and their sacraments to be valid in their own eyes, then, through their faith in them, they undoubtedly are.

These differences of opinion are obviously a barrier to ecumenism and church unity. Although some Anglicans may happily accept the 'validity' of Roman Catholic orders, they may subscribe to all of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, they may be baptised and confirmed Christians, but if they prefer to be practicing members of the Anglican Church they are forbidden from receiving the sacrament from a Roman Catholic priest.[51] By contrast, the Anglican Church welcomes to its altar rails any and all who are members of Trinitarian churches, who are in 'good standing' with their churches, and wish to receive Communion.

There is, it seems, more to the debate about the structure and validity of Holy Orders than is immediately obvious.

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[50] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 83f.

[51] This prohibition does not seem to apply if, for any reason, persons cannot receive the sacraments because there is no local Anglican Church, or they are on the field of battle, or they are *in extremis*, etc.

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