

In this presentation we will be taking a look at a subject which has, in the last 3 centuries of Lutheran theological endeavor at least, been the subject of much debate and disagreement, namely, the office of the Holy Ministry. From the Congregationalist debates of 19<sup>th</sup> century Missouri to the most recent arguments about call to common mission, Lutheranism, in this country at least, has remained divided on this question.

Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn pointed out in his 1970 article *The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church*, included in ***Lutheran and Catholics in dialogue IV*** that Lutheran theologians have interpreted the statements of the symbolical books about the sacred ministry in 3 typical ways:

1. In its extreme form the first view holds that the sacred ministry is only the activity of the universal royal priesthood of believers. The exercise of this ministry has solemnly been committed to certain persons for the sake of good order and efficiency.
2. The opposite view point holds the sacred ministry is the contemporary form of the primitive apostolate and, as such, is the personal representative of Christ.
3. The third view occupies the middle ground between the two extremes and incorporates elements of both. The sacred ministry, the priesthood if you will, is a divine institution that is essential to the life of the church. The primary responsibility of this divine institution is the public proclamation and application of the law/gospel word of God and the right administration of the sacraments.

In my own theological journey, I have tended to gravitate between positions 2 and 3. In my most recent reflections including those which anticipated this presentation I have begun to move more toward position 2.

Since at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> century of the Christian era I believe that this represents the authentic catholic position. The question as I will pose: “Is it a Lutheran understanding that the pastor functions “*In Persona Christi*” in the Christian community? I propose to look at priesthood in the OT, the NT and the Earliest Church Fathers, then at the Lutheran Confessions and finally to draw some conclusions. This presentation does not purport to be new or innovative but is rather a synthesis of theological work by many theologians and a product of my own study.

I will begin my reflections with three presuppositions which I believe are critical to this discussion and the doing of theology in Lutheran circles. At least one of these presuppositions is not widely discussed in current Lutheran deliberations but I believe it is essential to the other two presuppositions of this paper.

## I) PRESUPPOSITIONS

- 1) The first of these presuppositions is the article on which the church stands or falls; “Justification by grace through faith outside the works of the law.” As with the doctrine of the ministry this principle of Lutheran theology has a long and varied history of interpretation. It is important to be clear about this phrase is used in this paper.

First of all, ala Robert Jenson’s seminal work in his book *Lutheranism*, and Gerhard Forde’s work in essays such as those found in *Christian Dogmatics* edited by Braaten and Jenson, justification by grace through faith cannot be understood as a methodological process that moves a person from one state to another but rather must be understood as the activity of God toward humanity. Justification is what God does to us, with us, in us and then finally through us by grace in faith. Ala George Linbeck it is a meta-linguistic description of salvation. It is a dynamic not a static principle which norms the speaking and doing of the gospel of Christ and serves to norm all activity of the church as it lives out its vocation to be the body of Christ, the instrument of God’s saving activity toward the whole of his fallen creation. Because justification is a dynamic principle it necessitates a dynamic and immanent God who is deeply and permanently involved in human and created existence.

Justification cannot be understood to be purely propositional. We are justified! Or we are made just! It is rather the ongoing work of Christ’s cross and resurrection by grace through faith to recreate us as God imagined us to be. It is a relational conception. Justification according to Robert Jenson is the divine address of God’s gospel good news. This address comes by grace through faith. Faith being the relationship established by God wherein we are made the addressed of God’s justifying gospel. Justification is an eternal and everlasting reality of God’s faithfulness, built upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ; the one who lives to die no more and thus the eternal High Priest.

Justified then is who and what we are as we are addressed by the saving gospel of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Justification is not something we have but is something that is done to us, for us, in us, through us. The continuity of justification rests in God’s never failing love. Growth in faith and grace comes in the acceptance of our continual need for it, our recognition of the gift, and our appropriation of that justifying work of grace through our ongoing participation in the justifying activity of God in word and sacrament. Justification so understood focuses all of Christian and human existence on our absolute dependence upon and need for God.

2) Luther recognized early on that using Justification by grace through faith as the theological foundation for expressing the realities of Christian existence required the abandonment of the scholastic tradition, represented in its most erudite form by the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas. The scholastic tradition was rooted in an Aristotelian philosophical framework. Luther recognized the need to return to a more biblical understanding of reality. As a biblical scholar Luther was well situated for this work. In the sacramental controversies of the early 1500's particularly with Ulrich Zwingli, Luther came to realize that justification by grace through faith required, as I said before, an immanent God, the God of the incarnation. In his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper 1528* Luther expounded the second of the underlying principles of our work together namely the principle of ubiquity. This principle originated in Luther's biblical understanding of both God and creation and his unflinching adherence to the incarnation of God in Christ which was essential to a justifying God.

This is not a principle with which most Lutherans are well acquainted but it lays the foundation for the doctrine of the real presence (essential to justification) and is not merely an argument about bread and wine but is most deeply an articulation of Chalcedonian Christology. Luther felt so strongly about this that in both the 1528 treatise and his last *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament, 1544* he boldly asserted that Zwingli was not a Christian and that he was no longer praying for him because he had died outside the faith. For Luther rejection of the real presence was rejection of the two natures of Christ and a denial of the hypostatic union of the second person of the Trinity.

*(a) "I testify on my part that I regard Zwingli as un-Christian, with all his teaching, for he holds and teaches no part of the Christian faith rightly. He is seven times worse than when he was a papist, according to the declaration in Matthew 9{12:45}, "the last state of the man becomes worse than the first." I make this testimony in order that I may stand blameless before God and the world as one who never partook of Zwingli's teaching, nor will I ever do so. "* LW vol. 37 pg 231

*(b) "Therefore I had to despair (as I still must) of the salvation of his soul, if he died with such a disposition, regardless of the fact that his disciples and successors made him out to be a saint and martyr. O Lord God, this man a saint and martyr! In this book he not only remains an enemy of the holy sacrament but also becomes a full-blown heathen. "* LW VOL. 38 289-290

These quotes show how integral Luther understood the real presence to be to the Christian life. It was a Christological as well as a sacramental concept for him which was essential to the confession of Jesus as Lord.

It is my assertion that the Christological content of the doctrine of the real presence which is rooted in the doctrine of ubiquity is foundational to all theological reflection on the part of Lutherans because it cuts to the heart of the person and work of God the Father through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* edited by Donald K. McKim in an article entitled *Luther's Contemporary Theological Significance* Robert Jenson argues that the most significant contribution which Luther and his theology can make to the ecumenical conversation today is this radical Christology which insists on the full communication of his human and divine attributes. The hypostatic union of the two natures (*Hypostasis* means, literally, that which lies beneath as basis or foundation.) was adopted by Chalcedon. Luther's Christological contribution to this theological principal was advance the doctrine of ubiquity as an explanation of the hypostatic union and was considered by Luther to be thoroughly biblical and Chalcedonian in its conception. Jenson writes:

*“As Luther is often still taught, his radical Christology is put on the periphery of what we should learn from him if indeed it is not regarded as an embarrassment. The matter did not appear so to Luther's earliest theological followers. The Lutheran theologians of the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries developed from his Christological remarks an immense conceptual structure which dominated their systems. A school of Lutheran philosophers was constructing an entire revisionary metaphysics to accommodate this Christology, until German scholarship was disrupted by the 30 years war.”*

Jenson is referring of course to theologians like Martin Chemnitz and his treatise “Two natures in Christ.” While this is not strictly the subject of our reflection this work on the *communicatio idiomata*, *genus maiestaticum*, and the *Deus absconditus* as a conceptual framework for Christology has been the foundation of the work of Finnish Lutherans in their dialogues with the Orthodox and have given us a new path on which to walk in our theological deliberations which will help us out of some of the mire that confronts the contemporary theological scene.

It is in this vein that I mention the presupposition of ubiquity which, basically stated conceptualizes the world in Trinitarian rather than Aristotelian terms. In simplistic terms Aristotle conceived the world as hierarchical; heaven, earth, hell. While the biblical and Trinitarian theology of Judaism and the Church conceived the cosmos and the world in organic terms.

As the icon of the Holy Trinity makes clear in its exposition of this biblical truth creation finds its true significance within the circle of divine love that is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The incarnation then is not God the Son moving from one location to another and from one state of existence to another, it is rather a creative act not unlike Genesis 1 in which order is called out of non-order and creation is defined in God as the object of the love of the Trinity out of sheer grace and love. The incarnation is the revelation of reality as God imagined it to be.

1. This would on the surface at least appear to be what John's Gospel was getting at in the opening prologue of that gospel.

*<sup>RSV</sup> John 1:1-3, 10-14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God;<sup>3</sup> all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not.<sup>11</sup> He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.<sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God;<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*

- (b) This is also represented by the cosmology of Ephesians

1. *<sup>RSV</sup> Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call,<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism,<sup>6</sup> one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.*
2. This understanding is reflected in the early church ***Irenaeus of Lyon Against the Heresies***
  - a. *Because we are His members, we are nourished by means of creation, the creation which He Himself gives us by making His sun to rise and sending the rain as He pleases (cf. Matt. 5:45). The cup which is part of creation, He declares to be his blood, by which our won blood is fortified and the bread, which is part of creation, He affirms to be His Body, by which our own body is fortified. So then, if the mixed cup and manufactured bread receive the Word of God and become the Eucharist, that is to say,*

*the Blood and Body of Christ, which fortify and build up the substance of our flesh, how can these people claim that the flesh is incapable of receiving God's gift of eternal life, when it is nourished by Christ's Body and blood and is His member?*

- (c) The biblical and early catholic witness understands all of existence to be an organic unity. Unity was and continues to be the watch word of early Christianity.
- 3) Finally, our third presupposition has to do with the centrality of the Word. This word is primarily understood to be a revealing word. The Word which orders creation reveals itself in the person of the illegitimate son of a carpenter from Nazareth. Jenson: John is not parodying Genesis 1, where God does not think the world into being but rather speaks it into being. As Luther said, consciously correcting the received interpretation, "Moses uses the word *amar*, which straightforwardly denotes the spoken word.... By a mere word that he speaks, God makes heaven and earth from nothing." By a mere word God reveals that this Jesus who stands on the banks of the river Jordan is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. By a mere word the Father declares through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit that this bread and this cup are the body of Christ. In the person of the God/Man, creation is restored as God imagined it to be from the beginning. Jesus is the very embodiment of the cosmos. Unlike scholastic theology which by its own conceptions must see Jesus as supernatural the biblical witness sees Jesus as the revelation of what is natural, normal, God-given, which because of sin now seems incredible. The function of the Word made flesh is to reveal the truth, full grace. God is not far off but everywhere, all in all. What is of paramount importance then in the language of Lutheran theology is the verbs and prepositions. Luther focuses on the "is" of the verba because the immanent present work of God on our behalf to justify us through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit is essential to life as God imagined it to be. God is at work for, in, with, through, and under Jesus as the second person of the eternal trinity to bring the way, the truth, and life to light. This is the power of the Word of God to order all things. In this sense then one speaks of God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient

This Word of God is a living, active, ultimately spoken word. "God said and it was so." It must then ultimately be an incarnate word, word en-fleshed, spoken and heard, received and lived. There must be a speaker and a hearer. Luther called the church a mouth house where the creative word of the Father is spoken by his Son by the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth. It is only in the Word that creation

can truly be known and seen. It is within this framework and these presuppositions then that we will consider the office of priest/pastor/ministry.

## II) PRIESTHOOD IN THE OT

- 1) The OT is clear from the beginning that God worked through persons. Adam is in fact God's representative in Creation. *Genesis 1: 26-31*. Adam's role is to embody God's creative activity in the creation. He is the priest of God's created order, who in the image of God reflects to the creation the true relationship of Creation and Creator.
- 2) In the earliest strata of the OT it would appear that the office of priest was filled by the elder זָקֵן (including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) which literally meant "bearded one." Probably a reference to those who were aged in the community. At *Ex 24:14* they offered judgment while Moses was up on the mountain. They laid hands on the head of the sin offering for the people at *Lev. 4:25*. They stood with the judges at the ark for the reading of the Law at *Josh 8:23*. The LXX translates this term *elder* as πρεσβυτερος a term picked up by the NT for ministers of the gospel.
  - (a) The 70 elders /presbyters of *Ex 24* and *Num 11* were not Aaronic priests. They come at *Ex 29-30* and *Num 11:16-30*. Priesthood per se then began with Aaron and the Levites. It should be noted that this priesthood was never understood in the OT to be in conflict with Israel's function as a holy and royal priesthood. They were understood to be complimentary. That this office of Aaronic priesthood was understood to be distinct from the universal priesthood of Israel can be seen from the fact that at
  - (b) *Ex. 28:2-39* they are given distinct vestments,
  - (c) At *Ex. 29:7* there was a special anointing,
  - (d) At *Ex. 28:43ff* they were assigned distinct functions especially in the offering of sacrifices and the Day of Atonement,
  - (e) At *Ex. 28:43* this priesthood was also restricted to the unblemished descendants of Aaron,
  - (f) In this framework the Levites were auxiliary helpers to Aaron. According to *Deut. 39: 9* leaders like Joshua and the judges and finally the kings of Israel were also anointed by the priests as a sign of their office for the people,
  - (g) In Vol. 9 of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* pg. 429 Eduard Lohse is quoted:
    - *"Institution into office is also accomplished by the laying of hands. One reads in P that Moses laid hands on Joshua and thus appointed him his successor. The laying on of hands is here a rite of transfer, since Joshua*

*is thereby endowed with the power he would need to discharge the office. According to Dt. 34:9 he was filled with the spirit of wisdom. The transferring of this gift took place before the assembled congregation in order to ratify publicly the legitimacy of the succession, Nu. 27:21-23. After the model of the institution of Joshua, and with the express appeal to it the Rabbis developed their own practice of ordination.*

- 3) David Chytraeus (16<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran theologian) called the Levitical Sacrifices “sacraments” in that they were connected with forgiveness. In his treatise “On Sacrifice” he calls them marks of the OT Church. In Leviticus 1-8 all Israel is involved but priests celebrate.
- 4) The Aaronic benediction was understood in the OT to be the conferral of God’s blessing, grace and peace. It was literally understood to be God speaking and thereby actualizing the blessing. (which no one has time to wait for in our church anymore). The word here was יהוה. So in the blessing the priest literally put the name of Yahweh on the people which is why the church added the Trinitarian formulae.
- 5) The priesthood of Aaron was Yahweh’s priesthood. What was to be done or not done was mandated by God. Yahweh jealously guarded this priesthood and visited fatal consequences on those who offered “unauthorized fire.”
  - *RSV Leviticus 10:1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put fire in it, and laid incense on it, and offered unholy fire before the LORD, such as he had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup> And fire came forth from the presence of the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said, 'I will show myself holy among those who are near me, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.*
- 6) The office was not to be exercised by any to whom it had not been given. It was never asserted that as a member of the royal priesthood of Israel one could function in the Aaronic priesthood. The connection between priesthood and sacrifice was absolute in Israel. (at *1 Samuel 15* Saul is cut off for violating this absolute).
- 7) Israel was not to improve upon what Yahweh had given. What God gave the Aaronic priesthood to do they faithfully were to do and the people were faithfully to receive it.
- 8) Both the priesthood of Aaron and the priesthood of all Israel were established by God, they were complimentary. The appointment of a priesthood, a judge or a king was seen as an act of grace not discrimination against those not chosen. This special priesthood did nothing to diminish the priesthood of Israel; in fact, it was given to serve it.

## II) PRIESTHOOD IN THE NT

1) One of the most significant texts in the NT for our topic is that found at *John 20:21-23*. It goes without saying that this has been a controversial text in the history of biblical study. The relationship between this text and what is recorded in the Lk/Acts tradition with the descent of the Holy Spirit has occasioned much discussion. It should be noted that the Acts account at least of the descent of the Holy Spirit serves as an inspiring of the whole community which, of course includes the apostles, but as Acts makes clear there were more people present than just the apostles. In John's gospel, the context seems to indicate that the "disciples" here refers to the 12 the apostles. It would appear that there were two distinct purposes present in the two accounts. The Acts account has as its purpose the beginning of the church. While the Jn account has as its purpose the empowering of the 12.

### 2) Reasons

- A) Jesus commissions the "disciples" for a specific task even as he was commissioned for a special task by the Father. As Jesus was sent into the world to forgive sins so the disciples are sent with authority (*Jn 17:18*) to forgive and proclaim life.
- B) At *Jn 20:21* Jesus is the sent one *αποστολος* of the Father. Whoever rejects him rejects the Father, *Jn 5: that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.* The disciples are *αποστολοι* of Jesus those who reject them and their word reject Jesus. Jesus then bestows on the apostles *the* Spirit that begets him in the womb of the virgin. This gift qualifies them precisely as apostles for the service to which they are now commissioned. This emulates the pattern for Jesus himself at **RSV John 1:32** And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. As well as **RSV John 3:34** For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit; This is the spirit that the apostles received breathed on them directly from him. The Spirit given here is for a specific task. This inspiring qualifies them as apostles and therefore as personal representatives of Christ and his authority to forgive sins. The spirit is given here for a ministry of both absolution and judgment.
- C) The 1943 addition of "Luther's Small Catechism" published by the Missouri Synod, quotes the text of John 20 and then asks: "What do you believe according to these words? I believe that, when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, especially when they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and again when they absolve those who repent of their sins and are willing to amend, this is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself." Pg 18 *Small Catechism* St. Louis Missouri,

CPH 1965 It is clear from this commentary that this is how, in this catechism at least, this passage was understood.

D) Lest however we think this catechism too far off the mark it should be noted that AC 28 5-7 the article on Bishops, the first written for the AC reads:

*(a) Our teachers assert that according to the Gospel the power of keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. 6 For Christ sent out the apostles with (ta-82) this command, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).*

(b) This statement references the text from John to assert biblical foundation. Clearly Augustana understood this passage to refer to the apostles and not the general Christian assembly.

E) At *1 Tim 4:14; 5:22 2Tim1:6-7* it appears that the laying on of hands became the standard way of signifying the gift of the Holy Spirit for this special office. Dr. David Scaer in his treatise *Ordination: Human Rite or Divine Ordinance* makes the following points after looking at these three passages:

- (i) Ordination as a ceremony through which persons are admitted into the office of pastor, (indicated as  $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ ) is mentioned 3 times in the Pastoral Epistles.
- (ii) In all 3 citations the laying on of hands is mentioned as part of the rite.
- (iii) Those actively participating in the rite are only those who already possess the office into which the recipient is being ushered.
- (iv) Through the activity of this rite, a  $\chi\eta\rho\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha$  ' gift or endowment, is given to the recipient.
- (v) The gift is given at one time and in one act. No repetition of the act is mentioned.
- (vi) The gift exists continually within the recipient.
- (vii) The gift may fall into disuse and be revitalized by its possessor.
- (viii) Though the gift is given through the laying on of the hands, God is the giver of the gift.
- (ix) The gift is not available to any Christian for the asking but is to be given to those who have met certain criteria.
- (x) Ordination is a rite whose misapplication carries a threat.
- (xi) It is a rite through which those who bestow it share in the ministry of the one who receives it.

- (xii) The gift given in the rite is identified as the Holy Spirit bestowing certain gifts.
  - (xiii) It is a rite which is encompassed within an apostolic command.
  - (xiv) It is a rite which Paul enjoins upon Timothy to continue. Paul is not giving instructions for a one-time limited situation.
- F) It is clear from Timothy that for the NT, ordination was at the heart of the proclamation of the gospel. The real presence of Christ as the living word to, for, in, with, and under the community was rooted in the presence of Christ to, for, in, with and under the office holder of apostle/bishop/presbyter.

### 3) 1 Corinthians 4:1

- *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

Is now and always has been understood by orthodox Christianity as a reference to the NT priesthood. Οικονομοισ (stewards, economy, work) of the μυστηριων is in all likelihood a early reference to the sacraments.

A) The term Οικονομοισ economy, or work was in subsequent theology applied to the working of the divine Trinity. Thus Paul Peter, and probably Apollos, are here being designated by Paul as participants in the ecumenical work of the Trinity. Administering the μυστηριων of divine presence for the renewal of the world as God imagined it to be. Even CFW Walther cites this passage in discussion of ministry in *Church and Ministry*.

### 4) <sup>RSV</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:4-6

*<sup>4</sup> Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, <sup>6</sup> who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

A) The term διαφηκν covenant is the same word for covenant found in the institution narratives of the gospels and suggests a Eucharistic reference. In the context of OT priesthood it would appear here that Paul is asserting that he is a priest/minister of a new covenant which the gospels clearly identified with Baptism and the Eucharist.

B) Thus like the Aaronic priesthood before him Paul considers himself a minister of the new covenant. This is his vocation or calling. Note also that competence comes not from Paul or training but from God. So Paul asserts he is an apostle from God.

- C) Much of 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 2-6 deals with the ministry.
- (i) <sup>RSV</sup> **2 Corinthians 2:17** *For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.*
  - (ii) <sup>RSV</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:18** *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- D) Ministry is the office of reconciliation, the office of the cross and resurrection, forgiving, retaining sins. In Lutheran terms office of the law gospel word of God.
- E) <sup>RSV</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:23**  
*For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,*  
Paul's phraseology here emphasizes the εἰ(ω) the I which is not necessary in the Gk. The mentioning of the I before the Lord Jesus would suggest emphasis. The Lord's Supper does not exist in abstraction. The doing of it is handed on through the doing of it by the one to whom the doing of it was entrusted and the doer in turn entrusts it to others.  
According to Lucien Deiss in the *Spring Time of the Liturgy* Paul is quoting from the church's early liturgy. He connects apostolicity with the handing on of the tradition of the supper which is here understood to be one of the roles of an Apostle. They are the ones who hand on what they have received from the Lord. (emphasis on unity and continuity again)
- F) Paul emphasizes παραδοσις tradition at *1Cor 11:2, 2 Th 2:15/ 3:6; 1Cor 11:23; 15:1-11; at Col 2:8* he makes reference to the traditions of men. So there are two kinds of traditions-- one from the Lord the other from men. Only the Lord is reliable. This is what the apostle/minister/bishop/presbyter hands on and this is to be received by the church as from Christ himself.
- G) Paul's points then
- (i) Apostle is representative of Christ and steward of the mysteries *1 Cor 4:1*
  - (ii) Baptism and the Supper are fundamental to making a person a member of the body of Christ *1Cor 11:25-27; 12:13*. The most recent Common Statement Lutheran Orthodox ecumenical dialogue states:

- *“the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist as the “fulfillment of the Christians” participation in the life of Christ and his church through the eating his body and drinking his blood in the Holy Eucharist. They also affirm that the Eucharist and believers’ participation in it remain a mystery that transcends human understanding. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of the New Covenant instituted by Christ himself. As such it is an indispensable part of the life of the church, which is the body of Christ.*

This would seem to ring true with Paul’s understanding of the matter.

(iii) There is an inseparable connection between the supper and office of Apostle.

(a) The term to do ΠΟΙΕΙΤΕ carries considerable theological freight

(i) The LXX translates the Hebrew כָּעָשׂוּ with ποιησθε do as it relates to the ordination of Aaron (*Ex 29:35*). This term is also used of the sacrificial offerings of *Num 15: 11-13*. כָּעָשׂוּ is the command to do related to the covenant (*Lev19:37; Dt 6:18*)

(ii) This is the meaning of do in the dominical institution at Matt 26:18 when Jesus says I am going to celebrate the Passover the word is ποιῶ His command to do is made to the apostles this is the only place that it is used in this way in connection with a cultic action.

H) As a Passover meal the responsibility to preside is that of the pater familias. This is not a duty assigned at random. That is, Jesus’ role in the institution Do this encompasses that role. The presider acts in the stead of Christ at the community’s meal.

I) There are no other mandates for apostles/bishops/ministers/presbyters in the NT other than to preach, baptize and celebrate the Eucharist.

### III) PRIESTHOOD IN THE EARLIEST CHURCH

1) There is only fragmentary written evidence of the earliest church’s practice.

A) We have no Sunday liturgies for the 1<sup>st</sup> 300 years of church history. We can only extrapolate from secondary sources which describe the liturgical practice of the time as to the content of Christian liturgy in this period.

B) We have scant few documents. 1) the Didache the date of which is still disputed. (*Dr. Artur Voobus a leading Lutheran scholar on this Syriac document dated it before the Gospels.*) 2) The Didascalia the date and origin of which is also much debated. 3) Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus ca 215 4) Apostolic Constitutions ca 375

C) We have basically 3 church fathers to rely on-- Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Justin Martyr.

2) Clement of Rome

A) In his letter of 95-96 to Corinth, Clement draws a clear distinction between clergy and laity.

*(i) Now the offering and the ministrations λειτουργιας He commanded to be performed with care, and not to be done rashly or in disorder, but at fixed times and seasons. And where and by whom He would have them performed, He Himself fixed by his supreme will: that all things be done with piety according to His good pleasure might be acceptable to his will. They therefore that make their offerings at the appointed seasons are acceptable and blessed” for while they follow the institutions of the Master they cannot go wrong. For unto the high-priest αρχιερει his proper services ιδιαι λειτουργιαι have been assigned, and to the priests ιερευσιν their proper office ιδιος τοπος is appointed, and upon the Levites” λειτταιας their proper ministrations ιδιαι διακονιαι are laid. The layman are bound by the layman’s ordinances.*

(ii) It should be noted that the language used here by Clement clearly connects the NT office of the ministry with that of the OT Priests and Levites.

(iii) The distinction between lay and clergy is clear though the content of that distinction is not laid out.

(iv) Clearly Clement understood that the liturgy was done by those whom the Lord had appointed.

3) Ignatius of Antioch ca.110 AD

A) Ignatius writes in the period of the demise of the last eyewitnesses of the Lord and his resurrection. He wrote several letters during his own imprisonment awaiting martyrdom. In these writings we catch a glimpse of how the church progressed through time after the eye witnesses had died off.

B) In that setting Ignatius began to equate the Lord and the Bishop, and a number of statements enjoining obedience to the bishop as a vicar of Christ or of the Father, and referring to the presbytery as corresponding to the apostles may be found frequently in his letters.

*(i) “Be obedient to the bishop... as Jesus Christ was to the Father...., When ye are obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ....ye are living...after Jesus Christ....do nothing without the bishop, but be ye obedient also to the presbytery..... Do nothing without the Bishop, I am devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, the presbyters and deacons.*

(ii) In his letter to the Philadelphians he writes: *‘Do ye all 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 baptize or to hold love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid.*

C) There are several things to be noted from this quote. First the relationship between bishop and presbyters and the people is like unto that between Jesus and the church and apostles and the church. This line follows in development the NT indications that the apostles and their successors acted in the stead and by the command of Christ as the church moved through time from one generation to the next. It is also clear that this succession and unity was intended to assure the people that what they received and what was done in their midst was of Christ and therefore sure and valid. That is they could be confident that what they received and what they were taught was from the Lord and to be trusted. (unity and continuity hold the community together)

4) Justin M artyr ca 145-160 Rome

A) Justin Martyr the most important of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Greek apologists limits the offering of sacrifice (eucharist) to priests. In his On Christian Worship (ca. 150 AD) Justin provides us with one of the earliest accounts of the Eucharist.

(i) *Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen.....And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent when they carry away a portion.*

(i) *“And this food is called among us εὐχριστουμένη, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that these things which we*

*teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our savior, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which blessed by the prayer of His word, and from our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of me, this is my body"; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "this is my blood"; and gave it to them alone."*

- B) This letter written to pagans does not use the term bishop/presbyter but president. This is probably due to the fact that bishop was a technical term of the church and Justin sought to be clear. It also reflects the fact that the terms are not yet wholly fixed. However it is clear that there is a distinction between the one who gives thanks, distributes and gives affirmation. (which is the role of the people). According to Justin the president instructs, exhorts, gives thanks. The emphasis is on the physical and organic unity of the action which is neither hypothetical or invisible. It is, as Luther emphasized, the ongoing extension of the person and work of Christ.
- C) It also follows Paul's teaching about the body of Christ and relation between the Eucharist, baptism and that reality.
- 5) We turn now to the earliest written liturgical texts
- A) Didache ca 100 (Voobus) AD much disputed
- (i) Earliest example of a ecclesiastical document resembling a church order.  
Chapter 15 of this document provides for men to be placed into the office of Bishop and deacon
- (a) "Elect for yourselves, therefore, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, humble men and not lovers of money, truthful and proven; for they also serve λειτουργουσι you in the ministry' λειτουργιαν of the prophets and teachers. Do not, therefore, despise them; for they are your honorable men, together with the prophets and teachers.*
- (ii) According to the Didache the liturgical service of the community was the responsibility of the bishop and deacons and reflects an early stage where

offices are still in flux. This is probably written in the period before presbyters emerged in the church.

(iii) This quote however is consistent with the practices and understandings that are seen elsewhere in the church coming out of the NT period.

B) Another important text is the Didascalia its origins are uncertain.

(i) The Syriac version is the only extant copy of this tradition that we have; there are references here to both Bishops and presbyters.

*(a) “ But do you honor to bishops, who have loosed you from sins, who by the water regenerated you, who filled you with the Holy Spirit, who reared you with the word as with milk, who bred you up with doctrine, who confirmed you with admonition, and made you partake of the Holy Eucharist of God, and made you partakers and joint heirs of the promise of God.”*

(ii) The language used here to describe the bishop is that used to describe the role of Christ in the NT. By making the people partakers of the Eucharist they are made partakers of the promises of God. The focus here is on the office not the person. This is reflected in a quote from the Didascalia concerning visiting bishops.

*(a) “And if a bishop should come from another congregation, let him sit with the bishop; and let him accord him the honor of his rank, even as himself. And to thou, O bishop, invite him to discourse to thy people; for the exhortation and admonition of strangers is very profitable, especially as it is written: “There is no prophet that is acceptable in his own place.” And when you offer the oblation let him speak. But if he is wise and gives the honor to thee, and is unwilling to offer, at least let him speak over the cup.”*

This church order makes provision for joint celebration because the essence of the office is preaching and presiding at the Eucharist. Honor is due to a Bishop in his function not in his person. The joint celebration was the way in which one recognized this reality.

C) The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus ca 215

(i) I will not spend time debating whether this document came from Rome or was written by Hippolytus but it is informative about the understanding of bishop and presbyter.

(ii) This was a highly influential document in the early church. It was probably originally written in Greek. In Ethiopia it is still referred to as the Anaphora of the Apostles indicating how highly it is regarded. There are no extant texts in Greek. We have Latin, and later Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic versions. We

are fairly certain that it does not represent practice everywhere but it attempts to give a picture of the tradition at the time it was written.

- (iii) It begins with an ordination rite for bishop. In that rite the bishop is entrusted with the authority to remit sins, and celebrate the supper which is done immediately after the ordination in this rite.
- (iv) This order suggests that the salutation “The Lord be with you and with thy Spirit” was a reference to the Spirit bestowed in ordination. This appears to accord well with <sup>RSV</sup> **Romans 8:26**

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

- (i) *While all give their consent, the bishops shall lay their hands upon him, and the presbytery shall stand by in silence. All indeed shall keep silent, praying in their heart for the descent of the Spirit. Then one of the bishops who are present shall, at the request of all, lay hands on him who is ordained bishop and pray as follows, saying:*

*God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who dwellest on high yet hast respect to the lowly, who knowest all things before they come to pass. Thou has appointed the borders of thy church by thy grace, predestinating from the beginning the righteous race of Abraham. And making them princes and priests, and leaving not thy sanctuary without a ministry, thou has from the beginning of the world been pleased to be glorified among those whom thou hast chosen. Pour forth now that power, which thine, of thy royal Spirit, which through thy beloved Son Jesus Christ thou gavest to thy holy apostles, who established the church in every place, the church which thou hast sanctified unto unceasing glory and praise of thy name. Thou who knowest the hearts of all, grant to this thy servant, whom thou has chosen to be bishop, (to feed thy holy flock) and to serve as thy high priest without blame, ministering night and day, to propitiate thy countenance without ceasing and to offer thee the gifts of thy Holy church. And by the spirit of high-priesthood to have authority to remit sins according to thy commandment, to assign the lots according to thy precept, to loose every bond according to thy authority with which thou gavest to thy*

*holy apostles, and to please thee in meekness and purity of heart, offering to thee an odour of sweet savour. Through thy Servant Jesus Christ our Lord.....”*

(b) In this prayer the bishop is entrusted by the Holy Spirit with the authority to remit sins and loose every bond. Ordination bestows this authority on the one who holds this apostolic office. This is the spirit of the office of bishop. In the ordination for presbyters there is an invocation of the spirit of presbyter. It is clear from this ordination rite, following John 20, that the laying on of hands is seen as inspiring one, to serve in the stead of Christ, as the absolver and celebrant of the mystery of Christ's redemption for the world.

D) Apostolic Constitutions ca 375

(i) Probably Arian in origin. It belongs to the west Syrian liturgical tradition of which the eastern liturgy of St James is the contemporary expression. It is probably based on the Didascalia. It holds the same position as the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus. Bishop/Presbyter is a sin forgiving, presiding office founded on Spirit gift imparted by the laying on of hands.

*(a) “We also Father, thank Thee for the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for us, and for His precious body, whereof we celebrate this representation αὐτετύπηα as himself appointed us, “to show forth his death.”*

(ii) It is the role of the bishop as the chief presider of the Eucharist to show forth the death of Christ in, with, and through the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

*(a) Do thou, by us, (other bishops) pour down the influence (δυναμὴν power) of Thy free Spirit, through the mediation of Thy Christ... Grant by Thy name, ... that this Thy servant, whom thou hast chosen to be a bishop, may feed Thy holy flock, and discharge the office of an high priest to Thee.... Grant to him, O Lord Almighty, through thy Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that he may have power to remit sins according to Thy command; ...to offer to Thee a pure and unbloody sacrifice, which by Thy Christ Thou has appointed as the mystery of the new covenant.*

(iii) Clearly only those who are inspired in such fashion can preside for they stand in the stead of Christ.

(iv) Here also the sacrament is designated as a mysterion. This church order also introduces the Epiclesis- the calling down of the Holy Spirit- suggesting that the Spirit filled prayer for the Spirit is what constitutes the Lord's Supper.

IV) MINISTRY IN THE CONFESSIONS *(this material is drawn from Dr. Arthur Carl Peipkorns work in Lutherans and Catholics in dialogue IV The sacred ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church pg 101)*

1) The primary confessional sources for the office of the ministry, are articles 5, 14, and 28, of the AC (1530), Articles 13, 14, and 28 of the Ap (1531), Article 4 in Part Two and Articles 9 and 10 in Part Three of the Smalcald Articles (1536-1538), Treatise on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope (1537). All but the Smalcald Articles are from the pen of Melanchthon not Luther. There are in these documents a number of principles that should help in the historical context just presented to clarify a Lutheran understanding of the ministry.

A) First Principal: The church consists of both clergy and laity.

(i) According to LC Decalog 8<sup>th</sup> commandment

*(ii) 262 Wherever there are godly preachers and Christians, they must endure having the world call them heretics, apostates, even seditious and accursed scoundrels. Moreover, the Word of God must undergo the most shameful and spiteful persecution and blasphemy; it is contradicted, perverted, misused, and misinterpreted. But let this pass; it is the blind world's nature to condemn and persecute the truth and the children of God and yet consider this no sin.*

(iii) SC Table of Duties

(iv) *Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers*

*(a) "A bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way. He must not be a recent convert," etc. (1 Tim. 3:2-6).*

(v) *Duties Christians Owe Their Teachers and Pastors*

*(a) "Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7). "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). "Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:6, 7). "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,' and 'The laborer deserves his wages'" (1 Tim. 5:17, 18). "We beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and who are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to (ta-355)esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at*

*peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb. 13:17).*

(vi) FC SD 10, 10

*(vii) 10 We believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders\* of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God.*

2) According to AC 5

A) God instituted the holy ministry of the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The purpose of this ministry is that persons might be justified by grace through faith through the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. The divine word and sacraments are the means by which God gives the Holy Spirit that justifies by grace through faith when and where God wills in those who are addressed by this saving word. Lutherans reject the position that the Holy Spirit is received by purely interior preparation, meditation, and activity without the external word and activity of God personally communicated through the sacred office of the ministry.

*(i) 1 To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. 2 Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. 3 And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this.*

*(a) 4 Condemned are the Anabaptists and others\* who teach that the Holy Spirit comes to us through our own preparations, thoughts, and works without the external word of the Gospel.*

3) According to AC 14 and Ap 13, 7-9, FC Ep 12, 22; SD 12, 30

A) The content of the sacred ministry is the responsible public proclamation of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments. This is not the offering of an expiatory sacrifice which earns forgiveness of sins for the living and the dead. The sacred ministry is the living Word preached and heard.

*(i) XIV. Ecclesiastical Order*



*exclusively to the church, and he adds that they are given for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ. Where the true church is, therefore, the right of electing and ordaining ministers must of necessity also be.*

5) According to AC 28

A) The confessions see the ministry chiefly in dynamic and functional terms. Yet the confessions are mindful of the fact that apart from its incumbents the sacred ministry is an abstraction. The authority of Bishops is authority to preach the Gospel, to retain sins, and administer the sacraments.

*(a) AC 28, 5 Our teachers hold that according to the Gospel the power of keys or the power of bishops is a power or command of God to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. (ta-82) 6 For Christ sent out the apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 7 According to Mark 16:15 he also said, "Go and preach the gospel to the whole creation."*

(ii) We should note here that John 20 is quoted in support of the confessional provision.

(iii) The ministry of the divine word and sacraments is committed to bishops as bishops

*(a) AC 28, 21 Hence according to the Gospel (or, as they say, by divine right) no jurisdiction belongs to the bishops as bishops (that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and sacraments) except to forgive sins, to reject doctrine which is contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the fellowship of the church ungodly persons whose wickedness is known, doing all this without human power, simply by the Word. 22 Churches are therefore bound by divine law to be obedient to the bishops according to the text, "He who hears you hears me."*

(iv) Priests are called to teach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people.

*(a) Ap 13, 9 Men are not justified, therefore, because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ if they believe that it has redeemed them. Thus priests are not called to make sacrifices that merit forgiveness of sins for the people, as in the Old Testament, but they are called to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people.*

B) According to Tr

(i) The Gospel gives those who rule over the churches the command to teach the Gospel, to remit sins, and to administer the sacraments... This authority is by divine right is common to all who rule over churches whether they are called pastors, presbyters or bishops.

*(a) Tr 60-61 The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. 61 By the confession of all, even our adversaries, it is evident that this power belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters,\* or bishops.*

(ii) The church has the divinely imposed responsibility not merely of proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments but also of choosing, calling and ordaining fit persons to carry out these function.

*(i) Tr 67, 72 For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers. 72 From all these facts it is evident that the church retains the right of electing and ordaining ministers. Wherefore, when the bishops are heretics or refuse to administer ordination, the churches are by divine right compelled to ordain pastors and ministers for themselves. And it is the wickedness and tyranny of the bishops that give occasion to schism and discord, for Paul commands that bishops who teach and defend impious doctrines and impious forms of worship should be regarded as anathema.\**

(iii) God wills to preach and to work through the human beings that the church has chosen and ordained to the sacred ministry

C) According to the Ap

(i) To be effective, the gospel must actually be preached and the sacraments must be administered. But these are precisely the functions the confessions attribute to the incumbents of the ministry.

*(a) Ap 13 11-13, 11 If ordination is interpreted in relation to the ministry of the Word, we have no obligation to calling ordination a sacrament. The ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises: "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" (Rom. 1:16), again, "My word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). 12 If ordination is interpreted this*

*way, we shall not object either to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament. The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it. 13 It is good to extol the ministry of the Word with every possible kind of praise in opposition to the fanatics who dream that the Holy Spirit does not come through the Word (ta-213) but because of their own preparations. They sit in a dark corner doing and saying nothing, but only waiting for illumination, as the enthusiasts taught formerly and the Anabaptists teach now.*

- (ii) The ministry is a form of service not a source of privilege, prestige, and power. The linkage of ministry with service goes all the way back to Eph 4:12. This service is often seen by some Lutheran theologians in strictly functional terms and eliminates all distinctions between lay people and ordained pastors. They argue that the office exists only in the actual discharge of the duties never as an order in the church. This does not accord with the biblical and historical understanding of the church catholic. Art 5 of the AC was not disputed by the Roman party at Augsburg and so they clearly could not have understood it in this way. This position is not born out by the confessions either. The Lutheran Confessions see the ministry as both an office and an order or estate within the church. This differentiation does carry with it any narrowly clerical or hierarchical implications.
- (a) *Ap 13 11-12, 11 If ordination is interpreted in relation to the ministry of the Word, we have **no obligation to calling ordination a sacrament**. The ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises: "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" (Rom. 1:16), again, "My word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). 12 If ordination is interpreted this way, we shall not object either to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament. The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it.*
- (b) *Ap 28, 13 We like the old division of power into **the power of the order** and **the power of jurisdiction**.\* Therefore **a bishop has the power of the order**, namely, the ministry of Word and sacraments. He also has **the power of jurisdiction**, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty*

*of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution.*

*(c) I The papists had neither authority nor right to prohibit marriage and **burden the divine estate of priests** with perpetual celibacy. On the contrary, they acted like antichristian, tyrannical, and wicked scoundrels, and thereby they gave occasion for all sorts of horrible, abominable, and countless sins, in which they are still involved.*

D) Although it is not a confessional document Luther makes is clear in his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper 1528* that he considers the office of priest to be a holy order.

*(i) But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government.<sup>282</sup> All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and-estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God's sight.<sup>1</sup>*

*(ii) In the proclamation and application of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments the officiant or celebrant acts in the place of God and in the stead of Christ not in his/her own person.*

*(a) Ap 7, 28, 47 In accordance with the Scriptures, therefore, we maintain that the church in the proper sense is the assembly of saints who truly believe the Gospel of Christ and who have the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, we grant that the many hypocrites and evil men who are mingled with them in this life share an association in the outward marks, are members of the church according to this association in the outward marks, and therefore hold office in the church. When the sacraments are administered by unworthy men, this does not rob them of their efficacy. For they do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the church's call, as Christ*

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282 Luther does not always name the “orders,” i.e. the basic social units, in just this fashion. Cf. *Large Catechism*, Fourth Commandment, 158, and Melancthon's *Augsburg Confession*, Art. XVI.

<sup>1</sup>Luther, M. (1999, c1961). *Vol. 37: Luther's works, vol. 37 : Word and Sacrament III* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

*testifies (Luke 10:16), "He who hears you hears me." When they offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead. Christ's statement teaches us this in order that we may not be offended by the unworthiness of ministers. 47 They have approved the entire eighth article.\* There we confess that hypocrites and evil men have been mingled with the church and that the sacraments are efficacious even when evil men administer them, for ministers act in Christ's stead and do not represent their own persons, according to the word (Luke 10:16), "He who hears you hears me."*

*(b) Ap 13, 12 12 If ordination is interpreted this way, we shall not object either to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament. The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it.*

(iii) Baptism is an act of God through the priest

*(a) LC Baptism 10 10 To be baptized in God's name is to be baptized not by men but **by God himself**. Although it is performed by men's hands, it is nevertheless truly **God's own act**. From this fact everyone can easily conclude that it is of much greater value than the work of any man or saint. For what work can man do that is greater than God's work?*

(iv) Absolution is to be believed as nothing less than a voice sounding from heaven that is from God himself. The confessor who administers absolution is ordinarily an ordained clergy

*(a) Ap 12, 40 Because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly forgive sin before him, according to the statement (Luke 10:16), "He who hears you, hears me." Therefore we must believe the voice of the one absolving no less than we would believe a voice coming from heaven.*

*(b) Ap 12 109 Maybe someone will quote James 5:16, "Confess your sins to one another." But this does not speak of the specific confession to be made to priests but of the reconciliation of brethren to each other, for it commands that the confession be mutual.*

*(c) 176 It is only on earth, however, that the keys have the power to bind and loose, according to the statement (Matt. 16:19), "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." As we have said above, the keys do not have the power to impose penalties or to institute forms of worship; they only have the command to forgive the sins of those who are converted and to denounce and excommunicate those who refuse to be converted. Just as "to loose"*

*means to forgive sins, so "to bind" means not to forgive sins. It is of a spiritual kingdom that Christ is speaking. God's command is **that the ministers of the Gospel** absolve those who are converted, according to the statement (2 Cor. 10:8),*

*(v) Tr 60 The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent. 61 By the confession of all, even our adversaries, it is evident that this power belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters,\* or bishops.*

V) The confessions imply that the celebrant of the sacrament of the altar will be an ordained pastor.

- (i) AC 24,34 German. Inasmuch, then, as the Mass is not a sacrifice to remove the sins of others, whether living or dead, but should be a Communion in which the priest and others receive the sacrament for themselves, it is observed among us in the following manner: On holy days, and at other times when communicants are present, Mass is held and those who desire it are communicated. 35 Thus the Mass is preserved among us in its proper use, the use which was formerly observed in the church and which can be proved by St. Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 11:20ff. and by many statements of the Fathers. 36 For Chrysostom reports how the priest stood every day, inviting some to Communion and forbidding others to approach.\* 37 The ancient canons also indicate that one man officiated and communicated the other priests and deacons, 38 for the words of the Nicene canon read, "After the priests the deacons (tr-69) shall receive the sacrament in order from the bishop or priest."\**
- (ii) 40 Since, therefore, no novelty has been introduced which did not (ta-61) exist in the church from ancient times, and since no conspicuous change has been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass except that other unnecessary Masses which were held in addition to the parochial Mass, probably through abuse, have been discontinued, this manner of holding Mass ought not in fairness be condemned as heretical or unchristian.*
- (iii) Following this protestation Luther, of blessed memory, listed among other articles the following: "In the same way I also say and confess that in the Sacrament of the Altar the body and blood of Christ are truly eaten and drunk*

*in the bread and wine, though the priests who distribute them or those who receive them do not believe or otherwise misuse the sacrament.*

B) Christ binds his promise and activity in the sacrament of the altar to the speaking of the celebrant.

*(i) FC SD 76-78 Chrysostom says in his Sermon on the Passion : "Christ himself prepares this table and blesses it. No human being, but only Christ himself who was crucified for us, can make of the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace through the words that he speaks, 'This is my body,' the elements set before us in the Supper are blessed. Just as the words, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,'\* were spoken only once but are ever efficacious in nature and make things grow and multiply, so this word was indeed spoken only once, but it is efficacious until this day, and until his return it brings about that his true body and blood are present in the church's Supper."\* 77 And Luther states: "This his command and institution can and does bring it about that we do not distribute and receive ordinary bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words read, 'This is my body,' etc., 'This is my blood,' etc. Thus it is not our word or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ that, from the beginning of the first Communion until the end of the world, make the bread the body and the wine the blood that are daily distributed through our ministry and office."\* (tr-1001) 78 Again, "Here, too, if I were to say over all the bread there is, 'This is the body of Christ,' nothing would happen, but when we follow his institution and command in the Lord's Supper and say, 'This is my body,' then it is his body, not because of (ta-584) our speaking or of our efficacious word, but because of his command in which he has told us so to speak and to do and has attached his own command and deed to our speaking."\**

VI) The confessions make frequent use as we have seen of Luke 10:16. They see that this passage imposes on the clergy the obligation of teaching according to Christ's word and not according to human tradition.

*(i) Ap 28, 19 "He who hears you hears me" cannot be applied to traditions. For Christ requires them to teach in such a way that he might be heard, because he says, "hears me." Therefore he wants his voice, His Word to be heard, not human traditions.*

VII) The confessions accept the distinction between the authority of the clerical order and the authority of jurisdiction. Authority of the order, that is ordination to do what is to be

done in the stead and by the command of Christ and the authority of jurisdiction to what it is that the pastor has been ordained to do.

*(i) Ap 28, 13 We like the old division of power into the power of the order and the power of jurisdiction.\* Therefore a bishop has the power of the order, namely, the ministry of Word and sacraments. He also has the power of jurisdiction, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution.*

VIII) The confessions also identify the office of the ministry as one of the marks of the Church.

*(i) Ap 7, 3 That is why we added the eighth article, to avoid the impression that we separate evil men and hypocrites from the outward fellowship of the church or deny efficacy to the sacraments which evil men or hypocrites administer. Thus we do not need to defend ourselves at any length against this slander. (ta-169) The eighth article exonerates us enough. We concede that in this life the hypocrites and evil men are mingled with the church and are members of the church according to the outward associations of the **church's marks** — **that is, Word, confession, and sacraments** — especially if they have not been excommunicated. The sacraments do not lose their efficacy when they are administered by evil men; indeed, we may legitimately use sacraments that are administered by evil men. 4 Paul also predicts that Antichrist will "take his seat in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4), that is, that he will rule and hold office in the church.*

B) These marks of the church require that the word be proclaimed and that the sacraments be administered at concrete times and in concrete places. This is the task of the ministry. If there is any doubt about this Luther in his treatise on the 7 marks of the Church dispels any doubts that this was the intent of the confessions.

IX) The confessions never attempt to derive the sacred ministry from the universal priesthood of the faithful. This doctrine had receded into minor importance even for Luther by the time the confessions were written. The classic proof text for this position 1P 2:9 is quoted only once in the confession in the Tr 69 and there as a foundation for the church to choose and ordain ministers. Church here is not to be equated with the local congregation.

A) Without discussing it the confessions operate explicitly with the concept of a *de facto* succession of ordained ministers

- (i) SA III , 101 If the bishops were true bishops and were concerned about the church and the Gospel, they might be permitted (for the sake of love and unity, but not of necessity) to ordain and confirm us and our preachers,\* provided this could be done without pretense, humbug, and unchristian ostentation. However, they neither are nor wish to be true bishops. 2 They are temporal lords and princes who are unwilling to preach or teach or baptize or administer Communion or discharge any office or work in the church. More than that, they expel, persecute, and condemn those who have been called to do these things. Yet the church must not be deprived of ministers on their account.*
- (a) 3 Accordingly, as we are taught by the examples of the ancient churches and Fathers, we shall and ought ourselves ordain suitable persons to this office. The papists have no right to forbid or prevent us, not even according to their own laws, for their laws state that those who are ordained by heretics shall also be regarded as ordained and remain so.\* St. Jerome, too, wrote concerning the church in Alexandria that it was originally governed without bishops by priests and preachers in common.\**
- (ii) SA II, 4, 9 Consequently the church cannot be better governed and maintained than by having all of us live under one head, Christ,\* and by having all the bishops equal in office (however they may differ in gifts)\* and diligently joined together in unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer, works of love, etc. So St. Jerome writes that the priests of Alexandria governed (tr-475) the churches together and in common. The apostles did the same, and after them all the bishops throughout Christendom, until the pope raised his head over them all.*

- X) Ordination can be called an adiaphoron only in the most narrow and technical sense. The church ordains by divine command. **Ap13,12**. The need for ordination is demonstrated by the lengths to which the confessors go to demonstrate that they have the right to do it in the absence of Roman bishops. In the Freder ordination controversy 1550-1556 the Wittenburg faculty with the concurrence of Melanchthon rejected the position that vocation without ordination was legitimate for the church.
- XI) **AC 14** makes it clear that ordination is necessary for the proper preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. *Rite vocatus* the term translated properly called in both Weingert and tappert editions was as Piepkorn demonstrated in Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV mentioned earlier, a technical term for ordination was so understood by the Roman party at Augsburg. This article was undisputed at that time.

Only those literally translated that are ritely vocated, that is, those who have been ritualized (ordained) for that purpose are to preside preach and preside.

XII) The confessions also hold that the laying on of hands is part of ordination. **Ap13, 12** again. This is in continuity with the biblical witness and undisputed church practice. The ordination, according to the Tr and the Ap would be done by other clergy whether presbyters or bishops. This because the division of the office was seen as a human construct and not essential.

XIII) CONCLUSIONS:

1) In this study I have sought to demonstrate that pastors as ordained ministers of the church serve in an office that re-presents Christ in the church through time.

2) This is necessitated by the incarnational nature of the work of Christ and is reflective of the divine order of creation in the circle of divine Trinitarian love.

3) Continuity and unity in this office are essential to the understanding of the office as the work of Christ in the world and for the preservation of the Church through time.

A) The office is handed on from one office holder to another by the laying of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

B) This action of ordination represents the gift of a special charism which serves to assure the people of God that what is spoken and done is the indeed the work of Christ.

(i) Those who are so inspirited are bound to the Word of God by a close tether.

As pastors we do not speak or act for ourselves. We speak and act as we have been commanded. We are not inspirited to speak outside or act outside what has been clearly mandated by Christ in the Scriptures and the tradition. The Word of God is not mine to manipulate or judge. We are the instruments of Christ's action and word and as Paul says simply hand on what we have been given.

4) Without this presence of Christ in the community the church loses its identity. The Word is not preached, the Sacraments are not rightly administered, the church is undone. It is the office of the ministry that Christ uses to call the church into being and to sustain it as the arena of divine activity for the life of the world.

5) The ministry is most explicitly understood in the Confessions of the Lutheran church as an office in and for the church thus a call to said office is not simply the gut feeling or compulsion of the individual but involves the whole church, clergy and laity together. After proper consideration one is inducted into the office through a public rite of ordination that through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Spirit bestows the charism of ordination affirming that the one who feels called as in fact called and therefore a priest/pastor of the church. It is not simply I decide to be Pastor and the church is obligated

to make me a pastor or that I am called and can therefore just take the mantle as I see fit. There is no precedent for this in the one, holy, catholic, apostolic church. Ordained ministry is a corporate public gift of the whole church and submits pastors to the discipline of the church which sets the standards for worthiness, and appropriateness.

6) The church has lost this understanding of the ministry in every step it has taken to turn the office of the holy and public ministry of the pastor into the chief executive officer of the corporation. Wherever the holy office as the presence of Christ in the community has not been upheld the result has been the disintegration of the Christian community.

A) Anything that deprecates the office

(i) Lack of defining garb

(ii) Referring to pastors in familiar terms

(iii) Reducing the selection of Pastors to a corporate interview processes

(iv) Reduction of collegiality and deference to and among the clergy for each other and the office we hold Jeopardizes the well being of the church and the right preaching of the word and the proper administration of the sacraments.

B) The loss of integrity in the ministerial office jeopardizes the very souls of the faithful.

7) Churches that understand democratic organization as the replacement for the office of the ministry cease to be church in any measurable sense.

8) Without *in persona Christi* officers bound to the mandate of Christ, church organization is reduced to a loose confederation of competing ideas.

*On Holy Thursday morning, April [5, 2007], the Holy Father celebrated the Chrism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The following is a translation of the Pope's Homily, given in Italian.*

Putting on priestly vestments was once accompanied by prayers that helped us understand better each single element of the priestly ministry.

Let us start with the *amice*. In the past — and in monastic orders still today — it was first placed on the head as a sort of hood, thus becoming a symbol of the discipline of the senses and of thought necessary for a proper celebration of Holy Mass. My thoughts must not wander here and there due to the anxieties and expectations of my daily life; my senses must not be attracted by what there, inside the church, might accidentally captivate the eyes and ears. My heart must open itself docilely to the Word of God and be recollected in the prayer of the Church, so that my thoughts may receive their orientation from the words of the proclamation and of prayer. And the gaze of my ears must be turned toward the Lord who is in our midst: this is what the *ars celebrandi* means: the proper way of celebrating.

If I am with the Lord, then, with my listening, speaking and acting, I will also draw people into communion with him.

The texts of the prayer expressed by the *alb* and the *stole* both move in the same direction. They call to mind the festive robes which the father gave to the prodigal son who had come home dirty, in rags.

When we approach the liturgy to act in the person of Christ, we all realize how distant we are from him; how much dirt there is in our lives. He alone can give us festive robes, can make us worthy to preside at his table, to be at his service.

By putting on the alb we must remind ourselves: he suffered for me, too. And it is only because his love is greater than all my sins that I can represent him and witness to his light.

Lastly, one additional brief word on the *chasuble*. The traditional prayer when one puts on the *chasuble* sees it as representing the yoke of the Lord which is imposed upon us as priests. And it recalls the words of Jesus, who invites us to take his yoke upon us and to learn from him who is "gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29).

Taking the Lord's yoke upon us means first of all: learning from him. It means always being ready to go to his school. From him we must learn gentleness and meekness: the humility of God who shows himself in his being a man.

At times we would like to say to Jesus: Lord, your yoke is far from light: Indeed, it is tremendously heavy in this world. But then looking at the One who bore everything — who tried out on himself obedience, weakness, suffering all the darkness —, then these complaints of ours fade. His yoke is that of loving with him. And the more we love him and with him become loving people, the lighter becomes his seemingly burdensome yoke.

Let us pray to him to help us become with him people who are loving, thereby to increasingly experience how beautiful it is to take up his yoke. Amen.