

attitude toward institutional forms of the state of the counsels⁷⁰ and his obsession with a handful of Thomistic texts lead him astray. Nor is his basic perception false when he equates the vow of baptism with the vows of religious life, speaking first of the transition from the "lay state" to the "state of the counsels" as a transition to a radicalization of the lay state, which Church history shows to have been the "fundamental" state, and then making a clear distinction between the two.⁷¹ But, as we have clearly seen in our consideration of Christ's state of life, differentiation and distinction do not necessarily mean division. This is apparent, too, in the way of life proper to active orders and secular institutes.

It would be wrong to regard the various "spiritualities" by which the distinctive charisms of religious orders are made manifest as "limitations" on the basic spirituality of the Gospels as incorporated in the clergy. On the contrary, it is the one Spirit who discloses his fullness and that of Christ in the riches of his gifts (1 Cor 12:4), thereby engendering the inner vitality of the ecclesial organism and, in the process, giving proof that the often paradoxical "monk's answer" to world happenings is essentially the word of the Holy Spirit. Nor is the following of Christ's counsels to be allocated to the realm of the "moral virtues". "The teaching and example of Christ provide the foundation for the evangelical counsels. . . . The apostles and Fathers of the Church commend them as an ideal of life and so do her doctors and pastors. They therefore constitute a gift of God which the Church has received from her Lord . . ." (LG 43). The tradition of the Church has always maintained that the counsels are a meaningful expression of love; that they were understood in this way by Jesus as well as by Paul; and that they are, therefore, incompatible with anxiety about one's own salvation. If they required such anxiety, they would be obstacles rather than helps along Christ's way. If, in the course of history, a certain amount of dross has adhered to the state of the counsels, then, like Mercier's clergy, it too must

⁷⁰ Masure reaped the fruit of Mercier's theory when he placed the source of the three vows in the Old Testament: "This is, again, an Old Testament concept that has been replaced in the New Testament by a much more dynamic concept of holiness" (*De l'Eminente dignité du sacerdoce diocésain*, 154). On the relationship between *caritas* and *religio*, see Pt. I, Ch. 1, sec. 3 of this work.

⁷¹ Cf. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, Vatican Council II, *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, gen. ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Co., 1975), secs. 41-43. [Further references to this document (henceforth LG) are given in parentheses in the text. (Tr)]

be reminded of the primitive evangelical state: ". . . Sell whatever thou hast . . . and come follow me" (Mk 10:21). "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who . . . humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death" (Phil 2:5, 8).

The foregoing discussion has served only to reinforce the concept of the two-in-oneness (*Zwei-Einheit*) of the priestly and religious states as it was described earlier in this work. Both states are forms of the one state of election—but the forms differ according to whether the election is primarily to an objective function (and only secondarily to the way of life appropriate to this function) or primarily to personal discipleship (and only secondarily to an objective way of life according to the standard of a rule). Although different, the two forms are, however, much more closely related than is generally believed to be the case. This unity has its foundation not only in the unity of evangelical radicality, which is reflected at best only secondarily in the various states of election, but also, and most deeply, in the unity of Christ's priesthood, which is, at the same time, both official and personal.

3. THE STATE OF LAY PERSONS IN THE WORLD

Members of the Church who are in neither the state of election nor the priestly state belong to the state of lay persons in the world. Although there are priests who are not in the state of the counsels and persons in the state of the counsels who are not priests, it would be false to assume that the opposite of the priestly state is a different state from the opposite of the state of the counsels. The secular state that is not the priestly state and the lay state that is not the state of the counsels are not two different states of life. From this we see again that the state of lay persons in the world is not (theologically speaking) related to the priestly state and the state of the counsels as a third specific state, but rather as a general state to particular states having their own distinguishing characteristics. There is, for instance, no special consecration required for the lay state as there is for the priestly state or the state of the counsels: The consecration of the lay person is that of the Christian in general, namely baptism, which gives access to all the other sacraments and to the whole perfection of love, but is common to all Christians, including priests

and those in the state of the counsels. It is true that matrimony is reserved in a special way for those in the lay state and confers on them a new supernatural character that is not accessible to other states. But while matrimony is the basis of the "married state" as a special potential within the lay state, it is not the basis of the lay state itself.

This is not contradicted by the fact that Paul, in teaching about Church ministries, lists far more than the particular ministries appropriate to the special states of life identified above. As gifts of grace (charisms), these "ministries" are certainly more than just temporary occupations; they depend on the dispensation of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11) and confer on the Christian a genuine function in the total economy of the Mystical Body. But the very differences in the descriptions and classifications of the gifts show that they contain for the most part something transitory that cannot be the foundation of a state of life. The First Epistle to the Corinthians names the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the distinguishing of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of these tongues (1 Cor 12:8-10); and a few verses later: "first apostles, secondly prophecy, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, the gift of healing, services of help, power of administration and the speaking of various tongues" (1 Cor 12:28). The Epistle to the Romans distinguishes the gifts of prophecy, ministering, teaching, exhorting, almsgiving, administration and works of mercy (Rom 12:6-8), then proceeds to list general activities within the Church to which a Christian might, under special circumstances, be temporarily inspired by the Holy Spirit—among those already mentioned, exhorting, almsgiving, works of mercy—and to make other recommendations, each of which refers in its own way to the gifts of the Spirit, but none of which would be a sufficient basis for the establishment of a permanent, differentiated function or a fortiori for an office within the Church. On the one hand, Paul admonishes a whole congregation: ". . . Reprove the irregular, comfort the fainthearted, support the

weak, be patient towards all men" (1 Th 5:14); on the other hand, he urges Timothy to be diligent "in exhortation and in teaching" (1 Tim 4:13).

Two facts are made abundantly clear by Paul's teaching about these charismatically inspired ministries. The first is this: that the lay state in the Church is far from being an indistinguishable, formless mass whose sole function is to receive God's grace passively through the ministry of the hierarchy; that, on the contrary, this grace always contains also a mission, a well-defined ecclesial task, and imparts a responsibility for the whole body of Christ, which we are, "member for member" (1 Cor 12:27). It is certainly not opposed to Paul's thinking to assign such a charism to each Christian in the Church, for it is in the nature of grace not only to bind one to the Church, but also to confer a personal mission. The personal mission bestowed by the Holy Spirit is linked to the sacrament of confirmation by which the Christian is raised from a life that was predominantly the receptive and irresponsible life of a child to one that has voice and responsibility within the ecclesial community. The Christian is not thereby entitled simply to vote as is one who reaches his majority in the political community. Because grace always differentiates, is always personally oriented, always contains a personal challenge, he also receives an unmistakable and inalienable task within the ecclesial community.

The awareness of this personal function, which the laity do not choose for themselves, but have bestowed on them from above in divine sovereignty, and which they are to fill with the same care and conscientiousness they bring to secular functions, has long been lacking to most lay persons and, even in this age in which the lay movement is strong within the Church, has yet to achieve significant dimensions. Yet Paul's lists show that the difference between the states of life is not emphasized when the ministries are viewed charismatically: Apostleship and ecclesial office (*διακονία*, Rom 12:7) are mentioned in the same breath with other ministries that are open to or reserved for the laity.

Indeed, Paul reproveth the congregation because through their own fault they have been slow—or have neglected—to make the transition from a way of life in which they passively receive to one in which they actively give; that they have remained fixed in an “infantile Christianity” (ὡς νηπίους ἐν Χριστῷ) that cries for milk and cannot endure solid food (1 Cor 3:1–2). “For whereas by this time you ought to be masters, you need to be taught again the rudiments of the words of God; and you have become such as have need of milk and not solid food. For everyone who is fed on milk is unskilled in the word of justice; he is but a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who by practice have their faculties trained to discern good and evil” (Rom 5:12–14). Through culpable infantilism, the community forfeited at least three “missions” intended for it by the Holy Spirit: the gift of teaching, knowledge of the divine word, and the distinguishing of spirits, which, though charismatic gifts (1 Cor 12:10), nevertheless presume the cooperation of the spiritually mature and responsible Christian and, therefore, his personal exercise of them.

Secondly, Paul’s teaching makes it clear that, while the graces, offices and functions bestowed by the Spirit are not simply private graces, but are intended for the Church and are prerogatives conferred for the good of the community, they are nevertheless of themselves *not sufficient for the establishment of a state of life*. Neither in the Bible itself—as for instance in the description of the community at Corinth with its lively charismatic life, whose personalistic tendencies Paul had to stem by a firm teaching about objective ecclesial ministries and functions—nor in primitive Christianity, nor in Church history as a whole, do these ministries, with few exceptions such as that of “confessors”,⁷² claim to rival the ecclesial hierarchy or the ecclesial

⁷² “Confessors” were those witnesses to the faith who suffered torture and imprisonment, but not death, during times of persecution. Since, by virtue of their intention, they were considered equal to the martyrs who had actually given their lives for the faith, and were therefore regarded as persons who shared

state of the counsels. They have perhaps been given too little, rather than too much, attention. In fact, they have, for the most part, disappeared, as witness the fact that the lay community has merited again and again Paul’s biting reproof that they are still in need of teaching whereas they ought to have become teachers. It is a long-standing experience of the Church that the laity too often do not *want* to become mature in the Christian sense because Christian maturity does not mean just a serious obligation toward all the ministries inspired by the Holy Spirit and conferred as tasks; it also presumes a supernatural maturity that can be achieved only through much prayer and sacrifice, but that is wanting precisely to many of the laity who most loudly proclaim their own maturity.

If the call to a qualitatively higher state of life does not ensue, this conferral on the laity of special gifts of grace, special instructions and special demands of the Spirit gives rise to the distinctive condition known as the lay state. Earlier, in our consideration of the instrumental character of the ecclesial state and the state of the counsels (cf. ST 2a 2ae 184, 3), we saw that the lay state is to be designated as the primary and, at the same time, *the fundamental state in the Church*. Since this is so, and *since the two other states are formed by specific differentiations of this first state*, they may be regarded as classifications, emphases and *concretizations* of this state, to which they stand in a relationship of service.

This applies to the priestly state, which is essentially a function—that of representing Christ—and is, therefore, ordered to the universal Church. It applies even more strongly to the state of the counsels, whose “highest” ideal is the realization of the general Christian ideal, and which, therefore, must in a special way represent for all Christians the evangelical perfection toward which all must strive. It may be compared to the raising of a number to a higher power, which nevertheless contains the base

subjectively in the priesthood of Christ, they were permitted to perform certain priestly functions.

number; to the meeting of a challenge that is made to all; to the setting up of a model that all are to imitate; to the delineation of a type with which all are to be identified.

The qualitatively higher states of life are, then, at the service of the totality of Christians and have no other *raison d'être* than this service. It is their task unceasingly and in every possible way to procure, explain and transmit to the fundamental state in the Church the fullness of divine grace. The wealth that seems to be theirs belongs to them only for the sake of the whole Church, which possesses it when it possesses Christ. They are a treasure on which the Church of the laity can depend, that it can justly claim as its possession in Christ. In the name of Christ, the priesthood shows and gives this Church what belongs to it by right; by its very nature and example, the state of the counsels shows it the possibilities of development that are inherent in its own Christian life and makes them accessible to it. All that happens to these two states, even their most intimate, most personal and most God-oriented experiences, happens to them for the sake of the community. "For whether we are afflicted, it is for your instruction and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort. . . . And our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so you will also be of the comfort" (2 Cor 1:6-7). The whole dramatic chain of events that made the apostles "a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Cor 4:9) did not happen for its own sake: "For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which abounds through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound, to the glory of God" (2 Cor 4:15). The remarkable gifts of grace bestowed on those in the qualitatively higher states of life have no other purpose than that Christians "may have an answer for them who glory in appearances and not in heart" (2 Cor 5:12); indeed, the whole special economy that represents the sacrifice of the Cross either sacramentally or personally is the property of the whole Christian community: "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; or the world, or life, or death; or

things present, or things to come—all are yours" (1 Cor 3:22). Hence one called to the service of this wealth of the Church bears "all things for the sake of the elect" (2 Tim 2:10); he incorporates himself into the mystery of Christ, who chose poverty and the things that are nought so that his Bride, the Church, might be rich: "For you know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ—how, being rich, he became poor for your sakes, that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). The chosen one does likewise: "We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, but we are without honor! . . . We have become as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now!" (1 Cor 4:10, 13). He humbles himself "that you [may] be exalted" (2 Cor 11:17); he rejoices that he is "weak but you are strong" (2 Cor 13:9). For like the Lord, who was "made to be sin who knew nothing of sin, so that in him we might all become the justice of God" (2 Cor 5:21), so the apostle can say of himself: "Free though I was as to all, unto all I have made myself a slave that I might gain the more converts" (1 Cor 9:19). He places himself and his whole existence at the feet of the community: "What then is Apollos? What indeed is Paul? They are servants" (1 Cor 3:5)—"servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). "For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves merely as your servants in Jesus" (2 Cor 4:5). "Thus death is at work in us, but life in you" (2 Cor 4:12).

But in pointing out the contrast between himself and the community, the apostle has only one purpose: to strengthen the union that exists between them. For this contrast has for its premise the unity of love and for its goal the increase of love. In pouring out the whole fullness of Christian life upon the community, objectively in the sacraments and in the traditional teaching of the Church and subjectively by their example, by the richness of their Christian experiences in joy and in suffering, in ecstasy and in persecution, those in the state of election want only to give the whole community a share in their riches. By

word and example, they transmit to the community what truly belongs to it by grace, but what it has never sufficiently realized or recognized as its own.

By comparison with the priesthood, the lay community may seem, at first, to be but a passive recipient, to be overwhelmed beyond its power of comprehension by the immense fullness of God as it is transmitted and represented by those in the state of election. ". . . We are God's helpers, you are God's tillage, God's building" (1 Cor 3:9). "Are you not my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor 9:1). The lay community is reminded again and again of its value in the eyes of God; of how much the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well as the elect have done for it; of the extent to which everything it possesses exceeds its expectation, its comprehension. For what is promised to and bestowed upon the community by its ministers is greater than anything its faith can conceive. "Do you not know yourselves that Christ Jesus is in you?" (2 Cor 13:15). "Christ in you—your hope of glory!" (Col 1:27). This indwelling of Christ in the faithful is an actual participation in his death and Resurrection: ". . . If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with Christ" (Rom 6:8), for God has "raised us up together, and seated us together in heaven in Christ Jesus" (Eph 1:6). "If then any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor 5:7) in Christ, "who has also stamped us with his seal and has given us the Spirit as a pledge in our hearts" (2 Cor 1:22). The description of Christian election in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians depicts a veritable torrent of grace—starting with God's original purpose before the foundation of the world, when we were already loved and predestined in Christ to be holy and to be the children of the Father; continuing into the fullness of time, when we were made coheirs in Christ "according to the riches of his grace [that] has abounded beyond measure in us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph 1:7-8); and ending with our being stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit, the last mystery of the Holy Trinity. Thereupon the apostle bursts into an almost incoherent paean of praise before

the community: May God enlighten "the eyes of your mind . . . so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what [are] the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe . . . his mighty power, which he has wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead, and setting him at his right hand in heaven. . . . And him he gave as head over all the Church, which indeed is his body, the completion of him who fills all with all" (Eph 1:18-20, 22-23).

But the community cannot stand passively by and simply allow itself to be overwhelmed by the mysteries of Christ, to be made a partaker of the divine nature itself, to be unconditionally gifted with all the riches of God—"for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God, . . . the things that are of the Spirit of God. . . . But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:10, 14, 16). *One who is merely passive does not really receive:* To possess, one must accept; and the more spiritual the gift, the more gratefully and happily it should be accepted. *Thus the reception of grace becomes automatically an action—an action that accepts, takes hold of, understands, executes and transmits.* For how can one let divine love simply happen to him? How can he receive it without loving in return? The very acceptance of grace demands such a return, and the response to God becomes a spontaneous sharing of what one has received. Indeed, so identified are engracement and mission that this is the touchstone by which one knows that grace has truly been received: ". . . Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. . . . In this is the love, not that we have loved God, but that he has first loved us, and sent his Son as a propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn 4:7-8, 10-11). The life of faith—the life that is designated, in a broader sense, as mission and apostolate—is not a second reality beside the first reality, which is man's engraced state; the challenge of the Christian life is not something derived secondarily from the fact of Christian existence. This is the

Christian paradox: that grace, which of its very nature is bestowed absolutely, includes in itself the absolute challenge to lead a life according to grace, and that God has the mysterious power ultimately to break even man's resistance to grace. God's grace has an "abundance" (cf. Rom 5:15-21) that can be expressed only in the paradoxical formula: ". . . If we disown him, he also will disown us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim 2:12-13).

Grace, then, is a challenge to every Christian. And just as grace knows no upper limit, so its challenge knows no upper limit. The mysteries of the priestly and religious states do not form a higher, esoteric level above the modest ground level of "ordinary Christian life". Their purpose is rather to increase and reveal in all Christians "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God" (Rom 11:33). *The sacraments* do not have their "truth" outside the Christianity that contains them: What they signify is to be expressed in the life of all Christians. If Christ offers himself for us in the Mass, his sacrifice requires and presumes that "we likewise ought to lay down our life for the brethren" (1 Jn 3:16); that we, too, ought to present our bodies "as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God" (Rom 12:1) and "offer up a sacrifice of praise always to God" (Heb 13:15). And if Christ remains sacramentally present among us, it is for the sake of the faithful, that they may realize his presence even outside the sacraments: For where two or three are gathered in his name, he is in their midst (Mt 18:20). If there is an official priesthood whose duty it is to administer the grace of God, it exists only that the whole ecclesial community with all the laity may be "a chosen race, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2:9). If, through the ministry of his priests, the Lord gives himself to all in the Eucharist, it is that "we though many [may be] one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 11:17), "all [who are] baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slave or free" (1 Cor 12:13), and may, in our turn, live, care and die for one another. In baptism, we have all truly died to sin and selfishness (cf. Rom

6:2), but this presumes also that we have presented our members to God "as weapons of justice" (Rom 6:13). ". . . Do you not know . . . that you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19). ". . . Since one died for all, therefore all died . . . Christ died for all, in order that they who are alive may live no longer for themselves . . ." (2 Cor 5:14-15). "For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Rom 14:7-8). *To be baptized*, then, means totally to renounce a life lived according to one's own wishes, for "it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). But because "Christ did not please himself, . . . we . . . ought . . . not to please ourselves" (Rom 15:3, 1). The rule that governs what we do and what we do not do will no longer be what is permitted the individual as a private person, what he can allow himself to do on the basis of his own conscience, but only what is most beneficial for the community and can under no circumstances give scandal to its weaker members. "Now we, the strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. . . . Let us, then, follow after the things that make for peace and . . . for mutual edification" (Rom 15:1; 14:19). Let us ". . . bear one another's burden . . ." (Gal 6:2). If, by this means, baptism preserves its immediate truth in the life of the Christian, this is equally true of the sacrament of *confession*. For if the apostles received the power of binding and loosing, that is, of forgiving sins in the name and with the divine authority of Christ, this ministry must, nevertheless, be exercised in the context of the whole Church. This means not only that we must all forgive one another "as also God in Christ has generously forgiven" us (Eph 4:32; cf. ". . . Even as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you forgive", Col 3:13), but even more expressly that we must open our hearts and minds to one another: ". . . To God we are manifest. And I hope also that in your consciences we are manifest" (2 Cor 5:11). "Confess, therefore, your sins to one another, that you may be saved" (James 5:16)—and this even to the extent of eliciting from a brother the acknowledgment of his

sin: "If he listen to thee, thou hast won thy brother" (Mt 18:15). ". . . He who causes a sinner to be brought back from his misguided way, will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). Moreover, the priest's obligation by reason of his office to *admonish* and advise is transferred undiminished also to the laity: "Wherefore, comfort one another and edify one another" (1 Th 5:11); ". . . Do not regard [one who does not obey] as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Th 3:15). Finally, the model of Christ is translated so directly into the life of the lay community that the central mystery of his *sacrificial offering* of himself to the Church becomes for the laity a true sacrament, the lay sacrament of matrimony, which the spouses confer on one another in the presence of the priest as representative of the Church (cf. Eph 5:21-33).

Just as the laity receive the sacramental Word of God in order that it may be transformed directly into the truth of their lives and may continue to work independently in them, so also they receive the official preaching of the Gospel *in the homily*, not passively, but always actively, that their lives may proclaim its message. Because the community has "received . . . the word of God . . . not as the word of men, but, as it truly is, the word of God", it therefore "works" in them even to the living out of this word in persecution and martyrdom (1 Th 2:13-14). Indeed, every word of Christ is to be "good for supplying what fits the current necessity, that it may give grace to the hearers" (Eph 4:29). The official homily is the vehicle by which the word of God remains, dwells and operates in the midst of the lay community: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom teach and admonish one another . . ." (Col 3:16). The Church expects the mature lay person to be able to use "the sword of the spirit, that is, the word of God" (Eph 6:17) without recourse to the priest. He must know that the transmission of the faith cannot be entrusted to chance, but must proceed constantly from the grace of faith, "as shown in that which is written—I believed and so I spoke—we also believed, wherefore we also speak" (2 Cor 4:13). Hence the apostle's words apply to every

Christian: ". . . Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16). He expects the *congregation* to transmit the word that has been implanted in it; to *become* not only in its clergy, but also in the totality of its laity, a *messenger* of the Gospel. ". . . You became a pattern to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has been spread abroad, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth . . ." (1 Th 1:7-8). It is immaterial whether the Gospel is preached by word or by example, for the two are inseparable; the testimony to Jesus is always a testimony of both word and works (cf. Jn 10:38; 5:36). So true is this that the testimony of the word has no value without works, while the testimony of one's life can speak louder than the testimony of words: "In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands; so that even if any do not believe the word, they may without word be won through the behavior of their wives, observing reverently your chaste behavior" (1 Pet 3:1-2).

As the lay person must not only allow the priestly ministries—the administration of the sacraments and the word—to become fruitful in him, but must also translate them into the truth of his own state if they are to achieve their purpose in him, so he must translate *the example and ways of the state of the counsels into his life*. It has frequently been noted that all the light that emanates from the state of election is to such an extent oriented away from that state and to the illumination of the entire Church that the lay state itself becomes in the process "the salt of the earth", "the light of the world", "a city set upon a mountain", "a lamp . . . upon the lampstand": "Even so let your light shine before men" (Mt 5:13-16). Paul never wearies of offering his own exemplary life as a "model" for the whole Church: ". . . Be imitators of me" (Phil 3:17); "Therefore, I beg you, be imitators of me" (1 Cor 4:16); "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us" (2 Th 3:7). ". . . You became imitators of us and of the Lord" (1 Th 1:6). "But for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might

show forth all patience, as an example to those who shall believe in him for the attainment of life everlasting" (1 Tim 1:16). "Hold to the form of sound teaching which thou hast heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 1:13). His entire existence is summarized in the words: "But thou hast closely followed my doctrine, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my long-suffering, my love, my patience, my persecutions, my afflictions" (2 Tim 3:10-11). All that happens to the apostle is nourishment for the community; all that is in him is consumed in order to build up and strengthen the community. He requires the same dedication from them—that they, too, become "a pattern to the flock" (1 Pet 5:3). Paul does not select certain elements of his life and hold them up for imitation. It is not permitted him to do so, for even the sufferings he endures for the community belong to the community and are ultimately the most precious example he can offer for its imitation. Even the special fate that destines those in the state of election to become sacrificial victims is offered to the laity for its imitation. Paul addresses himself first to those who preside over the community: "In all things I have shown you that by so toiling you ought to help the weak and remember the word of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35). ". . . Enter into my sufferings for the Gospel through the power of God" (2 Tim 1:8); "conduct thyself in work as a good soldier of Christ" (2 Tim 2:3). Then he speaks to the whole community: ". . . All who want to live piously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:12). "In this [that is, in persecutions and tribulations] there is a proof of the just judgment of God counting you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which also you suffer" (2 Th 1:5), "for you yourselves know that we are appointed thereto" (1 Th 3:3). "For you have been given the favor on Christ's behalf—not only to believe in him but also to suffer for him" (Phil 1:29). "But if, when you do right and suffer, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. Unto this, indeed, you have been called, because Christ also has suf-

fered for you, leaving you an example that you may follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:20-21).

Thus the community not only shares passively in the fruits of the sufferings of those called to the state of the counsels; it is also allowed to share actively in their sacrificial calling. "I have you in my heart, all of you, alike in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospels . . ." (Phil 1:7). The two states are united in their efforts—"For you . . . [are] engaged in the same struggle in which you have seen me . . ." (Phil 1:29-30), "striving together for the faith of the Gospel" (Phil 1:27)—which Paul labels comprehensively "our wrestling" (Eph 6:12). Nevertheless, we are all "sanctified . . . and called to be saints" (1 Cor 1:2). The Gospel engages in no casuistry about the extent to which the laity must strive for perfection or to which they may consider themselves dispensed therefrom. Its only concern is with perfection itself: the perfection of what the Christian *is* by reason of his participation in God by grace, and the perfection of what he *ought* to be by reason of that same grace. All Catholics are "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved" (Col 3:12), and the apostle wrestles in prayer for them that they "may remain perfect and completely in accord with all the will of God" (Col 4:12). This perfection is a genuine perfection ("Let us then, as many as are perfect, be of this mind", Phil 3:15), even though it is still a perfection to be acquired, a pilgrim perfection, open to God ("Not that I have already obtained this, or already have been made perfect", Phil 3:12). ". . . Blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish" (Phil 2:15), Christians pursue the way that is an unending "way of perfection", an abounding "more and more" in perfection (Phil 1:9), a striving "after the greater gifts" (1 Cor 12:31). And yet "he who keeps his [Christ's] word, in him the love of God is truly perfected" (1 Jn 2:5).

The result is a reciprocally formative action between the state of election and the lay state: "Become like me, because I also have become like you, brethren, I beseech you" (Gal 4:12). Each state of life is the boast and glory of the other: ". . . I hope you will

always understand . . . that we are your boast, as you will also be ours" (2 Cor 1:13-14). The reciprocity is perfected by interceding for one another in prayer. Just as the apostle in his prayer "unceasingly" makes mention of the community (Rom 1:9-10) that is in his heart "to die together and to live together" (2 Cor 7:3), so he confides to the community all his apostolic cares and relies on their prayers to make his mission fruitful: ". . . Pray for us also, that God may give us an opportunity for the word, to announce the mystery of Christ" (Col 4:3). God "delivered us, and will deliver us, from such great perils; and in him we have hope to be delivered once again, through the help of your prayers" (2 Cor 1:10-11). And just as the apostle's prayer becomes more and more universal since his "daily pressing anxiety" is for "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor 11:28), so will the prayer of the churches become correspondingly a universal, Catholic prayer for the whole world: "supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings . . . for all men; for kings, and for all in high positions" (1 Tim 2:1). Thus the specific universality that is proper to the state of the counsels by reason of the promised hundredfold meets with the specific universality of the Church as a whole, including all the laity, in order that it may grow thereby out of its particularity and into the all-embracing unity of Christ. All the states of life must work together to represent this unity: "one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:4-6). The "apostles, . . . prophets, . . . evangelists, . . . pastors and teachers" (Eph 4:11), all, then, who are invested with a qualitatively higher ministry, exist "in order to perfect the saints for [their own] work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:12-13).

In this relationship of the states of life to and in one another is perfected to the fullest extent the "general priesthood" of the

Church as a whole, in which the Church, as body and Bride of its crucified head, is drawn into the one unending sacrifice of praise and love to God the Father (cf. St. Augustine, *De civ Dei* X, 6-7). The special functional priesthood of the clerical state and the special existential priesthood of the state of the counsels are henceforth no longer distinguishable from the comprehensive priesthood of all Christians (just as the special priesthood of those in the states of election in no way separates or dispenses them from participation in the general priesthood). If the official priesthood, which represents the head for the body within the unity of the Church, emphasizes the differences between the special and the general priesthood, the state of the counsels is properly associated with the lay state (cf. the references to Dionysius on pp. 302-304 above). By its sacrificial life, it supplies in full measure what is wanting to the sacrifices offered by the general priesthood of the laity.

4. THE STATES OF LIFE AND THE SECULAR ORDERS

Until now, we have been considering the states of life primarily in their reciprocal relationship within the Church of Christ. Yet the Church does not exist for itself alone, but for the ultimate redemption of the world. Its task is to proclaim, embody and establish as effectively as possible among the nations the majesty of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. But it may not identify itself with this majesty that has come, yet is always coming. As an institution, it exists to serve it. As those who have died and are risen again in Christ, the members of the Church are fundamentally incorporated into it, even when, as sinners and those as yet imperfect, they are still *in via* toward it. As the body and Bride of Christ, the Church shares the mind of its head; it seeks not itself, but the perfecting of all things through Christ in God: ". . . God our Savior . . . wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is *one* God and *one* mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave