

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
PERTAINING TO
THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

IN

ECCLESIA APOSTOLICA DIVINORUM
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THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

INTRODUCTION

APOSTOLICITY AND THE CHURCH

"Have you an Apostolic Succession? Unfold the line of your Bishops."
Tertullian, 3rd century A.D.

"If Catholic doctrine is true, every priest validly ordained derives his orders in an unbroken line of laying of hands, through the bishop who ordains him, back to the twelve Apostles."

Sir Anthony Kenny, *A Path From Rome: An Autobiography*, Oxford University Press, 1985.

Thomas C. O'Reilly, writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, makes the following comments on Apostolic Succession:

"Apostolicity is the mark by which the Church of today is recognized as identical with the Church founded by Jesus Christ upon the Apostles. It is of great importance because it is the surest indication of the true Church of Christ, it is most easily examined, and it virtually contains the other three marks, namely, Unity, Sanctity, and Catholicity. Either the word "Christian" or "Apostolic", might be used to express the identity between the Church of today and the primitive Church. The term "Apostolic" is preferred because it indicates a correlation between Christ and the Apostles, showing the relation of the Church both to Christ, the founder, and to the Apostles, upon whom He founded it. "Apostle" is one sent, sent by authority of Jesus Christ to continue His Mission upon earth, especially a member of the original band of teachers known as the Twelve Apostles. Therefore the Church is called Apostolic, because it was founded by Jesus Christ upon the Apostles. Apostolicity of doctrine and mission is necessary. Apostolicity of doctrine requires that the deposit of faith committed to the Apostles shall remain unchanged. Since the Church is infallible in its teaching, it follows that if the Church of Christ still exists it must be teaching His doctrine. Hence Apostolicity of mission is a guarantee of Apostolicity of doctrine. St. Irenaeus (Adv. Haeres, IV, xxvi, n. 2) says: "Wherefore we must obey the priests of the Church who have succession from the Apostles, as we have shown, who, together with succession in the episcopate, have received the certain mark of truth according to the will of the Father; all others, however, are to be suspected, who separated themselves from the principal succession", etc. In explaining the concept of Apostolicity, then, special attention must be given to Apostolicity of mission, or Apostolic succession. Apostolicity of mission means that the Church is one moral body, possessing the mission entrusted by Jesus Christ to the Apostles, and transmitted through them and their lawful successors in an unbroken chain to the present representatives of Christ upon earth. This authoritative transmission of power in the Church constitutes Apostolic succession."

¹ Thomas C. O'Reilly (1907). Apostolicity. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved February 9, 2009 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01648b.htm>

The Roman Catholic Church considers that apostolicity is not merely one of the four elements which define the true church of Jesus Christ², but *the* essential factor in determining the unity of the Church. Since there is but one true Church, according to the reasoning of O'Reilly, it follows that apostolicity is found in that Church alone, and not in any other Church. In consequence, those other churches and communities that have developed on non-episcopal lines are thereby excluded from the true Church, as, more controversially, are those which have separated from the jurisdiction of Rome, such as the Anglican Communion. This is, naturally, not a view accepted by many non-Roman Catholics, but it does give rise to many of the controversies concerning Holy Orders and validity thereof that has been a major influence on many of the communities we discuss.

Our role in this work is to set out some aspects of the Apostolic Succession as it passes into the *Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum*, an autocephalous jurisdiction of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and to illustrate the paths which connect our jurisdiction with the historic Apostolic transmissions of the larger denominations.

In the following pages, we will examine in turn many of the aspects of Apostolic transmission, and see the ways in which each of these can be understood with the result of closer and more productive relations between faithful Christians wherever they are to be found.

² Oskar Sommel, Rudolf Stählin Christliche Religion, Frankfurt 1960, p19

CHAPTER ONE

SACRAMENTAL VALIDITY – FORM, MATTER AND INTENT

According to normative Roman Catholic canon law, the validity of a sacrament is assured by validity of matter, form and intent. The first two of these are obvious and unambiguous in their meaning to anyone with a basic awareness of canon law. Although much is made of the meaning of the third term “intent”, often by those writing polemically against one or other denomination or prelate, its meaning as understood and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church through the ages is simple – to do as the Church does in confecting the sacrament concerned.

This presupposes a conception of Holy Orders that is in keeping with the common understanding of that sacrament. Any common understanding that is held to be binding on the Church as a whole must be that understanding held by the undivided Church since its earliest times (according to the canon of St Vincent of Lérins: “quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum es”), and unaffected by later developments. Thus issues such as clerical celibacy, which has no Biblical foundation³ and which was addressed by the First and Second Lateran Councils of 1123 and 1139 respectively, some seventy years after the Great Schism of 1054, cannot be taken to be integral to the understanding of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The admission into the Roman Catholic Church in recent years of married priests (usually converts from Anglicanism) makes this point even clearer.

It is also a basic precept that the character and state of mind of those who impart and receive Holy Orders is not material to the validity of the sacrament. The requirement as to state of mind is only that those participating should be “sufficiently sane” – that is, sufficiently sane to form the requisite intent. A sacrament is valid *ex opere operato* because of its divine institution.

As to the character of the minister concerned, which was of course the subject of the Donatist schism, this point is eloquently made by St. Augustine:

“But the baptism of Christ, consecrated by the words of the Gospel, is necessarily holy however polluted and unclean its ministers may be; because its inherent sanctity cannot be polluted, and the divine excellence abides in its sacrament, whether to the salvation of those who use it right, or the destruction of those who use it wrong...[T]hey whom a drunkard baptised, or those whom a murderer baptised, or those whom an adulterer baptised, if it were the baptism of Christ, were baptised by Christ.”⁴

and reinforced by Pope Innocent III:

³ See 1 Timothy 3:2-4, where it is stated that a bishop should be “the husband of one wife” and “one who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection.” St Peter was married: see Mark 1:30. It was the Church Fathers who promoted clerical celibacy, possibly with some degree of Apostolic encouragement.

⁴ Quoted in Allen Fitzgerald, John C. Cavadini: Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999, p746

“Nothing more is accomplished by a good priest and nothing less by a wicked priest, because it is accomplished by the word of the creator and not the merit of the priest. Thus the wickedness of the priest does not nullify the effect of the sacrament, just as the sickness of a doctor does not destroy the power of his medicine. Although the “doing of the thing”[opus operans] may be unclean, nevertheless the “thing which is done”[opus operatum] is always clean.⁵”

and further reiterated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in modern times:

“Celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the grace that they signify. They are efficacious because in them Christ himself is at work: it is he who baptizes, he who acts in his sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies. The Father always hears the prayer of his Son’s Church which, in the epiclesis of each sacrament, expresses her faith in the power of the Spirit. As fire transforms into itself everything it touches, so the Holy Spirit transforms into the divine life whatever is subjected to his power.”

This is the meaning of the Church’s affirmation that the sacraments act ex opere operato (literally: “by the very fact of the action’s being performed”), i.e., by virtue of the saving work of Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that “the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God.” From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister.⁶”

Likewise, Bishop James Ingall Wedgwood, founder of the Liberal Catholic Church, writes,

“The bishop, in laying on hands, does not add his imperfections of character, real or imaginary, to those of the candidate; he hands on the Episcopate. Anglican Orders are not polluted by the plentiful misdemeanours of Reformation divines, or Roman by the many scandals of the Papacy and Sacred College of Cardinals. Were it otherwise the Orders of no Church would be unsullied. All this is clearly and very properly recognised in theology...The fundamental fact of the whole sacramental system is that Christ, and not man, is the true minister of all sacraments, and His power can and does work, irrespective of the private fancies or particular unworthiness of the human instruments He uses in the interests of His people at large. Imperfections, mental, moral and physical, errors both of life and doctrine, necessarily exist in an imperfect world; but they are as naught compared to His power. To hold otherwise is unduly to exalt the human element in comparison with the divine.⁷”

⁵ Quoted in Alister E. McGrath: Christian Theology: An Introduction, 4th ed. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p425

⁶ Burns & Oates et al., Catechism of the Catholic Church, Popular and Definitive Edition, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000, p258

⁷ Dr. James Ingall Wedgwood: “The Facts Regarding the Episcopal Succession in the Liberal Catholic Church”, in The Collected Works of James Ingall Wedgwood, ed. The Very Revd. Tony J. Howard, St Alban Press, California, USA, 2004, p 230

As far as the Anglican Communion is concerned and those Protestant churches which descend from it, this view is also confirmed in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563):

“For those who receive the sacraments which are administered to them by faith and in proper fashion, the effect of Christ’s ordinances is not taken away by the wickedness of the minister, nor is the grace of God’s gifts diminished. These are effective on account of the institution and promise of Christ, even if they are administered by wicked people.”⁸

Nor can the acceptance of particular doctrines be taken as essential to the intent of a sacrament according to the *depositum fidei*, given the breadth of doctrinal opinion that has been permitted and accepted within the Roman Catholic Church over the centuries. Only in those extreme cases where the Apostolic Succession passes to groups which have actually ceased to define themselves sacramentally, or where their sacramental definition is non-Christian (as is the case, for example, with the Thelemic churches) can it be placed under serious doubt as to whether what is being conveyed is the Apostolic Succession as that concept is normally understood. Even then, it is beyond doubt that *something* essential of a spiritual character is certainly understood to be being conveyed through that sacramental transmission, although it may not correspond to conventional norms as understood outside that particular group.

Within Roman Catholic understanding, a sacrament may be validly conferred even though it has not received a Papal mandate. Validity is not dependent on the approval of the Vatican, but on proper matter, form and intent. In this way, a bishop may confer Holy Orders throughout his lifetime, whatever his state of relations with the Vatican, and those Holy Orders will be considered valid providing the conditions for validity are satisfied.

“The ordinary minister is every consecrated bishop and no one else [Council of Trent, sess. 23, c.7.]. Therefore even a schismatic bishop or one who has been degraded or one who has been declared irregular, etc. may ordain validly, provided that his own consecration was valid and that he uses the essential matter and form.” Handbook of Moral Theology, by Dominic M. Prummer, O.P., page 383, The Minister of Valid Ordination.

“We have no reason to doubt that the Old Catholic Orders are valid. The Apostolic Succession does not depend on obedience to the See of Peter but rather on the objective line of succession from Apostolic sources, the proper matter and form, and the proper intention ... likewise Old Catholic bishops are bishops in Apostolic Succession ... The Old Catholics, like the Orthodox, possess a valid priesthood.” Separated Brethren, William J. Whalen, pp. 204, 248.

“Every validly consecrated bishop, including heretical, schismatic, simonistic or excommunicated bishops, can validly dispense the Sacrament of Order, provided that he has the requisite intention, and follows the essential external rite (set. Certa). Cf. D 855, 860; CIC 2372.” Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Dr. Ludwig Ott, 1952, pp. 456.

⁸ Quoted in Allen Fitzgerald, John C. Cavadini: Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999, p746

Nor is this process influenced by the effluxion of time. The history of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht, the subject of the Whalen quotation above, shows that such ordinations and consecrations may continue for several centuries whilst continuing to maintain validity in Roman eyes. Such a succession is also passed on through the many lines of wandering bishops descending from Utrecht during the twentieth-century.

Those Orthodox churches separated from Rome in 1054 are also still perceived by her as holding valid Holy Orders today; were they but to reconcile with Rome, their bishops would be valid bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, their priests valid priests, etc. Naturally the Orthodox tend to see things from a somewhat different, Cyprianic perspective, as will be explained in the next chapter.

The formula “valid but illicit” is used by Rome to describe such transmissions of Holy Orders, indicating that their illicitness is in breach of the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church in that Papal permission has not been granted for the transmission in question. A bishop who confers orders without a Papal mandate is often said to have incurred *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication, although if acting out of fear, as has been argued in the case of the consecrations by Marcel Lefebvre and Carlos Duarte Costa, such automatic excommunication would not follow. In the case of the consecration(s) for the Order of Corporate Reunion in 1877, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milan certainly was not excommunicated, although there is little doubt that the Vatican had soon become fully aware of his role in matters. It is important to emphasise, however, that such excommunication is intended by the church to be a *temporary* and not a permanent measure; this is shown in recent years by the lifting of the automatic excommunication on the bishops of the Society of St Pius X consecrated by Marcel Lefebvre pending what is hoped to be an eventual full reconciliation with Rome.

In addition to this, such automatic excommunication does not follow in the event that canon law is violated in case of necessity⁹. A case of necessity is one in which the “*necessary goods for natural or supernatural life are so threatened that one is morally compelled to break the law in order to save them.*”¹⁰ so that even culpable violation would incur no automatic penalty. Only the commission of a subjective mortal sin (canons 1321 §1, 1323 70) can incur a penalty.

The invocation of necessity will strike a chord with many groups seeking to perpetuate the traditions of the inner church, including the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum, because in their conception of their reason for existence aspects of doctrine and practice have a central and unassailable role. Where the mainstream of the Roman Catholic Church has fallen into heresy, or denial of the basis and truth of the Christian faith, spiritual duty must lie in the furtherance of the truth, and not in collusion with teachings which hide or obfuscate it.

⁹ See “Wasn’t Archbishop Lefebvre excommunicated?” which expands on these matters with detailed reference to the Canons of the Roman Catholic Church at http://www.sspix.org/SSPX_FAQs/qu1_abexcommunicated.htm, retrieved on 10 February 2009.

¹⁰ See previous note, and also various authors, *Is Tradition Excommunicated?*, Angelus Press, 1993, p. 26, appendix II

We should remember here the statement of Richard, Duc de Palatine, “The fact that this Rite does not hold to the present accepted theological beliefs but to the Gnostic-Wisdom Religion teachings, may cause the present Catholic Church to denounce our Orders as being heretical, but before they make such a pronouncement they are advised to think carefully as the scholastic world have verified the contrary, that the Orthodox Church is in the position of being the 'true heretics', deviating from the True Teachings of the Christ. The old order of things and beliefs always dies very hard before the Light of the new age becomes fully established.”¹¹

Often, the *necessity* of maintaining the integrity of the religious life of a community causes its overt separation from the mainstream rather than any indigenous desire for separation or schism *per se*. Even where the practice of a community differs from that of the Roman Catholic Church, there is no authority that can force a bishop to “compromise in his teaching of Catholic faith or administering of Catholic sacraments.” It follows that this applies where the interpretation of Catholic faith differs from that of the mainstream of the Roman Catholic Church, provided (in the case of the *Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum*) such practice can be reconciled with the *depositum fidei* of the undivided, pre-Nicene church.

In all cases we shall encounter in this work, great emphasis has been laid upon ensuring validity, and the consecrations concerned have consequently taken place according to the established liturgies of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches, or, where another liturgy has been used, care has been taken to ensure that it conforms to those established liturgies in terms of the essentials needed for validity to be maintained. Even were that on occasion not to prove to have been the case, Apostolic validity among all clergy of today rests not upon a single line of succession or on a single bishop, but on multiple such lines and many bishops, just as the bishop presiding at a consecration is customarily joined by two or more others, not as an essential for the proper confection of the sacrament (it is fully valid when conferred by one bishop alone) but as a safeguard so that valid orders can be sure to have been received even if one or even more than one bishop proved not to hold them.

¹¹ Richard, Duc de Palatine: The Pre-Nicene Gnostic Catholic Church in *Lucis Magazine*, vol. 1 no. 3, 1959.

CHAPTER TWO

AUGUSTINIAN AND CYPRIANIC POSITIONS ON VALIDITY, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

There are two predominant theological positions in the churches concerning the validity of Holy Orders, and these bear the names of St. Augustine and St. Cyprian respectively.

The Augustinian position has already been outlined in its essentials; it is that a validly consecrated bishop may confer Holy Orders providing the correct matter, form and intent are present, whether or not the consent of the Church has been given. Historically, this is the position held by the Roman Catholic Church on most occasions.

The Cyprianic position holds that ordination and consecration as sacraments are not capable of being conferred *ad personam* but rather can only exist within the context of the Church; in other words, valid ordination is only valid when it occurs within the bounds of the Church. This position is broadly that taken by the Eastern Orthodox churches, and has been summed up by Pheidas as follows:

“Thus, the Orthodox Church, while accepting the canonical possibility of recognising the existence (υποστατόν) of sacraments performed outside herself, it questions their validity (έγκυρον) and certainly rejects their efficacy (ενεργόν). It is already well-known that in the ecclesial praxis, the Orthodox Church moves, according to the specific circumstances, between canonical «acribeia» and ecclesial economy, recognising by economy the validity (κύρος) of the sacraments of those ecclesiastical bodies. Yet, such a practice of economy does not overthrow the canonical «acribeia», which also remains in force and expresses the exclusive character of orthodox ecclesiology.¹²”

The mention of *ekonomia* is of particular importance here, since it gives open expression to the fact that both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches are essentially antinomian in their approach to the recognition of Holy Orders conferred in or for other communions. It is not the case that there is any impassable doctrinal barrier to such recognition; simply that it remains the prerogative of each church to determine such recognition as it sees fit, and indeed on withholding such recognition in particular cases, to be able to cite appropriate sources in support. All that one can learn from studying particular cases where this or that bishop has reconciled with the Holy See or with the Orthodox having initially served in another communion, is that on some occasions such recognition is granted, and on others it is withheld. The idea that there are fixed rules that are invariably applied on the matter is mistaken; rather, there are fixed rules that *may* or *may not* be deemed relevant in the case at hand.

Increasingly, however, there are forces within both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches that hold that ordination and consecration must be conferred within the context of the Church in order to be valid. This view has much to commend it

¹² Professor Dr. Vlassios Pheidas: *The limits of the church in an orthodox perspective*, chap. 2, retrieved from http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/pheidas_limits_2.html on 10 February 2009.

historically. In as much as the Church referred to is the undivided Church of Christ, there can be few clergy nowadays who would not regard themselves as serving within the single body that constitutes all Christian believers – the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church - even if they do not concede that the present-day Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches can adequately substitute for that all-inclusive entity. Indeed, a number of autocephalous denominations, including the *Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum*, explicitly proclaim their identity as a part of this body.

Clergy that regard themselves as wholly “independent” – that is to say, not part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, whatever their reasons for doing so, risk categorisation as non-Christians as well as engendering doubts regarding their validity. Can the sacrament that is “wantonly irregular” really preserve the intent of the undivided Church? If that sacrament involves the rejection of the very Church itself – whether in concept or in practice – it can only give rise to grave concerns of this kind.

Yet even here, it is important not to confuse the faith of an individual with the positions of the community in which they may find themselves serving. The Roman Catholic Church has committed itself in recent years to dialogue towards the seeking of a common understanding with other faiths, notably Judaism and Islam, which position is made explicit in the statement of the Second Vatican Council that salvation includes those who acknowledge the same creator. In Chapter Five we will discuss the document “*Dominus Iesus*” which addresses these issues in an important and progressive way.

Interfaith and ecumenical missions, in which category can be included such movements as the Unitarian Church (which embraces both Christians and non-Christians) can be seen as heterodox entities rather than as heretical depending on the particular individuals and period under discussion (certainly J.M. Lloyd Thomas was no heretic); the Christians within their fold have not openly rejected the Church, but pursue faith within a particular context.

RECONCILIATION WITH THE HOLY SEE – SOME EXAMPLES

Here are some examples of cases where the Holy See has recognised Holy Orders conferred in other communions as valid.

- Joseph René Vilatte (1854-1929)¹³ was born into the *Petit Eglise* and became a Roman Catholic in 1867. In the following years he spent time with a number of Roman Catholic monastic orders. In the 1870s he converted to Protestantism for two years while studying at McGill University in Canada but subsequently reconciled with Rome. Shortly afterwards, after coming into contact with two excommunicated Roman Catholic priests, he became a Presbyterian minister.

¹³ See Bertil Persson: *A Biographical Sketch on Joseph René Vilatte*, 3 vols, St Ephrem’s Institute, Sweden, 2000, available at <http://www.thedegree.org/csism.html>, retrieved on 10 February 2009. Also of significance is Serge Thériault: *Msgr. René Vilatte, Organiser of Community Religion*, Apocryphile Press, 2006, which gives much detail on these events.

Finding that he was preaching (without much success) to an overwhelming majority of lapsed Catholics strongly antipathetic to Rome, he discussed the future of his mission with the local Episcopalian Bishop Brown. Brown offered to ordain Vilatte himself, but Vilatte considered Anglican orders invalid and so pointed to the chance to build bridges with the Old Catholic Church in Europe as a non-Roman Catholic church that would appeal to his flock. As a result Vilatte was ordained deacon and priest in 1885 by Old Catholic bishop Edward Herzog (but without any oath of canonical obedience), and thus became the first Old Catholic missionary to the United States.

When Brown died in 1888, his successor Bishop Grafton (who was much more hardline in churchmanship than Brown had been) wanted to integrate Vilatte's mission fully into the Episcopalian church, but Vilatte and his three parishes wanted to maintain the links with the Old Catholics. The Old Catholics, meanwhile, had written to dissociate themselves from the Episcopalians given their behaviour. Vilatte proposed to them that he be consecrated as Old Catholic Bishop of America, to which they gladly agreed. However, Grafton countered that he would withdraw all support if they did so. In this deadlock, Vilatte sought to open dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church to gain support and also explored reconciliation with Rome. Grafton, hearing of this, began to openly brief against Vilatte and forced him to found a new mission elsewhere. In 1891 he was accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church bishop in Alaska as a priest under his jurisdiction.

However, again Vilatte found himself a pawn in the power-struggles involving Grafton, and Grafton's continuing interference and campaign of character-assassination made it impossible for him to continue his ministry as a priest. Consequently he was persuaded to seek the episcopate from a different source that would, he hoped, be recognised by the Russian Orthodox. In 1891, after being elected by his Synod, he sailed to Ceylon where after almost a year he was consecrated to the episcopate by three Jacobite bishops with the permission of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. On his return to the United States, he found that the Episcopalians had excommunicated him and briefed against him to the Old Catholics (to whom their church was becoming increasingly close). In due course, Rome was to excommunicate him as well.

In the ensuing years, Vilatte was often reduced to abject poverty. At various times he allied himself with Polish, French and American churches, seeking to unite the smaller churches, and consecrated many men for various bodies, some of which continue today or have since been absorbed into other churches. He repeatedly explored reconciliation with Rome but each time withdrew at the last minute. In 1925, he finally reconciled before the Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, regretting having

received Holy Orders illicitly and conferring the same on others. Pope Pius XI granted him a pension of 22,000 francs a year and invited him to stay at the Cistercian Abbey of Pont Colbert. During the following years, Vilatte stayed in a cottage in the grounds, where he was addressed as Archbishop and attended Mass daily, though wearing the simple black soutane. Pope Pius XI offered to conditionally re-ordain him, but he declined. On his death, his Requiem was private and he was buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery in Versailles.

In 1925, a German newspaper had published a statement from the Swiss Old Catholics that falsely stated that Vilatte had never been a priest of that body or any other in the Union of Utrecht¹⁴. To this, Bishop Ceretti, papal nuncio, replied in the same newspaper as follows:

“Archbishop Vilatte received the Minor Orders and the Order of Subdeacon on June 5, 1885, the Order of Deacon on June 6 of the same year, and on the following day, June 7, 1885, the Ordination to the Priesthood. All these orders were conferred upon him by Bishop Herzog (Old Catholic Bishop) in the Old Catholic Church in Berne. This proved by documents, seals and signatures of Bishop Herzog. Concerning his Episcopal Consecration, it took place on May 29, 1892. Archbishop Vilatte was consecrated by three Jacobite Bishops in the Cathedral of Archbishop Alvares in Colombo (Ceylon). Archbishop Vilatte is likewise in the possession of the consecration deed in question bearing the signatures of the three above mentioned bishops and of the American Consul, who was present at the ceremony.”

This statement clearly and unambiguously proves that Rome regarded the Holy Orders which Vilatte had received as valid and recognised his status as archbishop.

- Salomão Barbosa Ferraz (1880-1969)¹⁵ was born and brought up as a Roman Catholic. He left the Roman Catholic Church and became a Presbyterian minister from 1902 to 1917. In the latter year, he was ordained an Anglican priest and served as such. He reconciled with the Roman Catholic Church in the early 1930s, and in 1935 was ordained priest subconditionally. In 1936 he again left the Roman Catholic church, established a Free Catholic Church and was elected its first bishop. In 1945, Carlos Duarte Costa, an excommunicated bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, and founder of the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church, consecrated him for the Free Apostolic Church of Brazil. Ferraz in turn

¹⁴ The Old Catholics at that time promulgated similar falsehoods concerning Arnold Harris Mathew, a former bishop of the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht whose lineage has since passed into many generations of wandering bishops. In several determinations (Linale: 1982, Lewins: 1998) the Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI) has confirmed explicitly the validity of orders conferred in the Mathew succession. However, the Vatican has since discontinued its policy of being willing to comment on the validity of the Holy Orders of other communions in this way.

¹⁵ See <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bferraz.html>, retrieved on 10 February 2009.

consecrated Manoel Ceia Laranjeira for his church (later known as the Independent Catholic Apostolic Church of Brazil) in 1951. Under Pope John XXIII in 1958 Ferraz sought re-admission to the Roman Catholic Church, leaving Laranjeira to lead the ICACB. He was accepted and his episcopate recognised unconditionally, even though he was married at the time, and after a wait of several years was appointed Titular Bishop of Eleutherna in 1963. He participated in all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council.

- Licinio Rangel (1936-2002) was ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church in 1967. In 1991, he was consecrated bishop without papal mandate by three bishops from the Society of St Pius X who had themselves been irregularly consecrated by Marcel Lefebvre in 1988. The same year he succeeded as superior of the traditionalist Priestly Society of St. John Mary Vianney. In 2001, along with 25 priests, he reconciled with Rome. His Society was transformed into a Personal Apostolic Administration, and he was appointed as apostolic administrator. In 2002 he was appointed Titular Bishop of Zarna.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

Neither the Roman Catholic nor the Orthodox churches admit women to the episcopate. Only the Orthodox Church of Greece has permitted the ordination of women to the diaconate in certain specific circumstances since 2004, and since that time two senior nuns have been ordained to that order.

Ecumenically, the ordination of women is one of the most difficult, and potentially most divisive, issues of our time. However, its acceptance or non-acceptance goes to the heart of our understanding of the sacraments. St. Paul tells us that there is only one class of baptism, for all are equal in Christ¹⁶. How, then, can this be reconciled with two classes in practice, one for men who may proceed to ordination and one for women who may not? Likewise, women were present and shared in the Last Supper. The instruction to commemorate this as a memorial of Him was delivered to all present, not only to men. The role of Mary Magdalene is also key to an understanding of Jesus' relationship to the ministry of women, and has been the subject of many detailed studies.

There is Scriptural reference to ordained women. Phoebe is described as a *diakonos* by St Paul in Romans 16:1. This word means "deacon"; it does not imply that an order of female "deaconesses" was in existence that did not hold the diaconate. Also, St Paul when describing the qualities that the office holders called "deacons" must possess, writes in 1 Timothy 3:11 that the *gunaikas* (Greek for women) "are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." In doing so he makes it clear that both men and women were admitted to the diaconate in the early church. There is no Scriptural or theological justification for a person who has been admitted to the diaconate being prevented from proceeding to the priesthood or episcopate on the grounds of their gender. If they are admitted to one of the major orders, they must therefore be admissible to all three.

While the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum currently has only men as members of its clergy, it nevertheless accepts fully that there is no theological barrier to the ordination of women. The issue then becomes one of the unity of the Church. Since the Roman Catholic Church holds that the sacraments as conferred by women are invalid, it will be necessary for that position to change before there is a common understanding on the issue. Our position remains that we continue to advocate that the Roman Catholic Church should reconsider this matter in the light of the historical evidence as well as the conclusions of the Greek Orthodox Church.

¹⁶ Galatians 3:28 "All who are baptised in Christ, have put on Christ. There is no longer any discrimination between Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female."

CHAPTER FOUR

CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPROACHES OF DIFFERENT GROUPS TOWARDS THE MAJOR DENOMINATIONS

There are several differences among the smaller denominations on this issue, and it is possible to attempt a broad and necessarily crude taxonomy as follows.

Firstly, there are those smaller churches which are foreign missions of mainstream Orthodox churches and have not broken with those churches or deviated in their mission, thus regarding themselves as continuing to be united in faith with their founding denomination.

Secondly, there are those churches which may have been separated from their founding denomination, but in faith and practice are essentially committed to unity with that denomination, and seek reconciliation on the condition that validity is conceded to their mission and clergy, possibly on a “Uniate” model or as a community with a particular charism. The various Old Catholic and Traditional Catholic churches tend to conform to this pattern. Some define themselves not as “churches” but as “archconfraternities” or “orders” to emphasise their subordinate role to their mother denomination. Most autocephalous Orthodox churches are also broadly aligned with this overall viewpoint.

Thirdly, there are those churches which seek reconciliation, but within a considerably longer timescale, and which consider that such an event is dependent on changes, sometimes of a significant nature, within the major denominations (for example, concerning the ordination of women and/or homosexuals). These churches will tend to regard the Roman Catholic Pope as Bishop of Rome but not concede primacy to the Roman Catholic or any other church. Most Independent Catholic churches are more-or-less aligned to this viewpoint.

Lastly, there are those churches which, whatever their Apostolic origins, conceive of themselves as wholly independent of any Roman, Orthodox, Anglican or other context, and, rather as the evangelical Protestant churches, are concerned with the creation of a self-sufficient community of faith. A number of churches in the Gnostic and related traditions operate in this way. Equally, there are those who have felt called to found a wholly new church, usually with universal ambitions, and if this model is more common among the non-Episcopal churches, it is hardly confined to them.

None of these approaches necessarily excludes ecumenism, nor does it mean that such ecumenism will not involve churches and communities of substantially different beliefs. Indeed, many would endorse the *sobornost* concept as articulated by Ivan Kireevsky, “*the sum total of all Christians of all ages, past and present, comprise one indivisible, eternal living assembly of the faithful, held together just as much by the unity of consciousness as through the communion of prayer.*”¹⁷

¹⁷ Ninian Smart, John Clayton, Patrick Sherry, Steven T. Katz. *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the West*. Cambridge University Press, 1988. p183.

Yet this position must be set in a wider context. The interpretations of the issue of apostolicity vary from the most reductive (“grace by pipeline”, as Hugh Montefiore, late Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, summed it up¹⁸) to those in which great complexities of doctrine are involved. There are those in the East, for example, who, rejecting ecumenism, hold that the *filioque* caused the loss of apostolicity to the Western church and her descendants in their entirety after 1054. A further bone of contention is the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to be *primus inter pares* as a result of her continuation of the See of St Peter at Rome, despite St Peter’s prior see as Bishop of Antioch. It would be possible in a study well beyond the scope of this work to analyse many more ways in which the various churches determine apostolicity as this applies to their separated brethren, and the many arguments and counter-arguments about why particular groups do or do not (or do, but only conditionally) recognise each other’s apostolicity.

The position of the *Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum* is unusual in that it presents a bridge between the second and third categories defined above. It does not define itself as separate from the historic churches, but as representing a particular aspect of their tradition – that of the inner church. Its relationship to churches that reflect primarily the outer church tradition must therefore recognise at the profoundest level the commonality and interrelationship of those approaches, while also acknowledging that it is the inner church that will eventually achieve primacy.

¹⁸ Church Times, 6 May 1994

SOME CONCLUSIONS REGARDING VALIDITY

One may view the issue of validity, as it were, from opposite ends of a telescope. From one end, valid Holy Orders are extremely difficult to confer, and depend on a whole range of factors, whereby just one step out of sequence or removed will ruin the entire edifice. Travelling down this path brings one to the unfortunate conclusion that the orders of no church in Christendom can be unambiguously valid¹⁹.

The perspective of the other end sees Holy Orders as readily conferrable with the proper form, matter and intent, and validity as likewise readily available except where there is grievous omission or error. This viewpoint conforms to the practice of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches throughout the ages and is, in fact, the only interpretation that can possibly be borne out within the understanding and history of those communions. The consequent conclusion is that the majority of those clergy who claim Apostolic validity, unless in the face of compelling material evidence to the contrary, must indeed be in valid Holy Orders.

¹⁹ Naturally, polemicists who wish to discredit a particular prelate or group often apply this first interpretation to them, while of course reserving the second to their favoured denomination.

CHAPTER FIVE

JURISDICTION

Issues of *validity* are separate from issues of *jurisdiction* in Roman Catholic sacramental theology. The concept of jurisdiction is that it constitutes the authority of a bishop or priest to govern those in his charge. Jurisdiction is held to be essential for the valid celebration of the sacraments of Penance and Matrimony and for Roman Catholics or churches in or aiming to be in union with that church, such jurisdiction can only be conferred through the official structures of the church under Papal authority.

The response to this is most often to fall back on the principle of *ecclesia supplet*, whereby the Church under certain circumstances can supply jurisdiction for an act. For example, this principle can be invoked at the celebration of the Eucharist, where, in the event that the priest does not himself believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation, he can still form the required intent to confect the sacrament. Likewise, in an emergency, an atheist may baptise, providing in each case the proper matter, form and content are present.

There would certainly be cause to regard *ecclesia supplet* as capable of being invoked to remedy any alleged or actual defect of intent in an episcopal consecration, but its implications are far wider. They have been the subject of a detailed discussion and briefing by Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais of the Society of St Pius X^o, from which a few selected quotations will suffice,

"Does a priest lack something when he is ordained a priest? Would there be something missing from his priestly character which the diocesan bishop has to add by word, "Here, I give you jurisdiction," as by waving a magic wand? Would a word from the bishop give something extra to the priest? No, it is not quite this.

Jurisdiction is the fact that the bishop gives a flock to his priests, or that the Pope designates a flock for a bishop by giving him a diocese. Jurisdiction is the power which a superior has over his flock and which a pastor has over his sheep...

In the present situation of crisis, it is obvious that your priests cannot receive from their superiors in the church, that is to say from the diocesan bishops and from the Pope, a flock, because that flock is refused to them. This authority over a flock must, therefore, be given to them in another manner: that is, by substitute or supplied jurisdiction.

In this case it is the Church herself which gives to priests a power as the power of the pastor over his flock. Normally the power of Holy Orders, brings with it the foundation or basis of a power to organize the Church in a hierarchy. Thus the priest's or the bishop's power of Holy Orders normally brings with it the power of jurisdiction. It is normal for a bishop or a priest to have a particular flock over which he exercises his power of Holy

²⁰ Bernard Tissier de Mallerais with introd. by Fr. Peter Scott: *Supplied Jurisdiction & Traditional Priests*, retrieved from http://www.sspix.org/miscellaneous/supplied_jurisdiction.htm on 10 February 2009.

Orders. But in the present situation we have to deal with the abnormal situation where the power of Holy Orders is unjustly deprived of the power of jurisdiction. It is in this case that the Church mercifully supplies jurisdiction in favor of you, the faithful, giving the jurisdiction your priests would otherwise not have.

This is therefore an extraordinary power, which is an exceptional case. In exceptional situations there are exceptional powers.”

It is therefore notable that in remitting the excommunication *latae sententiae* imposed upon Bishop Tissier de Mallerais and the other bishops of the SSPX on 21 January 2009²¹, the Vatican tacitly acknowledged that the interpretation of Bishop Tissier de Mallerais on this issue, which had been followed in practice between 1988 and 2009, had been correct. This has important implications for other communions which are likewise in a state of separation. So far as the *Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum* is concerned, the power of jurisdiction is supplied directly by the Church herself to the *Ecclesia* as a faithful representative of the original traditions of Christ as expressed in the inner church and which have subsequently been suppressed and denied by the outer church in its bid for primacy and temporal power.

²¹ Protocol Number 126/2009 issued by the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops.

CHAPTER SIX

ROUTES TO UNITY

Our concern in this work is not separation, but unity, and in particular the role that the Apostolic Succession can play in that ultimate aim of ecumenism. In this, we are working for understanding and co-operation between churches and communities that, even within a common ecclesial tradition, may believe and practice very different things.

There are two main concepts of unity, one of which is far more assertively advocated in the public arena and, dare one say, is more obvious than the other. Yet the obvious solution is, as history shows, not always the best or the most likely to succeed. This first solution is what we might describe as the Constantinian solution of dogmatic unity, whereby doctrinal and historical differences are suppressed in effective submission to a particular dogmatic interpretation. Other churches are in error and heretical, this solution says; therefore they must repent of their sins against unity and return to the fold of the true Church – whatever body one may hold to represent this. There are many, particularly within the Church of Rome and the Eastern Churches, who hold this position, rejecting ecumenism in consequence and regarding it as symptomatic of modern error; yet in terms of the viewpoint of most of those Christian denominations seen as beyond the pale by the proponents of such an approach, it cannot be seen as any form of solution but rather as an overweening sin of pride in that a given church other than their own community is presented as having a monopoly on the faith and lecturing others (often within the rich traditions of centuries-old communions) about what they should or should not believe.

The second solution is both more subtle and more persuasive in practice, for where ecumenical headway has been made, it is this solution that has generally been behind that progress. It is to regard some element of diversity within the Church as a whole as both inevitable and not by any means a bad thing, and therefore to seek to understand and accept other churches and communities on the terms that they approach the Christian faith, without first requiring of them that they surrender those terms in order to be considered within the bounds of the Church. Such an approach is not new. It is the model of the church before the time of Constantine, and that of the church as it was left to us by the Apostles. In other words, such “unity in diversity” is the true and authentic model of the Church of Christ.

Such a solution requires that those involved are prepared to put aside their differences to work together, and indeed to extend co-operation despite what may be chasms in terms of doctrinal and liturgical practice. This requires both a security in the faith and a sound understanding of the diversity of Christian belief and the historical reasons why such diversity has come about. Those whose faith is founded on the separateness of what they believe to be the one true church from the mass of heretics and unbelievers are unlikely to find it conducive, as will those whose view of the Christian faith remains, despite all in Holy Scripture counselling to the contrary, primarily tribalistic.

We note in particular the comments of the late Bishop George Boyer,

“Personally, we do not think that [Pope John Paul II’s] death will make much difference to the Dogmas of the Roman Church. The now deceased Pope laid down certain rules for the Cardinals to follow before he died. These rules contained material, as it has been reported, that the ideas of women priests, contraception, and the remaining dogmas must be continued in spite of public opinion – so unless the new Pope is far-seeing we will not notice any difference to the way that Church works. The Roman Church over the years uses negative propaganda against any separate organisation or group that does not contribute to their kind of teachings, and have hung on to their version of The Christ in spite of all the recent researches into the true facts - so we do not expect any fundamental changes.”²²

It will be seen that the ecumenical approach promotes a broad and inclusive church rather than one which rests on the dogmatic governance characteristic of the externals of the Roman Catholic Church; it is more concerned with a common journey towards an understanding in faith than in seeking to define that faith within the absolute limits of dogma. In looking to such a model we are reminded by the Epistle of St Clement to the Church at Corinth (written ca.96 AD), that we should recognise the Apostolic Succession not merely as the exclusive property of a particular church, but as a *personal* succession passed from the Apostles to bishops with the direction that that group of bishops should in turn appoint its own episcopal successors.

The reality of this is shown in the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith “Dominus Iesus”. “Dominus Iesus” is worded carefully so that it includes both churches and communities, the latter term presumably applicable to those bodies that do not meet the definition of a church. Many independent sacramental groups, and some orders, societies and sodalities would fall into this latter category. The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum, which preserves the Eucharistic Rite in its true form, considers itself to be one such body.

“Dominus Iesus” was issued during the reign of Pope John Paul II, June 16, 2000, and signed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (now Pope Benedict XVI) on August 6, 2000. It contains in Section IV: Article 17 foll.:

“Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the [Roman] Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the [Roman] Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the [Roman] Catholic Church, since they do not accept the [Roman] Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church.

The Christian faithful are therefore not permitted to imagine that the Church of Christ is nothing more than a collection — divided, yet in some way one — of Churches and

²² Count George Boyer: *True Light of Christ*, published online at http://www.gnostic.info/boyer_truelight.html

ecclesial communities; nor are they free to hold that today the Church of Christ nowhere really exists, and must be considered only as a goal which all Churches and ecclesial communities must strive to reach". In fact, "the elements of this already-given Church exist, joined together in their fullness in the [Roman] Catholic Church and, without this fullness, in the other communities". "Therefore, these separated Churches and communities as such, though we believe they suffer from defects, have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the [Roman] Catholic Church"²³.

The lack of co-operation and mutual recognition among Christians is certainly a wound for the Church; not merely in the sense that she is deprived of her unity, but "in that it hinders the complete fulfilment of her universality in history". The argument that the Roman Catholic Church will be the vehicle by which the fullness of the Church's mission will be fulfilled is not by any means denied by the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum. That fulfilment, however, exists not within the Roman Catholic Church in its present state as representative of the outer church, but can only be realized when it is transformed through the inner church and its traditions, such that the inner church supplants the outer.

Again, we refer to the words of Jesus, when He said, "*When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter [the kingdom].*" (Thom: 22)

We should note the comment on churches that possess apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist which are here acknowledged as "true particular Churches". Needless to say, those bodies are not named by the Vatican, but we can demonstrate that in addition to the mainstream Orthodox churches the definition set forth can readily and comprehensively be applied to the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum.

²³

Retrieved

from

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html on 10 February 2009.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MYSTIC TRADITION

There is little basis for believing that the Church in the time of the Apostles and immediately thereafter was subject to centralised dogmatic governance in practice, although it is debatable as to whether it was the intention that, had practical obstacles been able to be overcome, such governance would have been seen by the majority of the Church as desirable. In as much as the *depositum fidei* dictated such matters, St Peter and St Paul seem to have had a model in mind for the governance of the Church (obviously contextual, although the extent of that context has been the subject of wide debate) that was to some extent authoritarian, and the extent to which the Church Fathers (particularly St. Irenaeus of Lyons) sought to standardize the faith continued this process.

Yet this was not the only approach to the legacy of Jesus; the cardinal lesson many have derived from St Paul's ministry is the importance of an *inner* spiritual succession (expressed through Divine revelation as *gnosis* or direct knowledge of God) as well as an outer succession (expressed through the conventional Apostolic succession through the laying on of hands). The mystic church is present both in Holy Scripture (through the tradition of St John and to some extent that of St Peter) and also as a living tradition in the ensuing years, whether through the various Gnostic traditions or through the other contemporaneous mystery schools.

If we see the two approaches to unity we described in the previous chapter as essentially in conflict, the former representing the Ultramontane while the latter represents the Ultrajectine, that conflict is as readily expressible in terms of the understanding of the Church from positions open to or opposed to mysticism. The Constantinian may accept the idea of a personal *theosis* as part of a transformative process whereby individual development is more closely attuned to the experience of God (and such a view prevails within the Orthodox churches), but this is not the same as accepting that there is an inner path leading to enlightenment for the initiate. For the mystic, however, such a path is not merely present in abundant reality but has clearly been manifested in different ways to different individuals through the ages, so that mysticism is present in practice within every manifestation of Christianity – including those traditions which outwardly discourage it – and in a number of cases has become the driving force behind particular ecclesiastical developments in the modern age²⁴.

The mystic within the mainstream denominations must remain a somewhat isolated figure, even when (as most usually through the monastic tradition) his or her spiritual path is accepted. Although one can speak at length of the many mystics within the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches over the centuries, none of these churches have sought greatly to encourage mysticism, perceived as a threat to church order or risking the promotion of what is perceived as heresy. In that the perception of

²⁴ In this context, we should note in particular the Old Catholic Church of the Mariavites, which draws on the visions of Feliksa Kozłowska (1862-1921) and the Palmarian Catholic Church, based on the reported apparitions of the Virgin at Palmar de Troya in 1968.

the church is that unity rests within a hierarchical and to a greater or lesser extent authoritarian leadership model, it is inevitable that private revelation be marginalised. In turn, such marginalisation at times is likely to produce a reaction in the opposite direction from that of the mainstream.

Historically, this mystic path coalesces in the late nineteenth-century to form the movements we can describe as New Thought and New Age²⁵, and forms the background for such developments as Theosophy, the guiding spirit behind the Liberal Catholic Church and modern Gnosticism. The rebirth of the Valentinian tradition occurs in 1890 with the establishment of the *Eglise Gnostique* under Jules Doinel (Tau Valentinus II). These mystery schools find their most overt twentieth-century embodiment in the work of bishops such as Richard, Duc de Palatine, George Boyer and Herman Spruit.

Here, the work of the church may be conceived as the embodiment of the inner church tradition and its universality seen through the actions of a small group of dedicated and enlightened adepts whose work, though invisible to the outside world, nevertheless constitutes a vital intercession in favour of the spiritual welfare of mankind in the widest possible sense. The connections with the teachings of Freemasonry, Martinism and Rosicrucianism are strong within these churches, as is a commitment to non-dogmatism and the importance of individual spiritual growth.

²⁵ That phrase is used here in the sense it was understood in the earlier part of the last century.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MEETING-PLACE OF THE MYSTICS AND THE MISSION CHURCHES

At the same period of the mid- to late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, we see as a separate development the planting in the West of autogenic missions of the existing Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches, usually with the intention not so much of caring for an existing community of that church, as of providing a bishop *in partibus infidelium* to perform a missionary role. Such a role has a long history, and one has but to reflect on the life of St. Patrick to find a famous example of such a missionary.

Some of these missions have to a greater or lesser extent developed an autonomous character and thus encompass both their original doctrinal heritage and additional influences, not necessarily affecting the overall identity of the group as standing within the mainstream of Orthodoxy, but rather as enjoying a similar position to a monastic order such as the Jesuits in relation to their mother church at Rome.

Many of the contemporary autocephalous denominations are the outcomes of either of these developments, or, since the various streams of Apostolic Succession deriving from them have intermingled over the years, from both. This brings about the widely divergent heritage seen among modern Independent Catholics and related groups. The concept of what is Orthodox is also widely redefined by these groups, with some, including the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum, concluding that a genuinely Orthodox position is that of the pre-Constantinian church.

A further development is provided by those churches and clergy that derive their Holy Orders from excommunicated Roman Catholic bishops in the twentieth-century; those bishops being Carlos Duarte Costa, Marcel Lefebvre, Pierre Martin Ngô Đình Thục and Emmanuel Milingo. The majority of these groups see themselves as either traditionalist Roman Catholics, or, in the case of the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church, as reformed Roman Catholics. The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum stands in the Duarte Costa succession. The Costa and Milingo successions have passed into reasonably wide circulation, while those of Lefebvre and Thục have largely remained among their particular groups of traditionalist Roman Catholics.

An older case of orders deriving from excommunicated Roman Catholic bishops is provided by Arnold Harris Mathew, who was consecrated as Archbishop of Great Britain of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht, a church whose bishops were recognised by Rome as having received orders which were valid but irregular in her eyes.

The various successions were unified during the twentieth-century by successions of wandering bishops – “apostles of a new spirituality” as Bishop Lewis Keizer has called them in his detailed study of their development²⁶. Several union movements formed

²⁶ Bishop Lewis Keizer: *The Wandering Bishops: Apostles of a New Spirituality*, published online at www.hometemple.org

during the 1940s and 1950s, and the most significant of these transmitted its heritages to Richard, Duc de Palatine, at his consecration. He writes,

“The direct lines of succession called “Catholic” are now known as THE OECUMENICAL APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION and blended with the non-Catholic successions, they became what could be termed THE WISDOM RELIGION-GNOSTIC MYSTIC TRADITION. The Catholic successions are derived through (1) Syrian-Antiochene. (2) Syrian-Malabar; (3) Syrian-Gallican; (4) Armenian-Uniate; (5) SyroChaldean; (6) Chaldean-Uniate; (7) Coptic-Orthodox; (8) Old Catholic (American); (9) Order of Corporate Reunion; (10) Roman Catholic; (11) Anglican, for what it is worth. They are derived through His Sacred Beatitude Mar Georgius, Lord Patriarch of Glastonbury. His Beatitude’s Orders were declared valid in the Parish Hall of Notre Dame de la Chambre, Brussels, Belgium on 26th March 1953 during a Conference of Roman Catholic Theologians presided over by Canon Pierre Gillet, who was for 18 years Professor of Canon Law in the Seminary of Malines, and Canonist in Title to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Malines.”²⁷

These heritages are further augmented by the authentic Papal line of transmission that passed through the *Eglise Johannite des Chrétiens Primitifs* of Bernard Fabre-Palapat into the *Eglise Gnostique* of Jules Doinel and its successor the *Eglise Gnostique Universelle*. In that latter body, further lines of succession were merged and pass today into the Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum and other churches.

The Ecclesia Apostolica Divinorum Mysteriorum does not claim to be the exclusive heir of any of its predecessor bodies, nor does it necessarily adopt a position of judgement on such claims made by others except where such is required of it of necessity. However, it represents one of the most complete expressions of the Apostolic heritage today, and as such stands as a bridge towards unity and a means of furthering its mission in the widest ecumenical context.

²⁷ Richard, Duc de Palatine, *op. cit.*