

A close-up portrait of Edward Schillebeeckx, an elderly man with glasses, looking directly at the camera. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

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THE
COLLECTED
WORKS OF

Edward Schillebeeckx

VOLUME IX
THE CHURCH WITH
A HUMAN FACE

B L O O M S B U R Y

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX

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EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX

VOLUME IX

THE CHURCH
WITH A HUMAN
FACE

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Most secondary literature on *The Church with a Human Face. A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* refers to the 1985 edition. In this new version typing errors, spelling mistakes and numerous wrong or poor translations are corrected. Therefore reference should be made to this version in the future, though it would be a service to your readers if the page numbers of the old edition (added in square brackets in the margins) are mentioned as well. The text of this new edition should be considered as authoritative.

Please note that endnotes in the original 1985 edition are converted to footnotes (with different numbering) in this new edition.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
BLE	<i>Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft des Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
COD	Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta
Conc.	<i>Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
FZPT	<i>Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie</i>
GCS	Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller
HJ	<i>Historisches Jahrbuch</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
KuD	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
MTZ	<i>Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
NRT	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
PG	J.P.Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PL	J.P.Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RAC	<i>Religion in Antike und Christentum</i>
RevAscMyst	<i>Revue d'ascétique et de mystique</i>
RGG	<i>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RSPT	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>

Abbreviations

RTL	<i>Revue théologique de Louvain</i>
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SdZ	<i>Stimme der Zeit</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TheolStud	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realencyclopädie</i>
TTZ	<i>Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TuG	<i>Theologie und Gemeinde</i>
TvT	<i>Tijdschrift voor Theologie</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WuW	<i>Wort und Wahrheit</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>

Introduction to

COLLECTED WORKS OF EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX

Without a doubt Prof. Mag. Dr Edward Schillebeeckx O.P. (1914-2009) is one of the most creative and influential theologians of the 20th and 21st century. His work has been much discussed and is still widely popular in academic and pastoral circles. Schillebeeckx played a major role in theological and ecclesiastic renewal. His academic studies and scholarly pastoral books, sermons and lectures continue to inspire a wide reading public. His considerable authority as a scholar is based on extensive knowledge of the Christian tradition coupled with passionate involvement with people and movements in church and society, especially those who are exposed to injustice and suffering.

A theologian of such exceptional stature in the Dutch language area certainly deserves enduring public attention. In 2004, therefore, on the occasion of Schillebeeckx's 90th birthday, the Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation made the first moves for the publication of his collected works. Extensive discussion followed on just what kind of publication we envisaged: a complete and comprehensive overview of his work, a critical edition of his monographs, an annotated reissue of his most innovative works and/or a selective republication of articles, including reflection on their reception. The preparatory committee – consisting of Dick Boer, Erik Borgman, Mijke Jetten, Kristanto Budiprabowo, Frans Maas, Robert Schreiter, Ted Mark Schoof O.P., Nico Schreurs and Carl Sterkens – was soon confronted with a major problem: the sheer volume of Schillebeeckx's work. He was a very prolific writer indeed. This is borne out by the updated version of Schillebeeckx's bibliography, compiled and published by Ted Schoof and Jan van de Westelaken, which can be found on the foundation's website: www.schillebeeckx.nl. A publication of his complete works, therefore, seemed virtually impossible. Some of them had been published in one language only (mostly Dutch, but also German and French), while translations, though usually meticulously checked by or on behalf of the author, at times differed somewhat from the original. Because of

practical concerns like financial constraints and the limited availability of translations we confined ourselves to a re-publication of Schillebeeckx's major works – still a daunting endeavour.

For similar reasons we decided not to republish the original Dutch texts but only translations, although we realize that not even the best translation can adequately convey the often subtle nuances and delicate shades of meaning of the original. Various misunderstandings at Schillebeeckx's much publicized 'conversation' with Vatican authorities on Christology in 1980 illustrate this risk. It seemed logical to choose translations which would be accessible to the extensive Anglophone world. Fortunately quite a number of good translations of Schillebeeckx's publications were available. Nonetheless a great deal of the *Collected Works* were revised once more, both linguistically and substantively. The translations of volumes 1 to 5 did not require checking: that had already been done at the time of the publication of the English versions (between 1963 and 1974) by Schillebeeckx's fellow brother and assistant at the time, Ted Mark Schoof, who, before concluding his theological education with Edward Schillebeeckx in Nijmegen, had followed the regular theology course of four years at Blackfriars, Oxford. Of the volumes 6, 7 and 11 the as yet untranslated parts were either translated or edited by Marcelle Manley. This applies particularly to volume 11, most of which now appears in English for the first time, but also to a new section in volume 7 (*Christ. The Christian experience in the modern world*). As for volume 6 (*Jesus: An experiment in Christology*), the (somewhat laboured) original translation by Hubert Hoskins was edited by Sr Joanna Dunham, and subsequently thoroughly revised and re-edited by Marcelle Manley, in such depth that she should be mentioned as co-translator. The substantive accuracy of John Bowden's original translations of volumes 7 to 10 (and of volumes 6 and 11 as well) was checked by Ted Schoof. Hence they are now published as 'authorized' versions. Volume 9 (*The church with a human face*) required such extensive terminological corrections that the earlier translation can no longer be considered reliable. In each volume the section 'How to use this book' synoptically outlines a format for references to the text.

Although many linguistic and substantive changes were introduced, we did not opt for gender-inclusive language. Present-day translations would undoubtedly have used this style, but for the sake of maximum fidelity to the original text, and for the practical reason that the English versions of volumes 1 to 5 did not require checking, we decided not to do so.

These *Collected Works* include Schillebeeckx's unquestionably major theological works. We chose them for their historical significance, theological relevance and impact on developments in theology and church communities. It was no coincidence that these works were mostly out of print. In the *Collected Works* each volume will have a short introduction providing a brief sketch of

Introduction to Collected Works

its background, context and relevance.

The Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation is proud to present Schillebeeckx's most influential works in one readily available series. We thank the Flemish and Dutch provinces of the Dominican Order for making this publication possible. We hope its readers' enjoyment of these works will be as great as our appreciation of the support we received.

Prof. Dr Nico Schreurs
Chairman, Edward Schillebeeckx Foundation

Introduction to the new edition

THE CHURCH WITH A HUMAN FACE

During his life, Edward Schillebeeckx published extensively on the theology of ministry and ministerial priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. In the 'Foreword' of his book *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* (1981; Dutch original 1980) he lists 17 articles, the first one published in 1955.

However, something had changed for him after the Second Vatican Council and, again, after the Synod of Bishops in 1971. In Schillebeeckx's view, the ecclesiology of the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* marked an important shift in thinking about the place and the role of the hierarchy, and thus of the episcopacy and the priesthood in the Church. In the period between 1850 and 1950, the Church was presented as centered around the clergy. Drawing on historical studies undertaken after the Second World War – of which Yves Congar's *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (1954) was the most influential – Vatican II reversed the order. *Lumen gentium* presented the Church first as the people – Greek: *laos* – of God. In this sense, being a member of the Church means being a member of the 'laity'; the distinction between those baptized and confirmed and those also ordained to the priesthood was secondary, although *Lumen gentium* made also unambiguously clear that the distinction was of a fundamental nature.

In the late 1950s, Schillebeeckx had developed in his own writing the idea that Christ was the primordial sacrament of the encounter with God (*Christ the Sacrament*, 1963, Dutch 1959). This role as a primordial sacrament was inherited by the Church as a whole after Jesus's death and resurrection. Schillebeeckx felt confirmed in this analysis by the statement in the opening paragraph of *Lumen gentium* that 'the Church is in Christ like a sacrament', that is 'a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race'. This meant, according to him, that priestly ordination had to be re-defined as a sacrament in this light: as an essential service to the Church, called to represent the living Christ to the world in a sacramental manner. *Lumen gentium* remained ambivalent on this point, but there were important signs of hope in the document, in Schillebeeckx's view. The opening paragraph of the

constitution's chapter on the hierarchical structure of the Church, especially, hinted at what for Schillebeeckx was a promising approach: 'For the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation' (no. 18). Priests have essential tasks to fulfill in order to let the Church be 'like a sacrament', that is both a sign and an instrument of 'a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race', as she is called to be. That is what makes their office sacramental.

However, after the closing of the council things started to develop in a different direction. In 1971 the theme for the Second Synod of Bishops was, apart from *Justice in the World*, - as the official title of its final document expressed - also the role and the place of the ministerial office in the Church. Out of fear that the role of priests in the Church would be only considered in sociological terms - a fear Schillebeeckx thought highly exaggerated - the synod refrained from rethinking episcopacy and priesthood in the light of the mission of the Church: to be the sacramental expression of God's salvific presence in the contemporary world, as Schillebeeckx considered necessary. Instead, the synod built on what he saw as a misreading of the theology of the Council of Trent, according to which the priest at his ordination is signed with a special *character*. What in Schillebeeckx' view was originally only a way of expressing that the ordination really hands on the ministerial priesthood in all its aspects to the person ordained, developed into what he called 'an ideology' that stressed the ontological divide between priests and ordinary believers.

According to Schillebeeckx's analysis the debates at the Bishops' Synod and its final document were defensive and started on the wrong foot. Departing from the texts in *Lumen gentium* that stressed the continuity with the council of Trent and Vatican I, the bishops could only think in terms of adaptation of what they saw as essentially the same priestly office to the changed situation. For Schillebeeckx, this approach in itself was a problem. The very mission of the Church was to be a 'like a sacrament' in the world. Its relation to the world as it actually is, should not be an afterthought, therefore, but a starting point. This is why he was sympathetic to communities in the Netherlands, often ecumenical in character, that tried in a practical manner to re-invent ecclesial presence in the Dutch society of the 1970s and 80s. Often they called themselves 'grassroots communities' and identified strongly with the *Comunidades de Base* that had developed in the Latin American church, typically combining social activism with religious reflection and celebration. Schillebeeckx saw that their approach involved problems and shortcomings, but he also considered them as laboratories, experimenting with

new ways of being ecclesial and being community, which also had to lead to new forms of leadership and ministry, as in fact it did. He felt that this was in accordance with the way in which the diversity of offices and mysteries had developed in the Church, as he argued in his contribution to a collection of reflections on ministry and offices in grassroots communities: *Basis en ambt* ('Grassroots and ministerial office', 1979, not translated into English).

All this is at the background of Schillebeeckx's *The Church with a Human Face*. This book presents the final results of his attempts to show historically how ministry has always developed in relation to the circumstances, and to the needs of the Church in that context. He also tries to show how tendencies to set apart ordained clergy from the ordinary believer, both sociologically by requiring a particular life style with celibacy as its core, and ontologically by understanding the special *character* as the foundation of their power to make Christ present in the sacraments, were later developments – and highly contestable ones at that.

Among other things, Schillebeeckx was concerned with the situation of so called 'pastoral workers' in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Canonically speaking they were lay people, but they had an academic degree in theology – not seldom they were former students of Schillebeeckx or of his colleagues at Nijmegen university – and had *de facto* responsibility for parishes. Their position was juridically unclear, however, and sometimes economically uncertain. Schillebeeckx thought it was time to do them justice and draw the consequences of what he saw as a happy experiment. Pastoral workers should be recognized as ministers in all aspects of the meaning of that word. In his view it was highly problematic that in the current situation the *de facto* pastors could not celebrate the sacraments to sustain the community in its relation with God in Christ. Especially concerning the Eucharist, the church's message was highly ambivalent: '[...] the eucharist, so highly praised in Vatican II as a place where the heart of the community beats, must now suddenly give place to other liturgical celebrations (praiseworthy and welcome though they may be in themselves) for want of a priest, and many believers have to be content with a longing for the eucharist' (p. 248-9 [265]).

Since these words were written, lay pastoral workers have been less and less employed, precisely in order to avoid the ambivalences Schillebeeckx thought should lead to new steps in the ongoing development of ministerial offices. Eventually, the formulation drawn up in the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the ministry and the life of priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, would become the new phrase to secure the unique identity of the priest: 'the priesthood, while indeed it presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, is conferred by that special sacrament; through it priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and are conformed to Christ the Priest in such a way that they can act in the person of Christ the Head' (no. 2). In *the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no. 875) this is explained further. The Catechism states that by their

ordination priests 'receive the mission and faculty ("the sacred power")' to act in the person of Christ the Head. Thus Vatican II's statement that the Eucharist is 'source and summit' of the life of the Church, becomes rather ambivalent. Because it is so strongly stressed that only ordained priests have the power to celebrate the Eucharist, one gets the impression that priestly ordination is more than ever in fact the fundamental sacrament of the Church.

Schillebeeckx' theology of ministry was investigated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in the first half of the nineteen eighties. In *Basis en ambt* and in *Ministry*, Schillebeeckx had concluded that under certain circumstances communities without priests could select someone from their midst to preside in the Eucharist, in what he called an 'extraordinary form of ministry' (*buitengewone ambtsbediening*). This, the congregation declared, could not be reconciled with the teaching of the Church. Remarkably, however, in order to show that Schillebeeckx was not debating an open question and a matter of theological opinion, the congregation used as its basis document *Sacerdotium ministeriale*, a letter 'on certain questions concerning the ministry of the Eucharist' not written by the pope, but sent by the Congregation for de Doctrine of Faith itself to the bishops on 6 August 1983; the two books in question, however, had been published already in 1979 and 1980 respectively.

In a letter dated 13 juni 1984, the Congregation sent its conclusions to Schillebeeckx, asking him to 'accept publicly the doctrine of the Church on this point by manifesting his personal adherence' to *Sacerdotium ministeriale*. He replied on 5 October 1984 by announcing the forthcoming publication of the Dutch edition of *The Church with a Human Face*. In *L'Osservatore Romano* the congregation published its letter with a part of Schillebeeckx' reply (on 11 January 1985) and later (15 September 1986) a 'notification' on the Dutch edition of *The Church with a Human Face* that would prove to be final. It conceded that the question of 'extraordinary forms of ministry' was not raised in the new book, but declared that 'while there is no formal rejection of the letter *Sacerdotium ministeriale*, there is likewise no declaration of adherence to it. Rather, it is made the object of a critical analysis'. Which is to say that, as far as the congregation is concerned, it does not qualify as a public acceptance and personal adherence to the document. The most important conclusion of the congregation, however, is 'that the author continues to conceive and present the apostolicity of the Church in such a way that the apostolic succession through sacramental Ordination represents a non-essential element for the exercise of the ministry and thus for the bestowal of the power to consecrate the Eucharist'.

This is indeed the fundamental difference. Schillebeeckx would of course use different language, but for him it is indeed highly problematic to stress the 'apostolic succession through sacramental Ordination' one-sidedly, at the cost of the faith tradition that the whole People of God is endowed with all the powers

Christ wanted to give his Church. It is not easy to see how these two positions can be reconciled in the near future. It seems that Schillebeeckx was forced to come to the same conclusion, which accounts for the very bleak tone of his introduction of *Church: The Human Story of God* (1989, p. [xiii]), in which he complains that the '[d]elight in belonging to this church, a delight which increased greatly during the Second Vatican Council and the years immediately following, has been sorely tested over the last decade.'

What was at stake for Schillebeeckx was not whether the Church had a divine foundation, whether the Eucharist represented a 'real presence' of Christ, or even whether the priesthood had a sacral meaning or was a distinguished religious calling in its own right. These things were important to him, but as *aspects* of the ongoing economy of salvation, in which people in their ordinary lives are receiving God's life-giving presence that leads them to their future in God's kingdom. The overall framework of *Lumen gentium* seems to be on his side. This framework, however, seems to have been lost sight of in the polarised church debates during the 1970s and 80s. Hopefully it will be restored in a new round of reception of the documents of Vatican II at the fiftieth anniversary of the council and its documents. It could mean new chances for Schillebeeckx's concerns, even though probably not in all the aspects of his writings on ministry.

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PREFACE

In its first and second editions, my book *Ministry*¹ was still too much a work consisting of originally separate articles, even though I had worked through them again for the new publication. These circumstances in which the book came into being caused unnecessary misunderstandings among some readers.

Those who read my books will also be aware that although *Ministry* was enthusiastically approved by many people, since it was published it has also provoked criticism of me here and there, both from theologians and from the official *magisterium*. Perhaps as a result of particular anxieties, some of which are understandable and some of which I find incomprehensible, a number of critics (for example W. Kasper, A. Vanhoye, P. Grelot and to a large extent also the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) seem to have been blind to what I actually said in the book. I myself was struck by the way in which some of them (perhaps rather hesitantly) were in fact really saying the same thing as I was, and yet criticizing me at the same time. The criticisms that they made usually related to small points of detail (some of them very small; while these were always valuable in the context of a comprehensive verdict on my book, they did not really affect my basic positions). I am particularly grateful to the patristic scholar H. Crouzel for his serious criticisms of detail, which moreover are certainly in place in an accurate and objective interpretation of what I have actually said in my book (this can hardly be said of the comments of some of my other critics). I shall take full account of *justified* criticism in the present book; the truth is served by that, and the truth is my concern.

Because their pastoral concern has led theological friends from abroad, too, to press me to make a specific reply to ungrounded criticisms or criticisms of positions which I nowhere defended in my earlier book, I have slightly changed my theological timetable for a while in order to return to the problem of ministry in the Roman Catholic Church and the crisis surrounding it, which is a cause of grief for many people - sometimes even a scandal. Unfounded criticism can damage the pastoral usefulness of experiments in the church. Hence this *new* book on 'ministries in the church'.

¹ *Ministry*, New York and London 1981.

Preface

Precisely in view of this particular impasse and its ecumenical implications, I have ended this new book with a critical assessment of the third part of the Lima Report, about 'Ministries in the Church', as a challenge to all Christians issued by the early, still undivided church.

Nijmegen, 1 January 1985
Edward Schillebeeckx

Factus sum insipiens

vos me coegistis

(II Cor. 12.11, Vulgate)

Introduction

WHY THIS NEW BOOK? A TEST CASE?

(a) The aim of my earlier book, *Ministry*

In both the first and the second, expanded, edition of *Ministry* I began from the specific situation in which Christian churches now find themselves - in positions for and against. In many respects a great many people - members of believing communities and ministers - find their experiences in the present situation negative. The dominant conceptions about the practice and the theology of the ministry seem to be robbing the gospel of its force in communities of believers - an experience which is shared by quite a number of Christians and ministers. Moreover, in all areas we can see an increasing shortage of priests. These facts often have serious consequences where traditional views are maintained. The Sunday celebration of the eucharist is trivialized (the laity preside over a kind of pseudo-eucharist, with hosts which are brought from elsewhere; this both takes the heart out of the celebration that in fact takes place and regards consecrated hosts in a magical way). Moreover, not only nor even primarily in Holland, one can see all kinds of attempts to get out of this dead end.

For the theologian, this raises the question: what is possible and desirable, and even pastorally urgent, for Christians and the church, in such developments? To find an answer, the theologian turns to the life of the church down the centuries. He or she then discovers that the church is always affected by new social and historical developments in the world - sometimes to its advantage and sometimes less so. This raises the question: why should this process of trial and error and pastoral exploration suddenly come to an end in our day, perhaps to the detriment of the vitality of the gospel in the churches? There is a theological problem here which calls for theological illumination. My starting point in dealing with it is the view that much, but not everything, is possible in a community of Christ. Ministries in the church have their own

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specifically sacramental significance, which in my view was also accepted by the Reformation, though it did not use the technical term 'sacrament' in this context. Moreover, one can never give an absolute cut-and-dried formulation of what is specifically normative for Christians, since this can only be found in changing historical forms. If such a norm is made absolute, then 'the normative element' is itself caricatured; despite everything, this normative element is to be found only *in* these historical forms, never detached from the historically contingent context. Where such a development takes place, absolute authority is accorded, for example, to the actual practice of the ministry at the time of the New Testament (as in biblicism, in either right-wing or left-wing fundamentalism), or to the view of the ministry held, for example, by Saint Sulpice, the modern image of the priesthood down to our day.

A historical investigation teaches the theologian that on the basis of the sacramental reality of the 'community of God', the exercise of ministry in the church has taken different forms over the course of history. At the same time it becomes clear that according to sociological laws, in an established church which needs a church order, the various forms, including that of ministry, develop a tough structure and in the long run no longer fit different situations. Changes in the forms of ministry never seem to be deliberate in the first place, but only appear as a consequence of social changes in the church and the world: the rise of a new spirituality, different views of the church, society and the world. By this theological approach to 'socio-historical facts' and especially by demonstrating the pluralism in them, I have sought to show that even today, changes in the practice of the ministry can be quite legitimate in the light of the gospel (in the sense of being legitimate dogmatically) and that from a pastoral perspective they may even be said to be necessary for the vitality of the gospel in Christian communities at the present time. Of course opinions may differ over the question of pastoral necessity, but there is no need to brand someone a heretic who points this out and indicates the possibilities within the church. Perhaps I might add that in *Ministry* I did not argue for illegality in any way, but tried to *make understandable*, both theologically and pastorally, those illegal practices which are in fact carried on. I did this both in order to get rid of excrescences and to open up ways to the recognition of new possibilities in the church.

[003] *Ministry* was also intended for those to whom the 'classical' image of the priest is so familiar and so beloved - that is why so many spiritual and material sacrifices are still made for it - in order that they can also reconcile themselves emotionally to changes in the familiar image of this practice and to other emphases relating to conceptions of the ministry. It can be liberating to discover from historical material that in other times the accents did not lie where they do now. Moreover, many of today's changes are not as drastic as

some people fear; indeed, taken together they are very modest. In my view, at any rate, fear about any change whatsoever in this area goes back to the view of the priesthood held by Père de Bérulle in the seventeenth century, though some moves in this direction can be detected in the Middle Ages and the early church. At the heart of this view lies the conviction that Jesus Christ was a priest on the basis of his divine and not his human nature. If we see, rightly, the church's ministry as 'sharing in the priesthood of Christ' (Thomas Aquinas) against this background, the source of the sacral ontologizing of the ministry is clear. But if one bases the priesthood of Jesus not on his deity but on his humanity - and in the nineteenth century J.H. Newman argued for this - then the ministry, too, takes on another dimension with a no less truly Christian, sacramental significance. The ultimate aim of my first book about ministry was to clarify this.

(b) The aim of this new book

In *Ministry* I drew a very sharp distinction between the conception of the ministry in the first Christian millennium and that in the second. At that time, and especially in the second edition of this book, I called this an *overall* (i.e. unqualified) schematization of past history. I still believe this to be true as a general appreciation. Of course, differences in spirituality, in conceptions and forms, even of ministry, never take place suddenly. They come about over the course of centuries, often imperceptibly, with a good deal of overlapping in which the old and the new stand side by side. Moreover, one can see what became characteristic and striking in the second millennium take shape as early as the end of the fourth century. So this overlapping can last for centuries. It already begins at the end of the first century. Throughout this process over two Christian millennia there are of course *quite* fundamental shifts, but no definitive or radical break can be established. Thin but real threads of continuity remain, as I already saw in *Ministry*.

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In this perspective it would be better to present the overall scheme of the two millennia following the New Testament in a more sophisticated way, as follows - though it is still schematic throughout:

1. Conceptions of ministry in the second century;
2. A fundamental shift between the second and the end of the fourth century: the mystique of the consecrating priest perceptibly gains ground;
3. Feelings and experience in the church in the early Middle Ages and the feudal period;
4. The thirteenth century, the time of the mediaeval bourgeoisie and the writers of great *Summae*, which systematized in a somewhat 'timeless' way the practice and the view of the ministry which had in fact come into being;
5. The Council of Trent and Its influence (really only the influence of the