

## Cracking the Clerical Caste: Towards a Conciliar Church<sup>1</sup>

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Clericalism suffocates; it makes part of itself into the whole sacred character of the Church; it makes its power a sacred power to control, to lead, to administer, a power to perform sacraments, and in general, it makes any power a “power given to me.” Clericalism separates all “sacredness” from the lay people: the iconostasis, communion (only by permission), theology. In short, clericalism is *de facto* denial of the Church as the Body of Christ, for in the body, all organs are related and different only in their functions, but not in their essence. And the more clericalism “clericalizes” (the traditional image of the bishop or the priest-emphasized by his clothes, hair, e.g., the bishop in full regalia!), the more the Church itself becomes more worldly; spiritually submits itself to this world. In the New Testament, the priest is presented as an ideal layman. But almost immediately there begins his increasingly radical separation from lay people; and not only separation, but opposition to lay people, contrast to them. Again, the most obvious form of separation in the exclusion of lay people from the communion as the fulfillment of their membership in the body of Christ. Instead of a “faithful image” there appears

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper given at an international conference, “The Legacy of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1921–1983,” held in Paris, 11–14 December 2008, at the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute.

the image of “master of sacrality” separated from the faithful, dispensing grace as he sees fit.<sup>2</sup>

This selection from Alexander Schmemmann’s journals from 2 February 1982 is but one of his many stinging comments about clericalism and abuse of power in ecclesial life, themes that we find throughout his writings, not just in his journals, but in his essays and talks as well. Schmemmann identified clericalism as a problem that not only pertained to the Eastern Church, but was experienced in the West as well.<sup>3</sup> In short, clericalism creates an ideological and theological separation among the people of God, the *laos tou theo*, into two separate and seemingly unequal classes or castes: the clergy and the laity, two groups that are seemingly pitted against one another. This term “caste” is actually mentioned in the earlier writings of Schmemmann’s mentor Archmandrite Kyprian Kern, a faculty member at St. Sergius Institute in Paris, under whom Schmemmann served under at St. Constantine and Helen’s parish in nearby Clamart. In his essay, “Two Models of the Pastorate: Levitical and Prophetic,” Kern outlines two major thematic visions of the pastoral life in the Bible: the Levitical and the Prophetic. While speaking about the prophetic priesthood, Kern writes,

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<sup>2</sup> Julianna Schmemmann (trans.) *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973–1983* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000), p.210.

<sup>3</sup> Most noteworthy are Donald Cozzens’ two books *The Changing Face of the Priesthood* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) and *Sacred Silence: Denial and Crisis in the Church* (Liturgical Press, 2002). See also George Wilson *Clericalism: The Death of Priesthood* (Liturgical Press, 2008); Geoffrey Robinson, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus* (Liturgical Press, 2009); George Dennis O’Brien, *Finding the Voice of the Church* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Michael L. Papesh, *Clerical Culture: Contradictions and Transformation* (Liturgical Press, 2004); Russell B. Shaw, *To Hunt, to Shoot, to Entertain: Clericalism and the Catholic Laity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993); Robert McClory *As It Was in the Beginning: The Coming Democratization of the Catholic Church* (New York: Crossroad, 2007).

A Levitical type, in this spiritual meaning, is one from a *priestly caste*, one who is conventional, formal, narrowly nationalistic, inert, and uncreative. In Old Testament times the Mosaic Law priesthood was hereditary and exclusive.... Thus to presume the need for some kind of narrowly conventional state as essential for priestly service is to sin against the very essence of the evangelical concept of the pastoral office. It is an attempt to confuse the living pastoral vocation with Levitical formalism.<sup>4</sup>

It is also important to note that Kern's essay originally appeared in *Living Tradition (Zhivoe predanie)*, a collection of essays by noteworthy Orthodox theologians and thinkers such as Fathers Sergius Bulgakov, Kyprian Kern, and Nicholas Afanasiev, as well as lay theologians Anton Kartashev and Lev Zander. This collection of essays put forward a creative and forceful attempt to bring the joy and beauty of Orthodoxy to a Western culture, leaving behind the rigid formalism and reductionism of what was often considered "school theology." Many of the themes in *Living Tradition* – freedom, openness, ecumenism, pastoral ministry – are incorporated throughout Schmemmann's corpus of writings as well as his own life and pastoral work.

In this top-down model of ecclesial life, power and authority, roles in decision making – especially regarding ecclesiastical administration and the organizing of ministries – as well as fiduciary responsibility, are divided between the clergy and laity. Unfortunately laity wrongly assume that the clergy conduct the "real business of the Church," namely, leading the liturgical services, managing Church administration and functions, and overseeing the daily work of the Church; while the laity, on the other hand, are only to "pray, pay, and obey" (the bishops and priests of course!). One could call this a type of ministerial reductionism, akin to the many types of reduc-

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<sup>4</sup> Kyprian Kern "Two Models of the Pastorate" in Michael Plekon, ed. *Tradition Alive: On the Church and the Christian Life in Our Time: Readings From the Eastern Church* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2003), 110–11.

tionisms which Schmemmann identified, viz., spiritual, liturgical, and ecclesiological.<sup>5</sup> Is there a viable alternative to this current situation? Is the Church going to be restricted to this singular, albeit skewed, vision of ecclesial life that many of us experience?

If we look to the writings of Father Alexander we might find an answer in his thoughts on conciliarism, or what is more commonly known as *sobornost'* or eucharistic ecclesiology, which is the teaching that the Church is fully the Church and Christ is fully present at each and every eucharistic gathering where the entire people of God is gathered together to hear the Word of God, offer common thanksgiving or *eucharistia*, and share in communion (*koinonia*) and fellowship. A conciliar or "sobornal" approach was also based on the eucharistic ecclesiology of Alexander Schmemmann and others, most notably his mentors and teachers in Paris, Fathers Nicholas Afanasiev and Sergius Bulgakov whose writings on the eschatological and conciliar nature of the Church and who rediscovered the Eucharistic ecclesiology of the church's early years. Their work deeply inspired Schmemmann. A conciliar Church is based on the sharing of the mutual gifts, talents, and abilities of the members of the entire Church. The Church is not comprised of the clergy or the laity alone, but both clergy and laity working together for the building up of the Body of Christ. A clerical model of ecclesial life is one that is not fulfilling this Pentecostal vision of a Spirit filled Church, very much alive and robust, where everyone, men and women, parents and children, single and married, are fulfilling their common vocations as Christians.

This essay will look at the problem of clericalism and how the Church can struggle to combat clericalism based on a real and practical conciliar and sobornal framework of Church life. I use the terms "real" and "practical" because, so often as

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Schmemmann's three articles on ecclesial problems in the Church: "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Canonical Problem" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 8 (1964): 67–85; "Problems of Orthodoxy in America 2: The Liturgical Problem," *SVTQ* 8 (1964): 164–85; and "Problems of Orthodoxy in America 3: The Spiritual Problem," *SVTQ* 9 (1965): 171–93.

Orthodox, we offer lip service to conciliarism and *sobornost* in theory, but we fail in praxis. How many bishops actually sit down and have open and honest conversations and sharing sessions with their respective priests, deacons, and lay members? How many parish priests actually help foster and encourage lay participation in ecclesial life other than liturgical worship? How many lay leaders have real and important administrative positions on the diocesan or national level?

### *A Clerical Culture*

Clericalism is a result of a theological reduction of ministry where clergy often live in physical, social, spiritual and psychological isolation from other clergy and also from their respective parishioners, and sometimes in isolation from the culture and society around them. Schmemmann's own journals reflect a sense of despair when he comments on the lack of social awareness of former seminarians, their lack of continuing education and reading. At one point in the journals he mentions that he in fact knew more about the local community of a parish priest than the priest when he went to visit his parish for a retreat! Schmemmann certainly was a man of the world so to speak and was not cut off from the world around him. Likewise, he was well versed not only in theology, but in Russian and French literature as well as in current events and popular culture and society, often mentioning political and social issues of the day.

Clericalism is especially acute in many living situations, for example in the Roman Catholic Church where clergy often live in a rectory or parsonage together in community and share a common clerical way of life. Their time is primarily devoted to serving Mass and performing sacraments, prayers, and blessings, with little time for socializing and sharing with their parishioners. However, this social isolation also infects Orthodox clergy who, in some cases have families, but still choose not to socialize or identify with the laity of their respective parishes. This separation usually does not occur consciously, but is a result of many factors, including isolation in seminary formation and in parish life.

Clericalism is also seen in the overt controlling attitudes of priests. Those of a clericalist mindset may expect special attention when in the presence of others (kissing of the hand, offering of priestly blessings, and so forth), as well as seating at separate seats or tables at Church banquets. The laity sometimes project or reinforce a clerical culture by assigning clergy to a “clergy only” table at banquets or seeking the advice of the parish priest for routine matters of life – in other words, allowing clergy to have more power than they need or should have. Here I think of laity who turn over their decision-making to their parish priest in terms of family, home, or work, always seeking what I call “spiritual advice” about getting a new job, relocating to a new area, or having additional children.

Commenting on what he calls the “clerical culture,” the North American Roman Catholic theologian Donald Cozzens identifies clericalism in the following way,

Although clericalism finds its roots in clerical culture, and is intimately linked to it, the distinction should be maintained. Clericalism, as we shall see, is always dysfunctional and haughty, crippling the spiritual and emotional maturity of the priest, bishop, or deacon caught in its web. The laity instinctively resists the patronizing and dominating tendencies in priests who have succumbed to it.<sup>6</sup>

Cozzens, as did Schmemmann before him, identifies the embryonic stages of clericalism in the seminaries, when young seminarians, who are themselves in an educational, social, and spiritual formation process, begin to see themselves as “different” and as “other” than the laity.

Schmemmann notes that clericalism turns into a type of special “clerical piety or spirituality” as he noted on several occasions: “looking at some of our priests, walking around the seminary on Education Day, one can physically feel their worship of cassocks, clerical hats, all that constitutes this visible piety. And then one hears that almost all of them are

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<sup>6</sup> Cozzens, *Sacred Silence*, 112–23.

condemning others for lack of spirituality, lack of piety.”<sup>7</sup> Schmemmann had keen insights into clericalism because he spent most of his adult life teaching, preaching, and pastoring at a theological seminary, first at St. Serge in Paris, and then at St. Vladimir’s in New York. He saw that clerical culture was fostered by seminary community life as we see in the following journal entry and portion from his private lecture notes:

The tragedy of theological education lies in the fact that young people who seek priesthood are – consciously or unconsciously – seeking this separation, power, this rising above the laity. Their thirst is strengthened and generated by the whole system of theological education, of clericalism. How can they be made to understand, not only with their minds, but their whole being, that one must run away from power, any power, that it is always a temptation, always from the devil? Christ freed us from that power – “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18) – by revealing the Light of power as power of love, of sacrificial self-offering. Christ gave the Church not “power,” but the Holy Spirit: “receive the Holy Spirit....” In Christ, power returned to God, and man was cured from ruling and commanding.<sup>8</sup> In the sixty-first year of my life, I suddenly ask myself: How has it all become so perverted? And I become afraid!<sup>9</sup>

A first year seminarian has already a tendency to think that he is to learn to acquire something “specifically priestly,” a way to walk and to speak, a way to behave which will make him “soon like a priest,” and this feeling of belonging to a different and superior “cast” may obscure in him the very simple idea that to be a priest one must first of all, be a Christian-in the full meaning of this word. And to be a Christian, means,

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<sup>7</sup> *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann*, 231.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

above everything else, to take seriously, directly and literally the commandments of Christ and to live by them.<sup>10</sup>

The second quotation, taken from his personal lecture notes, reveals Schmemmann's thoughts about this false notion of a priest being apart or separate from the rest of the people of God. Students, in the very early stages of their spiritual, theological, and pastoral formation, are already overly identifying with their role in the Church, and associating with that role power, control, domination, and authority. Yet Schmemmann suggests that real pastoral education and formation require a much simpler and probably healthier approach, and consists in following Christ and His commandments. If one does this, everything else will fall into place. I guess we are slow learners since clericalism is still rather strong in our Church, at least in the Orthodox Church in North America.

Unfortunately however, clergy are often viewed either by themselves or by others, sometimes even both, as being merely cultic leaders who have special power and authority to perform the sacraments, absolve sins, change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, to conduct liturgical service from womb to tomb. In other words, the clergy are seen as the gatekeepers in the Church who have the control and power over the laity. Here, e.g., we can recall those who attend church on Christmas or Easter to have food blessed, to light a candle in the Church, or to purchase a few religious books in the bookstore. Every year, at my parish, there is a lady who comes at the end of Vespers on Easter Sunday morning, buys a few candles, and leaves, never to return until the following Easter. I'm sure many clergy have experienced similar things in pastoral life. The late liturgical theologian Aidan Kavanagh once remarked that the job of the priest is not to do everything in the parish, which is most often the case. When the priest is not acting as he should the entire Body of Christ is negatively affected, "He (the priest) is the main facilitator in the local Church, not a living clot of surrogates for everything it must

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



do for itself as the Body of Christ.”<sup>11</sup> Kavanagh is right: the priest is not the beginning and the end of parochial life, nor should he be, but he often is reduced to the general practitioner who is the only person in the parish who performs ministry.

Likewise, Schmemmann says that the laity are reduced to seeking the power and authority of the clergy. The laity often can become emblazoned by the democratic ideals of society and attempt to bring such ideals of freedom, liberty, rights, and duties, into the Church. Furthermore, some of the laity may seek to become little priests by trying to gain some of the sacramental power and authority of the clergy and by having an abundance of “lay ministries” as somehow different or distinct from “clerical ministry.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, their reaction is to obtain the so-called power from the priest so that they have a type of ministry too, without realizing their prophetic and priestly role in baptism. Both visions are wrong. Towards the end of his essay on clergy and lay relations Schmemmann says:

The conclusion is clear: there is no opposition between clergy and laity in the Church. Both are essential. The Church as a totality is Laity and the Church as a totality is the inheritance of God, the Clergy of God. And in order to be this, there must exist within the Church the distinction of functions, of ministries that complete one another. The clergy are ordained to make the Church the gift of God, the manifestation and communication of His truth, grace and salvation to men. It is their sacred function, and they fulfill it only in complete obedience to God. The laity are ordained to make the Church the acceptance of that gift, the “Amen” of mankind to God. They equally can fulfill their function only in complete obedience to God. It is the same obedience: to God and to the Church that establishes the harmony between clergy and laity,

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<sup>11</sup> Aidan Kavanagh *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 187.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 329.

makes them one body, growing into the fullness of Christ.<sup>13</sup>

***Towards a Conciliar Church:  
Clergy and Laity Working Together***

Schmemmann's unique contribution to pastoral theology and ministry is based on his understanding of the conciliar nature of the Church. As noted, this perspective was not original with him but is a hallmark of the Eastern Christian theological tradition. The conciliar understanding of the Church was emphasized by the "Paris School" theologians, most of whom taught at the St. Serge Orthodox Theological Institute.<sup>14</sup> While these theologians often disagreed, one common theme which runs throughout their writings is that the Church is not just composed of the clergy who are seen apart from the rest of the Church, nor is it a Church of laity only, which is very much congregational, but it is the entire people of God, both clergy and laity who are gathered together at the one altar offering their prayers and praise to God and who are united in the Eucharist. This vision of the conciliar nature of the Church, also described as "eucharistic ecclesiology," is to be found throughout the writings of the Paris school theologians such as Paul Evdokimov, Nicholas Afanasiev and Sergius Bulgakov and in the West in Yves Congar, Jean Daniélou, and Henri de Lubac. Each of these theologians, in some way, had a deep impact on Schmemmann's theological vision of the Church and therefore it is not by accident that their understanding of the Church as conciliar would be a prevalent theme in his own writings as well.

Schmemmann's understanding of the Church is sacramental, rather than legal or institutional. The Eucharist unites all of us

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<sup>13</sup> *Clergy and Laity*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> "In modern Russian theology [*sobornost'*] denotes a unity of persons within the organic fellowship of the Church, each person maintaining his full freedom and personal integrity." Elizabeth A. Livingstone, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 470. Also see my study, *Church, World, Kingdom: The Sacramental Foundations of Alexander Schmemmann's Pastoral Theology* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Press, 2010).

together in the one bread and one cup and thus also unites the earthly and the heavenly. “The institution is sacramental because its whole purpose is constantly to transcend itself as an institution, to fulfill and actualize itself as the New Being; and it can be sacramental because as institution it corresponds to the reality it fulfills, is its real image.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is the sacramental dimension of the community which underlies his approach to an overt clericalism. The priest is not merely reduced to the person who dispenses grace but one who unites a congregation who all together make the eucharistic sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

A sacramental image of the Church mirrors the Trinity. The three persons of the Trinity are a council of divine persons who are in relation to one another; they all have different functions but exist in a perfect bond of love. While the Trinity is bound together in love, so too are the clergy bound to the rest of the Church, which is thus conciliar. Likewise, the laity are also bound to the clergy, and everyone together is bound to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The clergy cannot be outside or apart from their congregations. The Trinity also contains a hierarchy of persons who do not have the same function; neither do the members of the Church. In a lengthy passage worth citing, Schmemmann outlines the hierarchical nature of the Trinity and its ecclesial implications:

The principle of hierarchy implies the idea of obedience but not that of subordination, for obedience is based on personal relationship whereas subordination is, in its very essence, an impersonal one. The Son is fully obedient to the Father, but He is not subordinated to Him. He is perfectly obedient because He perfectly and fully knows the Father as Father. But He is not subordinated to Him because subordination implies imperfect knowledge and relationship and, therefore, the necessity of “enforcement”.... Hierarchy, thus, is not a relationship of “power” and “submission” but of a perfect obedience of all to all in Christ, obedience

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<sup>15</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, “Towards a Theology of Councils” in *SVTQ* 6 (1962): 163.

being the recognition and knowledge of the personal gifts and charisms of each by all. Whatever is truly conciliar is truly personal and, therefore, truly hierarchical. And the Church is hierarchical simply because she is the restored life, the perfect society, the true council. To ordain someone to a hierarchical function does not mean his elevation “above” the others, his opposition to them as “power” and “submission.” It means the recognition by the Church of his personal vocation within the *ecclesia*, of his appointment by God, who knows the hearts of men and is, therefore, the source of all vocations and gifts. It is, thus, a truly conciliar act, for it reveals the obedience of all: the obedience of the one who is ordained, the obedience of those who ordain him, that is, recognize in him the divine call to the ministry of government, the obedience of the whole Church to the will of God.<sup>16</sup>

The Church maintains a hierarchical structure, but as Schmemmann rightly states, it is not a hierarchy of power but an ordered structure. Interestingly enough this notion of an ordered structure which is based on relationship and association is also a theme which is being developed and reflected on by several contemporary Roman Catholic theologians in the United States – Susan Wood, David Power, Kevin Seasoltz, and Terence Nichols.<sup>17</sup> According to the conciliar model, the Church is a community of the baptized saints who work together building up the Body of Christ one person at a time through the exercising of the variety of gifts and charisms that are distributed to each by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Body only exists because it is Christ’s Body and is held together by a continual outpouring of love.

Schmemmann also notes that the gifts that grant the full participation of the laity in the Church are clearly enumerated

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>17</sup> Susan K. Wood *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Ordained and Lay Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003) and Terence L. Nichols *That All May Be One: Hierarchy and Participation in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

in the Orthodox baptismal service. There we find the following prayer for the newly baptized person to be – “an honourable member of God’s Church, a consecrated vessel, a child of light, and heir of God’s kingdom.” Quoting the Apostle Paul, Schmemmann reminds us that the newly baptized are, “fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:1).

The importance of baptism, as entrance into the Church and into the royal priesthood, is seen in the liturgical prayers, which are written in the plural and reflect the *common* work of the clergy and laity – of the entire assembly or community – during the liturgical celebrations: “*we* offer, *we* pray, *we* give thanks, *we* pray, *we* receive, *we* lift up our hearts.” Even the Lord’s Prayer is in the plural: “Our Father.” Jaroslav Pelikan notes that in its original form the Nicene Creed was also in the plural (“we believe in one God”) since it was the common faith of the Fathers gathered at Nicea and not just the personal or individual faith of one person. Although there are a few prayers in the liturgies of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great where the prayers are specifically for the priest, even these are within the larger context of the communal gathering and the emphasis remains on the entire worshipping community.<sup>18</sup>

Taking this a step further, Schmemmann notes that the laity together with the clergy celebrate the liturgy. In making his argument, Schmemmann discusses the recitation of the common liturgical word “amen,” which is used as a common response in the liturgy. “And ‘amen’ is indeed the word of the laity in the Church, expressing the function of the laity as the People of God, which freely and joyfully accepts the Divine offer, seals it with its consent. There is really no service and no liturgy, without the Amen of those who have been ordained to serve God as community, as Church.”<sup>19</sup> The word “amen” is a sign that the entire ecclesial community is responsible for the common prayer of the Church, that both clergy and laity offer the one prayer to God in behalf of all and for all.

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<sup>18</sup> *The Divine Liturgy According to St. John Chrysostom with Appendices* (NY: Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, 1967).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

When Schmemmann speaks of the common work and prayer of the laity, he is referring to the liturgical practice of concelebration, a practice which most commonly refers to more than one priest serving at the altar.<sup>20</sup> However, Schmemmann makes the point that in actuality, while the presiding priest may be leading the people in prayer, the entire congregation is concelebrating along with him, “Who is serving, in other words, is not the clergy, and not even the clergy with the laity, but the Church, which is constituted and made manifest in all fullness by everyone together.”<sup>21</sup> Schmemmann’s comments regarding the understanding of the term concelebration can be traced back to his mentor and teacher Nicholas Afanasiev who proposed that the term “concelebration” refers to the entire gathering of the assembly and includes both clergy and laity: “everyone ministers to God at the Eucharist. Neither separate groups nor separate members celebrate: it is the Church that celebrates. Everyone concelebrates at the celebration of the one – their president. There can be no celebration of all and there can be no eucharistic gathering apart from the one president.”<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, both Schmemmann and Afanasiev emphasize that it is everyone’s vocation to pray, to worship, to give thanks, to offer, and to bless. Therefore the entire Church concelebrates around the one-bread and cup on the one altar. Thus the entire Church, both clergy and laity together, offer their common worship to God as everyone participates in the liturgical services.

### **Conclusion**

A truly conciliar Church is one where both the clergy and laity openly engage in debate, discussion, reflection, and

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<sup>20</sup> Robert E. Taft, “*Ex Oriente Lux?* Some Reflections on Eucharistic Concelebration” in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding 2<sup>nd</sup>* ed. (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001), 111–32.

<sup>21</sup> Schmemmann, *The Eucharist*, 88.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Lord’s Supper*, trans. Alvian Smirensky, ed. Michael Plekon, forthcoming, 2010. Also see Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov, ed. Michael Plekon (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 9–56. The term “president” is synonymous with the term priest or presbyter which loosely is translated as elder or leader.

sometimes even in dissent, in a spirit of brotherly love and affection, but with full respect and freedom in Christ. In theory, the Church is supposed to be large enough for a variety of opinions and suggestions to be voiced as the entire people of God prays, celebrates, and lives their life common life together. Lay people should not be afraid to speak out against social injustices and abuse of power and authority among some of the clergy. Likewise, clergy should not be afraid to assist the laity in discerning their God-given talents and treasures. One thing is certain. Clergy should never abuse their spiritual authority and position over against the laity and should always be on guard against the temptations of power.

If both the clergy and laity are truly seeking to live according to the will of God, even among a fallen humanity with human sinfulness and arrogance, there must be an expression of love based on the example of Christ Himself.<sup>23</sup> Jesus gave us the supreme example of love through His passion and crucifixion on the cross, giving up His life for others. His life was an example of loving and serving others, not using power and authority over His disciples or anyone else in his life. Clergy are not called to have power and authority over the laity nor are the laity called to increase their power or authority over and against the clergy, but rather both should work together for the common good of all members of the Church.

Ministry must first and foremost be service of love. Deacons, priests, and bishops cannot function in their respective roles without love. Neither can the laity fulfill and completely express their baptismal priesthood without love. Our most perfect example of love is Christ Himself who numerous times shows us His long-suffering love through His acceptance of the stranger and outsider, through His miracles, through acts of kindness such as the washing of the feet of His disciples, and ultimately through the sacrifice of His own life on the cross. It is at Golgotha where we see the greatest gift of love, the giving of oneself for the neighbour. Golgotha is where Christ affirmed his role as the high priest for us and where the one unblemished Lamb was slain. Christ became our High

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<sup>23</sup> Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, 255–276.

Priest so that we could continue this priestly ministry from generation to generation and which is expressed in the eucharistic offering. It is here at the Eucharist where the entire Church, both clergy and laity, are seen side-by-side fulfilling their priestly ministerial roles in different but complimentary ways. It is also in the Eucharist which provides us with a lens through which we can re-envision pastoral care for the contemporary Church.

To conclude, I offer several very practical and pastoral suggestions on how we as a Church can respond to divisions in the Church among clergy and laity and hopefully heal the wounds that are caused by such divisions. It is up to us, however, to our bishops, parish clergy, and lay leaders, to want to change, and to put our best foot forward as we grow together in faith, hope, and most important, love:

1. That bishops would meet regularly with their priests for open and frank dialogue, discussion, and debate on a regular basis and that the local diocesan bishop would include input from his clergy in decision making and future planning of the diocese. These meets would be more than perfunctory, but would in essence be working meetings for fruitful progress.
2. That local parish clergy help equip their parishioners in their respective God-given talents and abilities for ministry in the local parish and in the world around them. And that parish clergy foster and encourage regular continuing education programs in their parishes, focusing on lay ministry, vocation, and the basics of the faith such as Scripture, liturgical catechesis, and outreach to the community.
3. That lay leaders would have administrative and managerial positions on both the diocesan and national Church levels, either as secretaries, treasurers, or other administrative positions. They should hold not just consulting positions but be found in key decision-making positions also.



4. That seminaries would directly address the spiritual and pastoral temptation of clericalism and the tangential concerns of the abuse of power and authority, control, and of a top-down or one way model of decision making (bishop-priest-laity).

5. That recent seminary graduates, primarily parish clergy, would be assigned a local clergy mentor to help guide and direct the new priest in his first years of ministry, especially regarding decision-making processed in the parish.

