

# THE FATHERHOOD OF THE PRIEST

*By*

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DEDICATED  
TO THE  
FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
FROM WHOM ALL FATHERHOOD IN HEAVEN AND  
ON EARTH IS NAMED

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## F O R E W O R D

There is a growing curiosity in the world today concerning the reason why the Catholic priest is called father. There are many outside the Church who vehemently deny the priest's claim to fatherhood, whereas many of the faithful, while they readily assent to the paternity of the priest, are unable to offer any solid arguments in favor of their position. The principal reason why both Catholics and non-Catholics cannot understand the reason for regarding the priest as a father is because they fail to understand the notion of fatherhood. Some have gone so far as to maintain that fatherhood is a relation to be found in God alone; and these object to the application of the term to others in view of the words of Christ, "Call none your father upon earth; for one is your father, who is in heaven."<sup>1</sup> This objection, of course, totally disregards the context in which Christ's words were spoken. Our divine Lord does not restrict paternity to God the Father, although, as we shall see in the course of these pages, it is God alone who is Father in the fullest sense of the word, and the term is applied to others only in so far as they participate in His paternity. Others are under the impression that fatherhood is the relation of generation in only natural created beings. This materialistic concept rules out not only the fatherhood of the priest, but that of God as well.

An understanding of the solution to this problem has great practical importance, for the relations between priest and people are, to a great extent, determined by whether or not the priest recognizes the faithful as his children, and the faithful in turn regard the priest as their father. The recognition of this mutual relationship will result not only in a more zealous, understanding priesthood, but also in a

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<sup>1</sup> Matt., xxiii, 9.

more enlightened, militant laity. When the priests see in the faithful their own spiritual children whom they must nourish, protect and instruct in the supernatural life, they cannot but be inspired with a more loving, all-embracing solicitude for the problems of their subjects. When this paternal solicitude is manifested in the daily life of the priest, there will arise a bond of the utmost confidence between him and the faithful which will induce them to bring all their difficulties to him as a child to his father; they will ever be running to the priest for that nourishment, encouragement and guidance which are so necessary for existence in the spiritual life. When, as today, however, priests and people lose consciousness of their respective relationships of fathers and children, the closest bond of mutual confidence between the priesthood and the faithful is thereby relaxed and a distance and diffidence often grows up instead.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the practical importance of this question, it is of great theoretical value in as much as its solution implies an investigation of the most fundamental theological problems together with their intimate relations among one another. In order to understand the priest's claims to fatherhood it is necessary to be acquainted with the Church's teachings on such important doctrines as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the efficacy of Christ's Passion, grace and its communication through the sacraments, and especially on the Christian priesthood. Moreover, a knowledge of the important philosophical concept of analogy is of the utmost necessity.

The precise end we have in view is to show that the priest is truly a father and not so-called merely by way of metaphor. As far as we have been able to ascertain, very little has been written previously on this subject. It is true that some of the Fathers of the Church, such as St. John Chrysostom, have, in passing, alluded to the priest's claim to paternity by reason of his sacramental ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. E. MANNING, *The Eternal Priesthood* (The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Md.: 1944), pp. 22-23.

But there seems to be no *ex-professo* treatment of the subject, certainly not in English.

The method we shall follow is theological. Because of the analogical nature of fatherhood, however, we shall first of all, by way of preamble, examine the traditional teaching on analogy, thus establishing a solid basis for the application of the name fatherhood. In the application of the name fatherhood we shall see that Christ participates most intimately in the fatherhood of God. We shall then proceed to show that Christ is a father by reason of His priesthood. From this fact follows the logical conclusion that since the priest shares in the priesthood of Christ, he, by that very fact, participates in the divine paternity. Finally, we shall see that the priest has a second claim to fatherhood by reason of his sacramental ministry.

## CHAPTER I

# THE ANALOGICAL BASIS FOR THE CONCEPT OF FATHERHOOD

An understanding of common notions is based upon a twofold foundation: the derivation of names and their application. For the derivation of a name philology provides a history; into its application philosophy introduces an order. Philosophy, however, cannot proceed with precision without some cognizance of philological findings, although its subsequent activities in applying the name are in no way restricted by philology.<sup>1</sup>

Of the origin of the word "father" very little is known for certain. The word has the aspect of an agent noun in "fater" and "father." It is doubtfully referred to by some as a cognate of the Sanskrit root PA, meaning "protect" or "keep." Thus in Latin we have the verb *pascere*, whence are derived the words "pastor" and "pasture." Possibly the word is taken from the Anglo-Saxon *fedan*, meaning "to feed," which has the form *feden* in Middle English. In Modern English this becomes "feed." Whatever the origin of the word "father," it is one of the terms of intimate relation which occurs with slight changes of form in nearly all the Aryan and Indo-European tongues.<sup>2</sup> All have commonly understood fatherhood to imply some of the most fundamental and intimate relationships among human beings. The very commonness of the name and familiarity of the concept leads many to believe that they understand its meaning and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. THOMAS, *Ad Ephesios (In Omnes S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria*, edit. VII Taurinensis, MARIETTI, Turini, 1939), cap. III, lect. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, V, 351; also *The Century Dictionary*, III, 2153.



philosophical application, even without the intricacies of philosophical procedures. These procedures in the ordering of common names, while merely logical devices, are nevertheless founded upon reality and integral to theological method. That method, therefore, based upon principles of faith, can arrive at a notion of fatherhood that is theologically sound only by proceeding according to the totality of logical requirements in the ordering of human concepts. In the case of fatherhood this is especially important because, just as it is uncertain in its origin, so it is indefinite and not rigidly limited in its application. Fatherhood is not taken in all cases in exactly the same sense; it is not univocal, but analogical.

Because the term fatherhood is analogical it is necessary in its consideration that the notion of analogy and the rules for its use be ever borne in mind. It is not our purpose here to give a detailed account of analogy but merely to point out its nature and to emphasize those aspects of it which are absolutely essential to an understanding of the notion of fatherhood.

The concept of analogy is best clarified by the negative process of showing what it is not. Analogy is not univocation, neither is it equivocation. There is an equivocation when the same name is applied to two things which are in no way similar.<sup>3</sup> Thus the term "bank" may refer to the side of a river and to the place where money is kept. On the other hand, there is an univocation when a common term is applied to several things in the exactly same sense; for example, when the term "animal" is predicated of dog and cat, it has an identical signification in both cases.<sup>4</sup> In univocation, therefore, there is not only

<sup>3</sup> CAIETANUS, *De Nominum Analogia*, (edit. Zammit, Romae, 1934), cap. VI, n. 63: In *equivocis* namque rationes illae, puta canis marini et terrestri, sunt omnino diversae secundum rationem; et propter hoc id quod praedicat canis de marino cane, nullo modo praedicat de terrestri, et e converso; et ideo sola voce communius aut magis equivocatis dicitur et est.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 64: In *univocis* vero res illae, puta animalitatis in bove et animalitatis in leone, licet et numero et specie diversae sint, ratione tamen omnino eadem sunt; ratio enim unius est omnino eadem quod ratio alterius, et e converso; et propter hoc id quidem quod praedicat animal de homine, idem praedicat omnino de bove, et univocum dicitur et superius homine, leone boveque.

an identity of terminology, but also an identity of the thing signified.

However, terms are often applied to objects which are neither identical nor completely dissimilar. Such terms are used neither univocally nor equivocally; they are employed analogically.<sup>5</sup> The two or more things to which an analogical term is applied do not participate equally in the nature of the thing which is predicated of each of them.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to recall that analogy is a relation based upon a proportion;<sup>7</sup> it is a comparison, a relationship of two or more things to some one thing. In analogy the same name is predicated of different things partly in the same sense and partly in a different sense: in the same sense because of the reference to the same relation, in a different sense because of the different modes of the relation. Thus objects to which terms are applied analogically share in certain of the characteristics of univocacy and equivocacy.<sup>8</sup> Those things, there-

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 65: In analogis autem res analogiam fundantes (puta quantitas ut sic se habens ad esse, et substantia ut sic se habens ad esse), licet diversae sint et numero et specie et genere; ratione tamen eadem sunt non omnino, sed proportionaliter; quoniam unius ratio proportionaliter eadem est alteri.

<sup>6</sup> *IV Metaph.*, lect. I edit. Cathala, n. 535: Sed sciendum quod aliquid praedicatur de diversis multipliciter: quandoque quidem secundum rationem omnino eandem, et tunc dicitur de eis univoce praedicari, sicut animal de equo et bove.—Quandoque vero secundum rationes omnino diversas: et tunc dicitur de eis aequivoce praedicari, sicut canis de sidere et animali.—Quandoque vero secundum rationes quae partim sunt diversae et partim non diversae: diversae quidem secundum quod diversas habitudines important, unae autem secundum quod ad unum aliquid et idem istae diversae habitudines referuntur; et illud dicitur "analogice praedicari," idest proportionaliter, prout unumquodque secundum suam habitudinem ad illud unum refertur.

Cf. *XI Metaph.*, lect. III, n. 2197.

<sup>7</sup> Hence when Aristotle uses the word *analogice*, St. Thomas often interprets it as *proportionaliter* or *secundum proportionem*. Cf. e.g., *I Physic.*, lect. X, n. 7; lect. XIII, n. 9; *I de Caelo et Mundo*, lect. XIV, nos. 3-4; lect. XX, n. 2; *II*, lect. XI, n. 4; *I Metaph.*, lect. VIII, edit. Cathala, n. 879; *De Veritate*, q. 2, art. II.

Cf. also J. M. RAMIREZ, O.P., *De Analogia secundum Doctrinam Aristotelico-Thomisticam* (Extract. ex *La Ciencia Tomista*, July 1921-Jan. 1922), Matrii, 1922, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> CARD. DE AGUIRRE, O.S.B. notes this point in the following words: "Analogia autem sunt velut median quoddam inter univoca et pure aequivoca, quoniam participant ab utroque extremo: ab univocis quidem quod important

fore, are analogical whose name is common and the notion signified by the name is, simply speaking, different and, in some way, the same.<sup>9</sup>

Analogy, then, is concerned with the imposition of a name on a perfection which is shared in different ways and in varying degrees by two or more objects. Such a perfection is to be found in its totality in only one of the things compared. Were it to be found equally in all the terms of the comparison, a name would be applied to them in a univocal and not in an analogical sense. On the other hand, if the objects compared in no way participated the same perfection, the imposition of a common name on them would be an equivocation.

Excluding the analogy of inequality, which, as Cajetan<sup>10</sup> points out, scarcely merits the name of analogy, we can distinguish a two-fold analogy.<sup>11</sup> The members of this division have come to be known in scholastic terminology as the analogy of proportionality, and the analogy of attribution. This is a strictly metaphysical division in as much as it has for its basis not a mere mode of predication but the

veram aliquam convenientiam in re significata per nomen, ab equivocis autem quod importent diversitatem simpliciter adhuc in illo ipso praedicato seu re per nomen significata." (*Philosophia Rationalis Nova-antiqua sive Disp. Selectae in Logicam et Metaph. Aristotelis*, disp. 26, sect. 2, n. 13, p. 342, col. 2; *Salmanticae*, 1675).

<sup>9</sup> RAMIREZ, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> *op. cit.*, cap. I, n. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle speaks of these different types of analogy in various places, e.g., Analogy of inequality: *VII Physic.*, IV, 248b9; Analogy of attribution: *I Ethic.*, VI, 1095b29; Analogy of proportionality: *V Metaph.*, VI: 1016b35; Cf. also St. Thomas, *eodem loco*, lect. 8, n. 879.

St. Thomas also makes frequent and important use of these various kinds of analogy, although he refers to them by different names; e.g., Aliquid dicitur secundum analogiam tripliciter; vel secundum intentionem tantum et non secundum esse (id est analogia attributionis), et hoc est quando una intentio refertur ad plura per prius et posterius quae tamen non habet esse nisi in uno . . . vel secundum esse et non secundum intentionem (id est analogia inaequalitatis), et hoc contingit quando plura participantur in intentione alicuius communis, sed illud commune non habet esse unius rationis in omnibus . . . vel secundum intentionem et secundum esse (id est analogia proportionalitatis), et hoc est quando neque participantur in intentione communi neque in esse, sicut ens dicitur de substantia et accidente et de talibus oportet quod natura communis habeat ali-quod esse in unoquoque eorum de quibus dicitur, sed differens secundum rationem maioris vel minoris perfectionis (*I Sent.*, dist. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1).

diversity arising from the very natures of things, which is of the very essence of analogy. Since a thing is what is through its causes, the metaphysical division of analogy must be founded upon the causes of the similarity which is to be found in things which are diverse in an absolute sense. In as much as causes are either intrinsic or extrinsic, it follows that analogy also must be of two kinds. If the similarity in related things arises from intrinsic causes, it will be found intrinsically, though in its own way, in all the analogates. If, however, the similarity arises from extrinsic causes, then the analogical concept comes to all except one of the analogates from without, that is, from the one in which it is found intrinsically.<sup>12</sup>

The analogy according to formal intrinsic causality is called the analogy of proportionality. A proportion is a relation of one quantity to another; for example, the relation of two to four is as much as four is twice two.<sup>13</sup> A proportionality consists in the relation of two proportions to each other.<sup>14</sup>

There is also a twofold division of the analogy of proportion-

<sup>12</sup> RAMIREZ, *op. cit.*, p. 47: *Fundamentaliter vero considerando illam diversitatem, scilicet secundum causas vel rationes ejus, dupliciter itidem fieri posse intelligitur: aut secundum causas extrinsecas, ita nempe ut ratio analogica intrinsece tantum inveniat in uno, in aliis vero extrinsece et denominative, aut secundum causas intrinsecas, ita quod ratio illa analogica in omnibus analogatis intrinsece reperiat suo modo. Si primum, habetur analogia attributionis; si alterum, obtinetur analogia proportionalitatis.*

<sup>13</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 8, art. 1, ad 6: *Proportio proprie loquendo nihil est aliud quam habitudo quantitatis ad quantitatem, sicut quod aequalis sit una alteri vel tripla; et ex inde translaturum est nomen proportionis ut habitudo cujuslibet rei ad rem alteram proportio nominetur, sicut dicitur materia esse proportionata formae in quantum se habet ad formam ut materia ejus, non considerata aliqua habitudo quantitatis, et similiter intellectus creatus est proportionatus ad videndam divinam essentiam, in quantum se habet ad ipsam quodammodo ut ad formam intelligibilem.*

<sup>14</sup> *De Nominem Analogia*, cap. III, n. 24: *Quamvis autem proportio vocetur certa habitudo unius quantitatis ad aliam, secundum quod dicimus quatuor duplam proportionem habere ad duo; et proportionalitas dicitur similitudo duarum proportionum, secundum quod dicimus ita se habere octo ad quatuor quemadmodum sex ad tria: utrobique enim dupla proportio est, etc.; transtulerunt tamen Philosophi proportionis nomen ad omnem habitudinem conformitatis, commensurationis, capacitatis, etc. Et consequenter proportionalitatem extenderunt ad omnem similitudinem habitudinum. Et sic in proposito vocabulis istis utimur.*

reality. The first member of this division is analogy in its most restricted sense, and it is had when there is intrinsically realized, in its own way, in each of the members of the analogy a perfection which is signified by a common name.<sup>18</sup> Since this type of analogy is according to the formal intrinsic cause of things, whatever is predicated by way of it must be in some way essential to the object of which it is predicated.

A name or term, therefore, is analogical according to this intrinsic analogy if the reality signified by the term is intrinsic to the various objects to which it is applied. Objects thus designated are, strictly speaking, essentially diverse, but at the same time they are, in some way, essentially the same. Were they, strictly speaking, essentially different and, in no way, essentially the same, the imposition of a common name upon them would be a pure equivocation; for, it must be remembered that in this kind of analogy the diversity and similarity necessary for analogy must come from the formal intrinsic causes of things. On the other hand, if the objects were, strictly speaking, essentially the same and, in no way, essentially different, the applying of a common name to them would be univocation. The name "animal" when attributed to both man and brute is, strictly speaking, essentially the same, although there is a difference in the mode in which brute and man realize the generic notion of animal; for in the case of the brute, animality constitutes his essence, whereas in man the formal constitutive is rationality. When, however, a common name is applied to objects which are, strictly speaking, essentially diverse, yet the same according to an intrinsic formality univocation is impossible. The basis of predication is no longer identity in genus or species, but similarity in an intrinsic form. Thus, for example, being is found intrinsically in God and intrinsically in a creature, and on this similarity in being the one term can be predicated of both these infinitely diverse objects. That predication, moreover, does not,

<sup>18</sup> RAMIREZ, p. 56; *Hæc autem ratio analogæ intrinsicæ . . . secundum propriam significationem reperitur in omnibus terminis proportionalibus utriusque proportionis, et tunc dicitur analogia proportionalitatis propriæ. . .*

strictly speaking, envisage God as the cause of the created being, although it does not exclude God's causality, but merely considers the intrinsic likeness of the two objects.

Since each of the members of an intrinsic analogy are related to a common form in varying degrees, they are not, strictly speaking, essentially the same, but they are essentially the same proportionately. For this reason this analogy according to intrinsic causes, in which the thing signified by a common name is found formally in each of the analogates, has been designated as the analogy of proportionality.

Moreover, the foregoing analogy is called the proper analogy of proportionality to distinguish it from figurative, metaphorical or analogy of improper proportionality.<sup>16</sup> The latter is had when the reality signified by a common term is found intrinsically according to its proper signification in only one of the members of the analogy and in the other members only virtually and according to a transferred and improper signification of the common term.<sup>17</sup> Thus when Christ is said to be a lion,<sup>18</sup> there is a futile attempt to designate in Christ an intrinsic form which is proper only to a species of brute. While in an analogy of this type there are present realities which are, strictly

<sup>16</sup> *De Nominum Analogia*, cap. III, n. 25: Fit autem duobus modis analogia hæc: scilicet metaphorice et proprie. *Metaphorice* quidem, quando nomen illud commune absolute unam habet rationem formalem, quæ in uno analogatorum salvatur, et per metaphoram de alio dicitur: ut ridere unam secundum se rationem habet, analogum tamen metaphorice est vero risui, et prout virgati aut fortunæ successui: sic enim significamus hæc se habere, quemadmodum homo ridens. Et huiusmodi analogia sacra Scriptura plena est, de Deo metaphorice notitiam tradens.

<sup>17</sup> RAMIREZ, p. 56-57: Hæc autem ratio analogia *intrinsece* . . . *formaliter* et secundum *proprium* significationem invenitur in terminis proportionalibus *alterutrius* proportionis *tantum*, ita sane ut in terminis unius proportionis reperitur *virtualiter* et secundum significationem *improprie* et *translatam*, et in hoc casu dicitur analogia *proportionalitatis* *metaphorice*, v. gr., sicut se habet volatus aquilæ ad volatum caeterarum avium, ita se habet speculatio maximi ingenii (S. Augustini aut S. Thomæ) ad speculationem rudium hominum: nam sicut aliæ aves fere nihil a terra elevantur, aquila autem ad altissimas regiones evehitur, ita hebetes ingenio fere nihil a sensibilibus abstrahunt, magna autem ingenia (metaphysici) ab omni materia, etiam intelligibili, abstrahunt et altissima principia considerant.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 6; q. 33, a. 3.

speaking, essentially diverse, there is no relation of essential similarity between them. The form "lion" is to be found intrinsically only in the brute; in no way is it realized in Christ. There is, however, a similarity in the way in which both Christ and the lion act, for the actions of each are characterized by outstanding courage. But Christ's courageous manner of acting does not depend upon the form "lion" as upon an intrinsic cause nor, indeed, upon the brute animal to which this form is intrinsic. In other words, Christ and the lion do not act in a similar manner because of their relation to a common form. The similarity of their modes of operation are purely coincidental, and any relation which Christ and the lion bear to one another as a result of this similar mode of acting can be only a relation fashioned by the human mind without any foundation in reality. Any dependence is of predication rather than of being. When, therefore, the dependence existing between analogates is purely logical, they in no way participate in a common nature, nor is there any foundation in reality for a dependence of the secondary analogates upon the prime analogate. Hence, when a common term is used to designate by intrinsic analogy objects which, strictly speaking, are essentially diverse and, in no way, essentially the same, the name according to its proper signification can apply to only one of the objects; to the others it is applied in a transferred or a metaphorical sense. For this reason analogy of this kind is called improper or metaphorical.

This metaphorical analogy, like the proper analogy of proportionality, is always according to the intrinsic causes of things. Since, however, things are what they are not only by their intrinsic causes but by their extrinsic causes as well, an adequate metaphysical division of analogy demands that these latter be taken into consideration. Analogy according to the extrinsic causes of things is called the analogy of attribution.<sup>18</sup> Those things are analogous by an analogy of attribution whose name is common and the reality signified by the name is in one of the analogates formally and in the others extrinsi-

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *De Nominum Analogia*, cap. II.

cally by way of similitude, which similitude is caused in them by their relationship to the prime analogate.<sup>20</sup> In things which are analogous by an analogy of this kind, then, there exists a causal relation of similarity, and, in as much as this relation is numerically one, signifying the same thing in each of the members of the analogy, a common term is used according to its proper signification to predicate this relation of each of the members. Nevertheless, the name used to signify this relation will have a partly different meaning when applied to the various analogates, not because the relation itself is different but because of the different manner in which the relation is found in each of them. The relation is the same; it is its mode which differs. Hence, the analogy of attribution is a formal analogy; for it has as its basis a common relation of similitude, even though this relation is found in the prime analogate intrinsically and in the other members of the analogy by way of extrinsic causality. While the same relation is not realized formally in each of the analogates, the analogy itself is proper.<sup>21</sup>

Since this is an analogy according to extrinsic causes the attribution, which is nothing more than a relation of subject to predicate, may be considered in two ways: according as the objects to which a name is attributed are derived from a single principle or as they are ordered to a single principle. Under the aspect of origin from a single principle analogy of attribution is applicable in both the order of efficient and material causality. In this instance, of course, material cause is taken in its wide sense as principle, for otherwise it would not be extrinsic. If, however, diverse things are considered as ordered to a single principle, attribution is applicable in the order of final or even formal extrinsic causality. Formal extrinsic, that is, exemplary causality, is unique. It is not confined to either the aspect of deriva-

<sup>20</sup> RAMIREZ, p. 47: Quae dicuntur analoga analogia attributionis sunt illa quorum nomen est commune et ratio significata per nomen est in uno tantum intrinsece et formaliter, in aliis autem extrinsece et denominative ab illo vel ad illud secundum rationem simpliciter diversam.

Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 21, art. 4, corpus et ad 2; q. 1, art. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *De Nominum Analogia*, loc. cit., n. 11.



tion from a single principle or order to a single principle. Under various aspects it is both; for, the exemplary cause has the aspect of finality as the intention of the agent towards which his activity is ordered. On the other hand, in the actual execution, it is a principle according to which the agent seeks to realize his intentional form in another subject.<sup>22</sup> Because of this, attribution according to exemplary causality is at once the most fruitful and the most difficult of all the types of attribution according to extrinsic causes.

There are many examples of these various modes of analogy according to extrinsic causes. Among the most common in theological literature is the use of the word "healthy" to illustrate analogy by way of final cause.<sup>23</sup> The term "healthy" may be used in various senses: food, medicine, blood and animal are all called healthy. The word "healthy," however, refers to only one thing. It is the same health that is found in the animal, that is indicated by the blood, that

<sup>22</sup> JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Phil. Nat.*, I. P., q. XI, a. 3: . . . dicendum est causalitatem ideae reduci posse ad efficientem et finalem, sed specialiter et proprie ad formalem, quatenus est forma extrinseca formans, sed non informans. Est communis inter Thomistas. Et quod habeat rationem causae finalis sumitur ex D. Thoma q. 3. de Veritate art. 1. in fine corporis et 3 Contra Gent. cap. 19. ubi id expresse dicit. Ratio vero efficientiae attribuitur a D. Thoma Quodlib. 7. art. 3. ubi inquit, quod "artifex cognoscit artificiatum per eam formam, per quam ipsum facit." Et ratio est, quia idea et ars simul concurrunt ad artificiatum, et idea se habet ut forma practica, ergo ut operativa et efficiens per artem. Ratio enim practici efficientiam importat, sive ex propriis sive ex voluntate participatam. Nam ideam operari adiuncto amore voluntatis docet D. Thomas I. p. q. 45. art. 6. Quare sicut agens naturale operatur per formam suam, cui assimilat effectum, et illa forma est ratio operandi, quia est ratio assimilandi, ita agens artificiale ratione formae idealis assimilat sibi effectum, consequenter ratione illius operatur efficienter directive seu intentionaliter, non efficienter executive.

<sup>23</sup> *IV Metaph.*, lect. 1, n. 537: Ponit enim primo unum exemplum, quando multa comparantur ad unum sicut ad finem, sicut patet de hoc nomine sanativum vel salubre. Sanativum enim non dicitur univoce de diaeta, medicina, urina et animali. Nam ratio sani secundum quod dicitur de diaeta, consistit in conservando sanitatem. Secundum vero quod dicitur de medicina, in faciendo sanitatem. Propterea vero dicitur de urina, est signum sanitatis. Secundum vero quod dicitur de animali, ratio ejus est, quoniam est receptivum vel susceptivum sanitatis. Sic igitur omne sanativum vel sanum dicitur ad sanitatem unam et eandem. Eadem enim est sanitas quam animal suscipit, urina significat, medicina facit, et diaeta conservat.

is promoted by the medicine and that is preserved by the food. All these things are directed to health as to one end and it is in this that their similarity consists.

As an example of many things being compared to one thing as to an efficient principle theologians frequently use the word "medical."<sup>24</sup> A doctor, one who is so gifted and disposed that he can easily acquire the art of medicine, the materials used for making medicine, the instruments employed by the doctor in healing, as indeed the medicine itself, are designated as "medical." The term "medical" is not applied to all these objects equivocally because in equivocation there is not had a relation to one thing. Nor is the term used univocally because, as is evident, the word "medical" is applied to each of these various objects in a partly different sense; but it is used analogically in as much as all these objects are related to medicine as to one efficient cause.

Analogy by way of material cause is most commonly illustrated by the example of being.<sup>25</sup> The word "being" applies first of all to

<sup>24</sup> *II' Metaph.*, lect. 1, n. 538: Secundo ponit exemplum quando multa comparantur ad unum sicut ad principium efficiens. Aliquid enim dicitur medicativum, ut qui habet artem medicinae, sicut medicus peritus. Aliquid vero quia est bene aptum ad habendam artem medicinae, sicut homines qui sunt dispositi ut de facili artem medicinae acquirant. Ex quo contingit quod ingenio proprio quaedam medicinalia operantur. Aliquid vero dicitur medicativum vel medicinale, quia eo opus est ad medicinam, sicut instrumenta quibus medici utuntur, medicinalia dici possunt, et etiam medicinae quibus medici utuntur ad sanandum. Et similiter accipi possunt alia quae multipliciter dicuntur, sicut et ista.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 539: Et sicut est de praedictis, ita etiam et ens multipliciter dicitur. Sed tamen omnes ens dicitur per respectum ad unum primum. Sed hoc primum non est finis vel efficiens sicut in praemissis exemplis, sed subjectum (causa quasi-materialis). Alia enim dicuntur entia vel esse, quia per se habent esse sicut substantiae, quae principaliter et prius entia dicuntur. Alia vero quia sunt passiones sive proprietates substantiae, sicut per se accidentia uniuscuiusque substantiae. Quaedam autem dicuntur entia, quia sunt via ad substantiam, sicut generationes et motus. Alia autem entia dicuntur, quia sunt corruptiones substantiae. Corruptio enim est via ad non esse, sicut generatio via ad substantiam. Et quia corruptio terminatur ad privationem, sicut generatio ad formam, convenienter ipsae etiam privationes formarum substantialium esse dicuntur. Et iterum qualitates vel accidentia quaedam dicuntur entia, quia sunt activa vel generativa substantiae, vel eorum quae secundum aliquam habitudinem praedictarum ad substantiam dicuntur, vel secundum quamcumque aliam. Item negationes

substance in as much as substance has being *per se*. Other things are said to be beings because of their relation to substance. Thus, to passions, properties, generations, corruptions, qualities and negations the term "being" is applied because all these things are referred to substance as to a subject.

Analogy by way of exemplary causality consists in the imposition of a common name upon those things which are produced by way of imitation of another thing in which the perfection signified by the name is realized intrinsically.

If an imitation were perfect, this would arise from the fact that the agent would have had as his exemplar the form of the thing to be imitated; and then the imitation and the exemplar would be identical. However, when the agent does not have as his exemplar the form of the exemplar absolutely, but only according to a determined proportion, then the work produced will be more or less imperfect, depending upon how short it falls from the principal exemplar.<sup>26</sup>

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eorum quae ad substantiam habitudinem habent, vel etiam ipsius substantiae, esse dicuntur. Unde dicimus quod non ens est non ens. Quod non diceretur nisi negationi aliquo modo esse competeret.

Cf. also *De Veritate*, q. 2, art. 11, ad 5.

<sup>26</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 3, art. 2: . . . In his autem quae ad imitationem alterius producuntur, quandoque id quod alterum imitatur, perfecte imitatur ipsam; et tunc intellectus operantis praeconcipiens formam operati, habet ut ideam ipsam formam rei imitatae, prout est illius rei imitatae: quandoque vero quod est ad imitationem alterius, non perfecte imitatur illud; et tunc intellectus operativus non accipit formam rei imitatae absolute ut ideam vel exemplar rei operandae; sed cum proportione determinata, secundum quam exemplatum a principali exemplari deficeret vel imitaretur.

Dico ergo, quod Deus per intellectum omnia operans, omnia ad similitudinem essentiae suae producit; unde essentia sua est idea rerum; non quidem ut essentia, sed ut est intellecta. Res autem creatae non perfecte imitantur divinam essentiam; unde essentia non accipitur absolute ab intellectu divino ut idea rerum, sed cum proportione creaturae fiendae ad ipsam divinam essentiam, secundum quod deficit ab ea, vel imitatur eam. Diversae autem res diversimode ipsam imitantur; et unaquaeque secundum proprium modum suam, cum unicuique sit proprium, esse distinctum ab altera; et ideo ipsa divina essentia, cointellecta diversis proportionibus rerum ad eam, est idea uniuscuiusque rei. Unde, quidem una omnium ex parte essentiae; sed pluralitas invenitur ex parte diversarum proportionum creaturarum ad ipsam.

It is, at least in part, because of their relation to God by means of such exemplary causality that all things are said to be like to Him by way of a similitude to His essence. Created things do not imitate perfectly the Divine Essence because the divine essence is not taken absolutely by the divine intellect as their exemplar, but creatures are produced in the likeness of the divine essence according to a certain proportion so that they imitate it to a greater or lesser degree. Diverse things imitate the essence of God in different ways, each in its own manner, since it is proper to each thing to be distinct from another. Therefore, the divine essence as understood in the diverse relations of creatures to it is the idea or exemplar of everything. So while the divine essence itself is simple, there are many ideas in God because of the various ways in which His essence is imitated in creatures.<sup>27</sup>

The relations of similarity arising between things which are done by way of imitation are causal relations in as much as the imitations depend upon their exemplar for the likeness they bear to it. Their similitude consists in their participation in the perfection of their exemplar, because of which they are, in a way, one with it. Therefore, although an imitation and its exemplar may be essentially diverse, they are in some way the same in as much as they share a common perfection, which is present in the imitation because of its causal relation to its exemplar. In virtue of this causal relation of similarity there can be applied to diverse objects a common name in its proper signification, for regardless of the nature of things in which the relation is found, the relation or the reference is the same in all. It is only the mode of the relation which differs.

A name, then, is used in its proper signification in both the proper analogy of proportionality and in the analogy of attribution. It is only in metaphorical analogy that a term is used in a transferred sense, and hence such analogy is improper. It is true that the

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 6: Dicendum, quod una prima forma, ad quam omnia reducuntur, est ipsa essentia divina secundum se considerata; ex cujus consideratione divinus intellectus advenit, ut ita dicam, diversos modos imitationis ipsius, in quibus pluralitas idearum consistit.

attribution of a name in both metaphorical analogy and the analogy of attribution is extrinsic, in as much as in both cases the basis of the analogy belongs intrinsically to only one member. This, however, must not lead one to lose sight of the fact that there is a great difference between them; for in the analogy of attribution a causal relation binds the minor members to the prime analogate, whereas in metaphorical analogy there is only an accidental relation of similarity of activity.<sup>28</sup>

Because the analogy of attribution is not according to intrinsic causality it may be considered a less proper mode of analogical predication than proper proportionality. Yet, it cannot be excluded from the scope of analogy in a proper sense.<sup>29</sup> It is far removed from both

<sup>28</sup> Cf. JOSEPHUS GRETT, O.S.B., *Elementa Philosophiæ Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, (Herder, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1926), Vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>29</sup> *I Ethic.*, ed. Pirotta, lect. 7, nos 95-96: . . . aliquid dici de multis secundum diversas rationes contingit dupliciter. Uno modo secundum rationes omnino diversas non habentes respectum ad unum. Et ista dicuntur æquivoca a casu, quia scilicet casu accidit quod unum nomen unus homo imposuit uni rei, et alius alii rei, ut præcipue patet in diversis hominibus uno nomine nominatis. Alio modo unum nomen dicitur de multis secundum rationes diversas non totaliter, sed in aliquo uno convenientes. Quandoque quidem in hoc, quod referuntur ad unum principium (secundum causalitatem efficientem), sicut res aliqua dicitur militaris, vel quia est instrumentum militis, sicut gladius, vel quia est tegumentum ejus, sicut lorica, vel quia est vehiculum ejus, sicut equus. Quandoque vero in hoc, quod referuntur ad unum finem (secundum causalitatem finalem), sicut medicina dicitur sana, eo quod est factiva sanitatis, diæta vero eo quod est conservativa sanitatis, urina vero eo quod est sanitatis significativa. Quandoque secundum proportionem diversam ad idem subjectum (secundum causalitatem materialem), sicut qualitas dicitur ens, quia est dispositio per se entis, id est substantiæ, quantitas vero eo quod est mensura ejusdem, et sic de aliis, vel secundum unam proportionem ad diversa subjecta (secundum causalitatem formalem intrinsecam). Eandem enim habent proportionem visus quoad corpus, et intellectus ad animam. Unde sicut visus est potentia organi corporalis, ita etiam intellectus est potentia animæ absque participatione corporis.

Sic ergo dicit, quod bonum dicitur de multis, non secundum rationes penitus differentes, sicut accidit in his quæ sunt a casu æquivoca, sed magis secundum analogiam, id est proportionem eandem, in quantum omnia bona dependent ab uno primo bonitatis principio (secundum causalitatem efficientem vel exemplarem), vel in quantum ordinantur ad unum finem (secundum causalitatem finalem). Non enim voluit Aristoteles quod illud bonum separatam sit idea et ratio omnium bonorum, sed principium et finis. Vel etiam dicuntur omnia bona magis secun-

analogy of inequality and metaphor, both of which may be included in the true concept of analogy, which is itself analogous.

In a truly theological procedure, while, because of the context, either analogy of proportionality or analogy of attribution may receive a greater emphasis, neither can be completely excluded. Applying fatherhood to the various subjects in which it may be realized in theology need not be exclusively according to proportionality, but fatherhood may be considered as attributed to various subjects according as they realize, however deficiently, the totality of that notion as found in the prime analogate. The application of the term fatherhood in one or another mode of analogy must be based on solid notions of the common fundamental requirements and various modes of fatherhood.

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*dum analogiam, idest proportionem eandem, sicut visus est bonum corporis, et intellectus est bonum animae. Ideo hunc tertium modum praefert, quia accipitur secundum bonitatem inhaerentem rebus. Primi autem duo modi secundum bonitatem separatum, a qua non ita proprie aliquid denominatur.*

## CHAPTER II

### THE APPLICATION OF THE NAME FATHERHOOD

Because of its analogical nature the term fatherhood admits of various applications. Before attempting to apply this name, however, it is necessary to determine first in what the relationship of fatherhood consists.

According to the traditional teaching of theologians, a father, strictly speaking, is the proper active principle of generation in perfect living beings, while "Fatherhood is the relation of the principle of generation in perfect living beings."<sup>1</sup>

*Relation* is the name given the order that exists between two things which are in some way referred to one another. In every relation we can distinguish the principle or subject which is referred to, the term to which the subject is referred, and the reason for the reference. This latter is called the foundation of the relation. We have a clear example of a relation in teaching: the teacher is the subject of the relation, while the term is the pupil, the foundation of the relation being the act of teaching.<sup>2</sup>

*Generation*, in its wider sense, is nothing more than a change from non-existence to existence.<sup>3</sup> However, we are concerned here with the strict meaning of generation which signifies the origin of a living being from a conjoined living principle by way of a similitude

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<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 28, a. 4; *Relatio autem principii generationis in viventibus perfectis dicitur paternitas.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, aa. 1, 2; also Aristotle, *V. Metaph.*, 15, 1030b26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 27, a. 2; . . . communiter . . . generatio nihil aliud est quam mutatio de non esse ad esse.

of nature in the same species.<sup>4</sup> Three things, therefore, are required in order that there be a true generation. First, both the generator and the being generated must be *living*. Consequently, perspiration and such like things, although they have their origin within a living body, are not properly said to be generated. Secondly, it is required that the generator be *conjoined*, that is, he must produce the generated being from his own substance. Hence, the first man cannot be said to have been generated in the strict sense because God did not produce him from His own substance, but formed him from the slime of the earth.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, it is required that the one generated proceed from the generator *by way of a similitude of nature*, and not only by way of generic similitude, but there must be a procession by way of similitude in the same specific nature.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, both the subject and term of this procession must be living, knowing beings.<sup>7</sup> The principle of such a generation is called a father,<sup>8</sup> the term being the son, while the relation of the father to the son is fatherhood.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; Alio modo, proprie in viventibus; et sic generatio significat originem alicuius viventis a principio vivente coniuncto. Et haec proprie dicitur nativitas. Non tamen omne huiusmodi dicitur genitum, sed proprie quod procedit secundum rationem similitudinis. Unde pilus et capillus non habet rationem geniti et filii, sed solum quod procedit secundum rationem similitudinis; non cuiuscumque, nam vermes qui generantur in animalibus, non habent rationem generationis et filiationis, licet sit similitudo secundum genus; sed requiritur ad rationem talis generationis quod procedat secundum rationem similitudinis in natura eiusdem speciei, sicut homo procedit ab homine, et equus ab equo. In viventibus autem quae de potentia in actum vitae procedant, sicut sunt homines et animalia, generatio utramque generationem includit. Si autem sit aliquod vivens cuius vita non exeat de potentia in actum, processio, si qua in tali vivente invenitur, excludit omnino primam rationem generationis; sed potest habere rationem generationis quae est propria viventium.

<sup>5</sup> *Gen.*, iii, 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit.; cf. also III, q. 28, a. 1, ad 4um; I, q. 100, a. 1; I-II, q. 81, a. 2; also P.M. Gazzaniga, *Prolectiones Theologicae*, Tom. III, Dissert. II, Cap. III; also J. Gonzalez, *Com. in I part. D. Thomae*, Tom. II, Disputatio II, Sect. I.

<sup>7</sup> ST. THOMAS, *Ad Ephesios*, Cap III, lect. 4; . . . paternitas est tantum in viventibus et cognoscenibus.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 32, a. 2; q. 40, a. 2.



Advisedly, do we refer to the subject of this relation as principle, rather than cause. "The word *principle* signifies only that whence another proceeds."<sup>9</sup> But the ". . . term cause seems to mean diversity of substance, and dependence of one from another. . . ."<sup>10</sup> The necessity of the use of the word principle, rather than cause, will be evident as we proceed, particularly in our consideration of fatherhood within the Godhead, in which there is a procession from, but no dependence upon, the principle of generation.

A father is said to be the proper active principle in as much as in some imperfect generations, such as human generation, there is required a duality of principles, the one active, the other passive. The proper active principle in such cases is the father, while the maternal principle, although endowed with a certain limited activity, is properly said to be passive.<sup>11</sup>

It is to be noted that the ultimate term of generation is not only the production of a being but also the production of a being in its perfection.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, when a being which has not yet reached its perfection results from the essential act of generation, the very nature of generation demands that the process continue until the being attains its perfection. This means that the education and discipline of the offspring and all that these imply, such as nourishment and protection, are related to imperfect generation as integral parts.<sup>13</sup> The supplying of these necessities, therefore, is proper to the principles of all imperfect generations.

<sup>9</sup> *Summa Theol.*, q. 33, a. 1; . . . nomen principium nihil aliud significat quam id a quo aliquid procedit.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, ad lum; . . . nomen causa videtur importare diversitatem substantiae, et dependentiam alicuius ab altero.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 92, a. 1. The recent theory concerning an equality of active principles in generation is no longer tenable in the light of modern physiological findings. It is now generally admitted by competent scientists that not only is the father the proper active principle in as much as the spermatozoon actively penetrates the ovum, but also because of the established fact that the spermatozoon is gifted with extraordinary powers of locomotion while the ovum is relatively immobile.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, Suppl., q. 41, a. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 102, a. 1; Suppl., q. 41, a. 1.

## TYPES OF FATHERHOOD

We can distinguish five general types of fatherhood, namely: 1) divine fatherhood within the Godhead; 2) fatherhood of divine adoption; 3) God's fatherhood of natural creatures; 4) human fatherhood; 5) the fatherhood of human adoption. It is also possible to distinguish additional forms of fatherhood, such as nutritive, intellectual and spiritual paternity. However, the nature of these and the strength of the claim which they hold to the title "fatherhood" will be evident from a consideration of the five general types mentioned above.

In order to determine the precise sense in which the term fatherhood is applied to these various relations it is necessary to recall what has been said concerning the analogical basis for the imposition of a name. A name, in its proper signification, may be applied to those things which are causally related, either intrinsically or extrinsically, to the reality signified by the name. If this reality is found intrinsically, in its own way, in objects which are, strictly speaking, essentially diverse but, in some way, essentially the same, then the name signifying this reality is predicated analogically of those objects by the analogy of proper proportionality.

We shall, therefore, first of all, apply the concept of fatherhood, considered solely in the line of intrinsic causality, to the various types of fatherhood. If the relation signified by this concept is realized as an intrinsic form in the various members of which it is predicated, then they will be fatherhoods in the proper and intrinsically formal sense of the word. If this relation is not found in them intrinsically, then the term fatherhood is applied to them only metaphorically. It must be borne in mind, however, that at the moment our consideration of fatherhood is restricted to the line of formal intrinsic causality.

It is a fundamental Catholic dogma that there exists within the Godhead the relation of paternity. By an examination of this relation we shall see that it is properly and formally fatherhood in the fullest sense of the word. God is a father because He truly generates a Son.

In the procession of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity all the requisites for a generation in the strictest sense are present in the highest possible degree.<sup>14</sup>

A knowledge, although necessarily imperfect, of this divine procession is best had by a comparison of the immanent operations of human and divine intellectual activity. In the process of human thought, a concept proceeds from the mind's knowledge of things. This concept is called the mental word, while the sound which man forms to communicate this concept is called the oral word.<sup>15</sup> The more deeply the human mind penetrates an object the more intimate is its concept, and the more closely does the concept tend to become identified with the mind.<sup>16</sup>

A similar process goes on within the Godhead. Since God is infinitely perfect, He knows Himself completely and, in thus knowing Himself, He reproduces Himself in an interior Word. The fact that such a Word exists within the Godhead is divinely revealed in Sacred Scripture,<sup>17</sup> which refers to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity as the Word. The Word Himself assures us that He proceeds from a Principle<sup>18</sup> and, moreover, that He and His Principle are one.<sup>19</sup>

An analysis of this divine procession reveals it to be a formal generation. In order that there be a generation in the strict sense, it

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1; Quicumque enim intelligit, ex hoc ipso quod intelligit, procedit aliquid intra ipsum, quod est conceptio rei intellectæ, ex vi intellectiva proveniens, et ex eius notitia procedens. Quam quidem conceptionem vox significat, et dicitur verbum cordis significatum verbo vocis.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 2um; Manifestum est enim quod quanto aliquid magis intelligitur, tanto conceptio intellectualis est magis intima intelligenti; et magis unum: nam intellectus secundum hoc quod actu intelligit, secundum hoc fit unum cum intellecto. Unde cum divinum intelligere sit in fine perfectionis, necesse est quod verbum divinum sit perfecte unum cum eo a quo procedit, absque omni diversitate.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Prologue to the *Holy Gospel according to Saint John*.

<sup>18</sup> *Johs*, viii, 42.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, x, 30.

will be remembered, it is necessary that there be the origin of a new living being from a conjoined living principle by way of a similitude of nature.<sup>20</sup>

The Divine Word proceeds by way of intellectual action which is a vital operation. He proceeds from a conjoined living principle because He receives the very nature of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. He proceeds by way of similitude<sup>21</sup> in as much as the concept of the intellect is a likeness of the object conceived. He proceeds in the same nature because in God the act of understanding and His existence are the same.<sup>22</sup> The procession of the Second Person is, then, properly and formally called generation. God, as subject or principle of this generation, is truly and formally a father, and the Divine Word Who proceeds is rightly called His Son.

Not only is this procession within the Godhead a true and formal generation, but it is the most perfect generation. While the Word proceeds from a conjoined living principle, He remains eternally united to that Principle, because in God generation is an act which goes on for eternity. This characteristic is peculiar to this eternal generation and renders it infinitely perfect.

Therefore, considered in the line of formal causality, generation, and consequently fatherhood, is found first and foremost in God.

"The terms 'generation' and 'paternity,' like the other terms properly applied to God, are said of God before creatures as regards the thing signified, but not as regards the mode of signification. Hence also the Apostle says 'I bend my knee to the father of my Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named.' This is explained thus. It is manifest that generation receives its

<sup>20</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Cl. Coloss.*, i, 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 2; Sic igitur processio verbi in divinis habet rationem generationis. Procedit enim per modum intelligibilis actionis, quae est operatio vitae: et a principio conjuncto; et secundum rationem similitudinis, quia conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei intellectae; et in eadem natura existens, quia in Deo idem est intelligere et esse. Unde processio verbi in divinis dicitur generatio, et ipsam verbum procedens dicitur Filius.

species from the term which is the form of the thing generated; and the nearer it is to the form of the generator, the more perfect is the generation, as univocal generation is more perfect than non-univocal, for it belongs to the essence of a generator to generate what is like itself in form. Hence the very fact that in the divine generation the form of the Begetter and Begotten is numerically the same, whereas in creatures, it is not numerically, but only specifically, the same, shows that generation and consequently paternity, is applied to God before creatures.<sup>23</sup>

But God is called Father not only because He is the Principle of the generation of His divine Son, but also because He is the Principle of the being of other creatures. We shall now examine these relations of God to His creatures in order to determine whether or not they are relations of formal paternity. In order that they be fatherhoods in the formal sense it is necessary that God be the formal generative principle of creatures.

God is called the Father of those creatures who participate in His divine nature. It is evident that God is not the natural father of the creature to whom He gives a participation of His nature, for divine nature is in no way due to creatures. Thus this type of fatherhood is called one of adoption, for it is by adoption that one takes a stranger as his own heir and child.<sup>24</sup> The charter of this adoption is to be found in the Gospel according to Saint John, in the Synoptics

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 33, a. 2, ad 4um: . . . nomen generationis et paternitatis, sicut ut alia nomina quae proprie dicuntur in divinis, per prius dicuntur de Deo quam de creaturis, quantum ad rem significatam, licet non quantum ad modum significandi. Unde et Apostolus dicit: "Flecto genua mea ad Patrem Domini mei Iesu Christi, ex quo omnis paternitas in coelo et in terra nominatur." Quod sic apparet. Manifestum est enim quod generatio accipit speciem termino, qui est forma generati. Et quanto haec fuerit propinquior formae generantis, tanto verior et perfectior est generatio; sicut generatio univoca est perfectior quam non univoca: nam de ratione generantis est, quod generet sibi simile secundum formam. Unde hoc ipsum quod in generatione divina est eadem numero forma generantis et geniti, in rebus autem creatis non est eadem numero, sed specie tantum, ostendit quod generatio, et per consequens paternitas, per prius sit in Deo quam in creaturis.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 23, a. 1.

and in the Epistles of Saints Paul, Peter, and James.<sup>25</sup> According to their teaching, men are begotten, born of God. God is called the Father of men because He is the principle of a new life in them, a supernatural life, a life of grace. While this fatherhood is not a natural one in as much as the new life which men receive is in no way due to them by nature,<sup>26</sup> yet it differs greatly from human adoptive fatherhood; for, as we shall see, it adds inestimably to man's intrinsic worth.

However, those creatures whom God gives a participation in His divine nature do not proceed from Him by a process of generation in the strictest and most formal sense of the term. God does not produce the supernatural man from His own substance, but he is born of God according to grace, which inheres in his soul as an accidental form. Hence speaking in a most proper and a most formal sense, the act by which a child by divine adoption proceeds from God is not a generative one. However, all the other requirements of a true generation are verified. There is the procession of a new living being from a Living Principle; moreover, this new being participates in the nature of the Principle whence he proceeds. In view of this fact, then, it is not by mere metaphor that we refer to the act of divine adoption as a generation. Its close resemblance to generation taken in its strictest and most formal sense, and indeed its similarity to the divine eternal generation within the Godhead,<sup>27</sup> furnishes a well-founded basis for referring to it as a generation in a wide sense. Certainly there is more similarity between the procession of the adopted child from God and generation in the strictest sense than a mere similarity of activity, which is the foundation for a metaphor. However, in as much as the act of divine adoption does not fulfill all the re-

<sup>25</sup> *John*, i, 12, 13; *Matt.*, v, 9, 44, 45; *Luke*, xx, 35, 36; *Rom.*, viii, 14-16; *Ephes.*, i, 5 ff.; *Gal.*, iv, 4-7; *I John*, i, 3; *I Peter*, i; *James* i, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1; q. 114, aa. 2, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 23, a. 2, ad 3um: Filiatio adoptiva est quaedam similitudo filiationis aeternae: sicut omnia quae in tempore facta sunt, similitudines quaedam sunt eorum quae ab aeterno fuerunt.

quirements of a generation in its strictest sense, it can be properly referred to as a generation only in the wide sense of the term. Fatherhood, therefore, in its most strict and formal sense, is more properly applied to a human father as the principle of a human generation than to God as the Principle of man's generation in the supernatural life. Nevertheless, the fatherhood of divine adoption infinitely surpasses human paternity in dignity and excellence.

Considering the relations of God to those of His creatures whom He has not endowed with sanctifying grace, we again find the notion of fatherhood verified in God. This, however, is not formal paternity. Between God and natural creatures we do not find the relations of true paternity and filiation, first of all, because, formally speaking, natural creatures are created rather than generated. Moreover, God does not produce such creatures by way of a similitude of His nature, but by way of a similitude of His essence. Divine nature implies divine operation, and the only instances of creatures who operate in a divine manner are those who are gifted with divine grace.<sup>28</sup> So while natural creatures participate in the essence of God, they do not partake of God's nature. Then, too, natural creatures do not proceed from God as from a conjoined principle because God produces them from nothing and there is no medium between the Creator and the being created.

However, God may be said to be the Father of natural creatures because, as the principle of their being, He produces them in a certain likeness of His essence.<sup>29</sup> This likeness will be more perfect as it approaches more closely the true relations of fatherhood and sonship. Thus God is called the Father of some creatures by reason only of vestige, as in the case of the irrational animals.<sup>30</sup> Of the rational creature, God is Father by reason of the likeness of His image.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 110, aa. 3, 4; q. 112, a. 1; q. 113, a. 9; q. 114, a. 3; II-II, q. 19, a. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2um.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 45, a. 7; q. 33, a. 3; q. 93, a. 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, *Loc. cit.*; cf. also I, q. 93, a. 2.

This we read in the Book of Deuteronomy, "Is he not thy father that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?"<sup>32</sup> But God is not only the principle of the being of natural creatures; He is also the Director and Governor of their being as much as the production of a being is not the ultimate and of the divine action, but is ordained to a higher end. Creatures, however, are incapable of knowing and attaining this end, and so it is necessary that God conduct them to it. In this sense He may be said to be their Father, "for it belongs to a father to beget and to govern."<sup>33</sup> Thus while God may rightly be called the Father of natural creatures, He is not formally a father in this sense in as much as the formal notes of fatherhood are lacking in His production of such creatures. Since there is not present a true generation God can be referred to as the Father of natural creatures only by way of metaphor.

Among men we find a relation of paternity, that of human fatherhood, which, although infinitely inferior to the Fatherhood within the Holy Trinity, is nevertheless true and formal paternity. It is formal because the act by which men proceed from the human principle of their being is proportionately the same as the act by which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity proceeds from the First. This act, formal generation, is, as we have seen, the foundation for the relation of formal paternity.

In the production of a human being there is a formal generation because all the requirements for such a generation are verified. The principle of the act of the procession produces a new living being. Moreover, he produces this being as a conjoined principle, for his offspring proceeds from his own living substance. This new creature is of the same specific nature as its principle; it, too, is human. While this generation, considered only in its strict formality, is the same as the generation within the Godhead, it is only proportionately the same; for, unlike the nature common to the First and Second Per-

<sup>32</sup> Deuteronomy, xxxii, 6.

<sup>33</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 3: *Patris enim est producere et gubernare.*



sons of the Holy Trinity, the nature of the begetter and begotten is not the same numerically, but only specifically.<sup>34</sup>

God may also be called the Father of the natural man in as much as He enters in to supply the form in human production. However, His action in this instance is not properly generative, but rather creative, in as much as He produces the human soul out of nothing. God also gives the motion that results in the generative act; and for this reason, as well as because of the fact that He supplies the form of the resultant being, He can be called the father of the natural man. But He is so called only metaphorically, for the being that is produced as a result of His action and that of the human parents, who are the secondary principles in human production, receives the nature, not of the primary principle of its being, but rather of the secondary principle. It is the proper active principle of a new living human being who is properly and formally its father, for such a being is of the same specific nature as his principle from whose own living substance he has proceeded.

Those men are also called fathers who assume as their own children and heirs those whom they have not generated. Since one who partakes of this type of fatherhood is not the principle whence the life of the child proceeds, he is not said to be the natural father of the child; his fatherhood is one of adoption. Since such a father is not a generative principle there can be no question of a formal paternity. Consequently, in human adoption the father adds nothing to the intrinsic worth of his adopted child. Therefore, such a one can be called a father only in an improper sense. But this application of the term as a metaphor is justifiable in as much as, in lieu of the principle of the child's generation, the father by human adoption brings this generation to its integral perfection by performing those secondary functions which are proper to all principles of imperfect generations. The claim of the father by human adoption to paternity, then, is founded on the similarity of his action to that of the prin-

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 33, a. 2, ad 4um.

ciple of human generation in bringing his offspring to its integral perfection.

As we have seen, fatherhood is to be found in all its perfection within the Godhead. All other fatherhoods are derived from this divine principality of God the Father. If a relation similar to this divine paternity is found intrinsically in other principles, then those principles are fathers in the proper and formal sense of the word. However, the name father can also be applied properly, although not so properly, to those principles who are subjects of an action, which although not proportionately the same according to an intrinsic form, is similar to the divine generative action within the Godhead. Moreover, this similarity must be causally related to the eternal generation within the Blessed Trinity. The application of the name father to such principles is by the analogy of attribution in which, it will be recalled, a common name is imposed upon the various members of a comparison in which the reality signified by the name is found intrinsically in one of the analogates and in the others extrinsically by virtue of its causal relation to the prime analogate.

While it is true that the name paternity is first applied to creatures, the reality signified by that name is realized in its total perfection only within the Holy Trinity, and any other relationship is designated as fatherhood only in so far as it is similar to this eternal relationship within the Godhead.

Thus we see that any name which men apply to an object can be considered in two ways. If the name is taken as a term or word expressing a concept of the mind, then the name is predicated first of creatures rather than of God. But if the name is considered in so far as it manifests the quiddity of the thing which is named, then the name belongs first to God and then to creatures. Hence, the name paternity in so far as it signifies a concept of the intellect naming a thing applies first to creatures rather than to God because man knows creatures before God and must speak of God in terms of creatures. In so far as paternity signifies the very thing named, however, it is

primarily and principally in God rather than in men, for it is certain that all generative power in creatures is from God. For this reason St. Paul says, "I bend my knee to the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named," which is the same as if he had said, "the fatherhood which is in creatures is, as it were, nominal or vocal, but that divine paternity by which the Father gives His whole nature to the Son, without any imperfection, is true paternity."<sup>23</sup>

Fatherhood in its fullness and all its perfection, then, is the paternity within the Godhead. Any other relation merits the name of paternity only in so far as it imitates this relation of God the Father to the Word, and the more it resembles it the stronger will be its claim to the title of fatherhood.

Since the foundation for the relation of fatherhood is generation there must be a procession which can be properly called generation before there can be any question of true paternity. When, however, such a procession is present, it is possible, even though it is not a generation in the most strict and formal sense, that it be more perfect than a generation taken in the strictest sense in as much as, in its mode of operation, it imitates more perfectly the distinctive characteristics of the generation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Consequently, one who is the principle of a generation by the analogy of attribution may have a claim to a fatherhood which sur-

<sup>23</sup> ST. THOMAS, *In Epist. S. Pauli ad Ephesios*, Cap III, lect. 4: . . . nomen alicuius rei nominatae a nobis dupliciter potest accipi, quia vel expressivum, aut significativum conceptus intellectus; quia voces sunt notae, vel signa passionum, vel conceptuum qui sunt in anima, et sic nomen prius est in creaturis, quam in Deo. Aut in quantum est manifestativum quidditatis rei nominatae exterius, et sic est prius in Deo. Unde hoc nomen paternitatis secundum quod significat conceptionem intellectus nominantis rem, sic per prius invenitur in creaturis quam in Deo, quia per prius creatura innotescit nobis, quam Deus: secundum autem quod significat ipsam rem nominatam, sic per prius est in Deo quam in nobis; quia certe omnis virtus generativa in nobis est a Deo. Et ideo dicit: Ex quo omnis paternitas in coelo et in terra nominatur; quasi dicat: Paternitas quae est in ipsis creaturis, est quasi nominalis seu vocalis, sed illa paternitas divina, qua pater dat totam naturam filio, absque omni imperfectione, est vera paternitas.

passes in dignity and excellence a fatherhood which arises from a generation in the most strict sense because of the fact that the generation of which he is the principle imitates more perfectly the distinctive feature of the fatherhood of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity from "whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named."<sup>36</sup>

The unique characteristic of the Fatherhood within the Godhead is its communication of the totality of the divine nature. The nature which God communicates to the divine Word is the fullness of His divine nature. Therefore, those who share as principles in a generative process by which the divine nature is communicated are truly fathers, for we have the authority of God Himself that one is called a father by virtue of his participating in that divine eternal action by which He gives His whole nature to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The prime analogate, the fullness of paternity, is the divine Fatherhood within the Godhead, which is the archetype of all other paternity and of which all other fatherhood is but a participation.

Consequently, a theological determination of the various types of fatherhood and their relative excellence must take into consideration the exemplary causality of the eternal divine paternity, for God Himself assures us that His Paternity is the exemplar of all other fatherhood. When the title of fatherhood is applied to a relation which imitates this divine Paternity, the term is applied properly by the analogy of attribution, for in this type of analogy the reality signified by the common name is found intrinsically in one of the analogates and in the others by way of extrinsic denomination.

With the Fatherhood within the Godhead as an exemplar it only remains to determine which relations imitate it and which imitate it more perfectly. Our consideration, then, is by way of exemplary causality. In our consideration of paternity by way of the analogy of proportionality it has been seen that God's fatherhood of natural creatures and the fatherhood of human adoption cannot be properly called fatherhoods; for neither God in this instance, nor the father

<sup>36</sup> *Ephes.*, iii, 15.

by human adoption are in any sense principles of a generation. God's action in such cases is creative, while the father by human adoption is merely an external principle perfecting a generation of which he is not the principle. Hence, neither God, as principle of natural creatures, nor the father by human adoption can be called a father by the analogy of proper proportionality or the analogy of attribution, for in both these analogies the term must be realized in its proper signification in each of the members of the comparison. Since, then, neither God as principle of natural creatures, nor the father by human adoption are in any sense generative principles, the term father can be applied to them only improperly or metaphorically.

However, according to the analogy of attribution God can be properly called the Father of those creatures whom He has endowed with sanctifying grace. This is so because in the act of divine adoption God effects a true generation, even though it is not a generation in the most strict and formal sense of the term. Since generation like fatherhood, is analogical, it is required only that each of the elements of its definition be in some way verified. In divine adoption there is a true generation because each of its requisites is in some way present. First of all, there is the production of a new being in as much as man becomes a new creature<sup>27</sup> by the grace of adoption. There is a communication of nature because the grace of adoption is a participation in the nature of God.<sup>28</sup> The divinely adopted child may be said to proceed from God as from a conjoined living principle in this way: just as within the Godhead the Son remains ever conjoined to His Father in as much as the generation there is eternal, so, too, the adopted child of God remains conjoined to Him after the essential act of supernatural generation by the grace which God continues to sustain in his soul. There is here, then, a procession which may rightly be called a generation, and, indeed, this generation resembles more closely than all others the unique feature of that eternal, per-

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *II Cor.*, v. 17; *Gal.*, vi. 15.

<sup>28</sup> *II Peter*, i. 4.

fect generation within the Godhead. It imitates it more perfectly, first of all, because by it is communicated a participation in the same divine nature which God gives to His only Begotten Son. Moreover, it communicates the participation of this nature in a divine manner, for this generation by which men become the adopted children of God is not by nature but by the divine gift of grace. Hence the fatherhood of divine adoption can be properly called paternity, for it has as its basis a procession which, by the analogy of attribution, is properly designated as generation. Indeed, this fatherhood approaches more closely in dignity than all other types to the divine natural Fatherhood "from which all paternity in heaven and on earth is named,"<sup>39</sup> and its excellence and proximity to the paternity within the Godhead consist in its more perfect imitation of the distinctive feature of that paternity, namely, its divineness.

In our consideration of the process of human reproduction we have seen that it fulfills the requirements for a true generation. But in order that it be the foundation for a relationship of fatherhood which imitates the distinctive characteristic of that paternity "from which all paternity in heaven and on earth is named," it is necessary that this generation can be said to be in some way divine. But human generation can be said to imitate the distinctive characteristic of the generation within the Godhead in as much as the new creature which is produced by it is endowed with a spiritual soul which is the image of the divinity, or, more specifically, is a likeness of the only Begotten Son of God. This is so because "the creature is likened to the word not only as to its form, but also as to its intelligibility: thus the knowledge, which is begotten in the disciple's mind is likened to the word in the mind of the master. In this way the rational creature, even in nature, is likened to the Word of God."<sup>40</sup> The human father can be

<sup>39</sup> *Ephes.*, iii, 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 23, a. 3: . . . assimilatur creatura Verbo, non solum quantum ad rationem formae, sed etiam quantum ad intellectualitatem ipsius: sicut scientia quae fit in mente discipuli, assimilatur verbo quod est in mente magistri. Et hoc modo creatura rationalis, etiam secundum naturam,

said to communicate this likeness of the divine nature as a conjoined living principle in as much as the matter into which God infuses the spiritual soul is conjoined to him; this matter is the subject of the spiritual form, both of them being united to form a new living being.

While the secondary principle in human procreation is properly called a father in so far as he shares as a generative principle in the communication of a likeness of the divine nature, his fatherhood in this respect is very imperfect, less perfect than the fatherhood of divine adoption, and only a weak and faint reflection of the divine paternity within the Blessed Trinity. Its deficiency is found not only in the principles of human generation but also in the human generative act. The principles of human generation are imperfect precisely because they are material and multiple. Moreover, the generative act is imperfect because in man, who is finite, it is temporal. This means that not only does man have to wait until he reaches a certain stage of development before he can place the generative act, but, once he has placed the act, a period of time must elapse before the completion of the process of generation. Moreover, when essential generation has taken place, the being is far from having reached its perfection. The child at generation and for a long time after birth is incapable of maintaining its own existence. Consequently, closely bound up and included in the idea of human generation is the notion of education, which includes the nourishment, protection, instruction and training of the child. These notions are inseparable from the concept of human generation, "for nature intends not only the begetting of offspring, but also its education and development until it reaches the perfect state of man as man. . . ."<sup>41</sup> It is for this reason that the human father is said to be the principle not only of generation, but also "of educa-

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<sup>41</sup> *Summa Theol.*, Suppl., q. 41, a. 1: Non enim intendit natura solum generationem proles, sed traductionem et promotionem usque ad perfectum statum hominis in quantum homo est.

tion, of learning, and of whatever pertains to the perfection of human life."<sup>42</sup>

It is the function of the human father, then, not only to generate, but also to nourish, to protect, to instruct and to train his children. Indeed, in every generation which is not perfect (and there is only the one perfect generation) some or all of these functions will be necessary, depending on the nature of the being generated.

From a theological point of view, then, there are, properly speaking, only three types of fatherhood. The fullness of paternity is to be found within the Godhead and an imitation of this divine fatherhood is found in human paternity and in a far greater degree in the paternity of divine adoption. These latter are participations in the Fatherhood of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity because the similitude which they bear to It is actually caused, as by an exemplary cause, by this divine relation within the Godhead. Owing to its far more perfect mode of imitating its exemplar in communicating a participation in the divine nature, the fatherhood of divine adoption infinitely surpasses human paternity in dignity and excellence and is the greatest possible participation in the divine, eternal Fatherhood of God the Father.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 102, a. 1: *Pater est principium et generationis, et educationis, et disciplinae, et omnium quae ad perfectionem humanae vitae pertinent.*



## THE FATHERHOOD OF CHRIST

As we have seen, one is truly and properly a father in as much as he participates in the divine fatherhood of God from "whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named."<sup>1</sup> He who participates more fully than all others in this divine principality of the Father is His Divine Son, Jesus Christ. Christ is a father because He generates men into a new life. He begets new creatures who participate in His own nature<sup>2</sup> much more intimately than men, by human generation, share in the nature of their natural fathers.

Christ, as man, is the meritorious principle of man's participation in the divine nature in as much as through His human nature He merited this gift for men by His Passion.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Christ, as man, is the efficient although instrumental, principle<sup>4</sup> of man's supernatural generation in as much as His Humanity, through which He merited the grace by which men are regenerated, is an instrument

<sup>1</sup> *Ephes.*, iii, 15.

<sup>2</sup> *II Peter*, i, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Conc. Trident.*, sess. vi, cap. III; *Denz.*, 795: Nam sicut revera homines, nisi ex semine Adæ propagati nascerentur, non nascerentur iniusti, cum ea propagatione per ipsum, dum concipiuntur, propriam iniustitiam contrahant: ita nisi in Christo renascerentur, nunquam iustificarentur, cum ea renascentia per meritum passionis eius gratia, qua iusti fiunt, illis tribuatur. Cf. *Ibid.*, cap. VII; *Denz.*, 799; etiam can. 10; *Denz.*, 820. Cf. etiam *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 3: Dicendum quod interiorem sacramentorum effectum operatur Christus et secundum quod est Deus, et secundum quod est homo: aliter tamen et aliter. Nam secundum quod est Deus, operatur in sacramentis per auctoritatem. Secundum autem quod est homo, operatur in sacramentis effectus sacramentorum meritorie, et efficienter, sed instrumentaliter. Dicitur enim quod passio Christi, quæ competit ei secundum humanam naturam, causa est nostræ iustificationis et meritorie, et effective, non quidem per modum principalis agentis, sive per auctoritatem, sed per modum instrumenti, in quantum humanitas est instrumentum divinitatis eius.

conjoined to His divinity, which is the principal efficient cause of spiritual life. Thus to Christ, as the meritorious<sup>5</sup> and efficient principle of supernatural generation, is properly attributed the title of Father.

A cursory glance at the early events of human history shows the necessity of Christ's Fatherhood in the present order of things. When God created Adam, the first father of men, He endowed him with the greatest blessings. He elevated man to Himself, giving him a share in His own divine nature. The devil, seeing man in such a state of blessedness, was filled with envy and determined to steal from him his life in God. But the evil one knew that God had decreed that man should lose his participation in divine life only by sin. So he set out to deprive man of his life of soul and body by inducing him to sin. The devil was successful in his evil designs,<sup>6</sup> and man, deprived of his life in God, was, to all appearances, hopelessly lost.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, God, in His infinite goodness, decreed that man's heritage should be restored. He willed that man should have a new father who would regenerate him into the divine life. However, it was first necessary that man be reconciled to God. Man was, therefore, in need of a mediator; for, "properly speaking, the office of a mediator is

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<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted that it is by reason of her rôle as meritorious cause of their spiritual regeneration that the Blessed Virgin Mary is truly and properly the Mother of men. This is the common teaching of theologians. Cf. e.g., MERKELBACK, *Mariologia*, n. 194 "Causalitatem moralem suffragii, scil., meriti et intercessionis, mediationi Mariæ agnoscunt quasi communiter. . . ." "Mariam non solum esse nostram matrem adoptivam, externa quadam et iuridica adoptione, sed veram matrem, licet spiritualement, quia vere nos genuit, ita ut vera causa quodammodo sit intrinsecæ nobis vitæ supernaturalis et gratiæ divinæ." "Mariam esse matrem nostram spiritualement, non tantum *indirecte*, quia Christus ex ea natus est, aut *improprie*, quia maternam curam gerit et oratione pro nobis intercedit, sed *directe et proprie*: quia cooperata est nostræ generationi spirituali ac salutem, et quidem *cooperatione specificè materna*, cum intenderit nostram spiritualement generationem; et quia *ex munere matris* intercedit, ita ut oratio eius sit fundata in cooperatione sua, et etiam vera sit cooperatio in applicatione mediæ salutis et executione redemptionis." (n. 163)

<sup>6</sup> *Wisdom*, ii. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. FRAY LUIS DE LEON, *The Names of Christ*, (New York: 1926), pp. 44-45.

to join together those between whom he mediates."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the order of divine justice demanded that the mediator be a man; for, since it was man who had sinned, it was man who must make amends. But since man's debt was infinite, he was unable to make satisfaction. Only One Who was God could satisfy for the infinite offense. It was necessary, therefore, that the mediator be God. Moreover, it was required that the mediator be a priest; for to be a mediator between God and man is the office proper to a priest.<sup>9</sup> A priest was also necessary in as much as the divine justice could be satisfied only by the offering of an acceptable sacrifice, and "the priest's office consists principally in the offering of sacrifice."<sup>10</sup>

The reconciliation of man to God could be effected, then, only by a mediator who was at once God, man and priest. Such a one was required for satisfying the debt which man had incurred. But in order that man be restored to his life in God even more was required. God had decreed, however, that this restoration should take place. Moreover, He had determined the manner in which it was to be effected. The sons of Adam were not to be born into this world in a supernatural state, but God had ordained that men already born should "be reborn in a new manner so as to die according to the first birth and live according to the second."<sup>11</sup> As the foundation of this doctrine we have the words of Christ to Nicodemus, "Unless a man be born from on high, he cannot see the kingdom of God."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 26, a. 1: Dicendum quod mediatoris officium proprie est coniungere eos inter quos est mediator.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 22, a. 1: Dicendum quod proprie officium sacerdotis est esse mediatorum inter Deum et populum.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4, Sed contra: Sed in sacrificio offerendo potissime sacerdotis consistit officium.

<sup>11</sup> FRAY LUIS DE LEON, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Joh.*, iii, 3. Note:—The Greek text has "gennethe anothem" which may mean: "born again"; "born anew"; or "born from on high." Some of the Fathers and Doctors, St. Thomas among them, prefer "born from on high," and there is little doubt that this is the correct signification. The context in J: 31 there is little doubt that this is the correct signification. The context in J: 31 shows that this is the true meaning. It is not the fact of a rebirth that is emphasized but the spiritual quality of the rebirth. The sense of the passage is:

The very idea of birth implies a son or children who are generated and a father who generates. Therefore, in order that men have life in God it is necessary that they have a father to generate them into this divine life. Hence, for the regeneration of man into the supernatural life there is required a Father Who is at the same time God, man and priest.

The divine Son of God is the only One Who could fulfill all these requirements. Being man, and indeed the perfect man, He could take upon Himself the sins of man. Being God, He could satisfy for the infinite offense. Being a priest, He could offer the acceptable sacrifice, the fruit of which would restore man to supernatural life.

Christ is a priest simultaneously with His Incarnation, "since the mission received from the Father to redeem the world through His sacrifice dates from this instant."<sup>13</sup> "In becoming Incarnate, the Word of God assumed, so to speak, all the qualifications for and all the rights to the priesthood. By the dignity of His person and by the perfection of His holiness and His religion, He fulfilled all the requirements of a perfect priest."<sup>14</sup> However, "for Jesus Christ to be a priest, it was necessary not only that He become flesh, but that He be specially called and constituted priest by His Father. . . ."<sup>15</sup> But Christ was constituted priest in as much as "He was sent upon earth by His Father precisely for the purpose of representing men and of offering up the sacrifice which would reconcile them with God."<sup>16</sup>

Because He is the great High Priest, Christ is the Father of men. Indeed, He is the Father of men by a special divine decree, and His humanity, His mediatorship and His priesthood were all ordered to

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spiritual rebirth is the first requisite for entry into the kingdom of heaven, which, contrary to the general expectation, is here asserted to be a spiritual kingdom. Cf. M. J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: 1936), p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> J. TIXERONT, *Holy Orders and Ordination* (St. Louis: 1928), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

this end. While it is true that Christ was at the same time man, mediator, priest and father, in the order of nature His humanity, His mediatorship and His priesthood precede His paternity and, indeed, His paternity is the immediate consequent of His priesthood. It is by reason of His priesthood that Christ participates in the divine paternity of His Father, for by His priestly sacrifice He merited for men a participation in the divine nature by which they become sons of God.<sup>17</sup>

Just as Adam is the father of the human race in so far as he contained virtually as sons all men who were to proceed from him as from a principle, so, too, Christ, the Second Adam, is the new Father of men in as much as by His passion He merited for all men the grace by which they participate in the divine nature, which grace He efficiently communicates to them in the Sacraments. Christ is, therefore, the meritorious and efficient principle of man's generation into the supernatural life.

Since Christ is both God and man, He effects this divine generation in two ways, both as principal cause and as instrumental cause. It is the divinity of Christ which is the principal cause of man's spiritual generation, and therefore, this effect belongs to the whole Trinity. Nevertheless, in as much as in the present order man's generation into the supernatural life is to be effected by one who is God, man, mediator and priest, and since these requisites are found in Christ alone, supernatural generation belongs immediately to Him. It belongs also to the whole Trinity as to the first and remote cause, to whom Christ's life belonged as its first author and from whom Christ received the inspiration of regenerating man. Consequently, it belongs immediately to Christ as man to be the Father of men, although the spiritual generation of men is ascribed to the whole Trinity as its first cause.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Rom.*, v, 2; viii, 16.

<sup>18</sup> St. Thomas uses a similar argument to prove that the office of Redeemer is proper to Christ as man: *Dicendum quod ad hoc quod aliquis redimat, duo requiruntur: scilicet actus solutionis, et pretium solutum. Si enim aliquis solvat*

It is to be noted that to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, considered not as God-man, but as the Word of God, is attributed the title of Father by reason of the fact that He is the exemplary cause of man's spiritual regeneration; for the operation of divine adoption "though common to the whole Trinity, is appropriated to the Father as its author, to the Son as its exemplar, to the Holy Ghost, as imprinting on us the likeness of this exemplar."<sup>19</sup> Indeed this divine adoptive Fatherhood of the Word by reason of exemplary causality is perfect, for by it the "creature is likened to the Eternal Word, as to the oneness of the Word with the Father."<sup>20</sup>

However, considered in the line of efficient causality, Fatherhood is attributed to Christ as man and, indeed, as the great High Priest, for it was in this latter rôle that He offered the sacrifice which was efficacious for regenerating all men into the spiritual life.

Because of this entirely spiritual effect of Christ's action He is the Father of men in a much truer sense than Adam; for He gives men supernatural life, a participation in the very life of God, whereas Adam bequeaths to them only passing human life in a corrupted human nature, which, because of its corruptibility, is incompatible with eternal life. It is for this reason that as sons of Adam men must die, but as sons of Christ they have life eternal.

Christ is not only the second Adam; He is also "The last Adam,"

pro redemptione aliquis rei pretium, si non est suum, sed alterius, non dicitur ipse redimere principaliter, sed magis ille cuius est pretium. Pretium autem redemptionis nostrae est sanguis Christi, vel vita eius corporalis, quae est in sanguine, quam ipse Christus exsolvit. Unde utrumque istorum ad Christum pertinet immediate inquantum est homo: sed ad totam Trinitatem sicut ad causam primam et remotam, cuius erat et ipsa vita Christi sicut primi auctoris, et a qua inspiratum fuit ipsi homini Christo ut pateretur pro nobis. Et ideo esse immediate Redemptorem est proprium Christi inquantum est homo; quamvis ipsa redemptio possit attribui toti Trinitati sicut primae causae. (*Summa Theol.*, III, q. 48, a. 5).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 23, a. 2, ad 3: Et ideo adoptatio, licet sit communis toti Trinitati, appropriatur tamen Patri ut auctori, Filio ut exemplari, Spiritui Sancto ut imprimenti in nobis huius similitudinem exemplaris.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 3: . . . assimilatur creatura Verbo aeterno secundum unitatem quam habet ad Patrem. . . .

for "there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."<sup>21</sup> There is no other father to be expected who can free men from the deadly effects transmitted through their generation by the first Adam, and can give them a new life, a new nature, which is a participation in the divine nature. What Adam would have bequeathed to his sons, had he remained faithful, was lost by his sin; and, as a consequence, his sons are born in a nature that bears the deadly effects of his sin. Christ's sons, however, participate in the all-perfect nature of God Himself. Therefore, Christ's fatherhood exceeds the human and corrupt, as unsullied supernature exceeds corrupted nature. The comparison of the two Fathers of men and of the inheritances left their respective sons, as given by St. Paul in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, shows the infinite, superiority of Christ as the Father of men.

"But not as the offence, so also the gift.

For if by the offence of one, many died;	much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
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And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift.

For the judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation;	but grace is of many offences, unto justification.
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For if by one man's offence death reigned through one;	much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ.
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For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners;	so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just." <sup>22</sup>
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<sup>21</sup> *Acts*, iv, 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Rom.*, v, 15-19.

As sons of Adam, therefore, men are sinners, worthy of condemnation; but as sons of Christ they are saints, worthy of eternal life.

Christ, then, is the Father of all men virtually in that he merited for them by His Passion a participation in the nature of God. But He is also the actual Father of each man to whom He communicates the divine nature, to whom He applies the merits of His Passion by generating them into a new life.

This generation is effected through the sacrament of Baptism. In Baptism, Christ "actually implants within us that which we begin to receive in him and which He performed in Himself for us, that is, the destruction of our guilt and its expulsion from our soul. . . . At the same time He inserted a germ—a seed, we might call it—of His spirit and grace, which enclosed within our soul and cultivated as it should be, might afterwards sprout at its appointed time, increase in strength, and grow to the measure of the 'perfect man'. . . ." <sup>23</sup> It is by Baptism that men are incorporated into the Passion of Christ, <sup>24</sup> for, as the Apostle says, we are saved "by the laver of regeneration."<sup>25</sup> In Baptism all the requisites for a true generation are in some way verified. There is the production of a new living being, for through this sacrament man becomes a "new creature."<sup>26</sup> There is a communication of the same nature because by the grace given in Baptism men become partakers of the divine nature of Christ, "by whom," says St. Peter, "he hath given us most great and precious promises that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature."<sup>27</sup> Men, in the sacrament of Baptism are said to proceed from Christ as from a conjoined living principle in as much as, having proceeded from Him by grace, they remain ever intimately united to

<sup>23</sup> FRAY LUIS DE LEON, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 69, a. 2: . . . per baptismum aliquis incorporatur passioni et morti Christi: secundum illud Rom. vi: Si mortui sumus cum Christo, credimus quia etiam simul vivemus cum Christo.

<sup>25</sup> Titus, iii, 5.

<sup>26</sup> II Cor., v, 17; Gal., vi, 15.

<sup>27</sup> II Peter, i, 4.



Him by the presence of this grace in their souls. Hence, it is that Christ is truly and properly called a father, and men, by the "laver of regeneration," become His sons.

In recognition of this fact, that through their divine Mediator men must die as sons of Adam and live as sons of Christ, the Church, in her Litany of the Holy Name, salutes Christ in the words of Isaias as "Father of the world to come."<sup>28</sup> However, it must be noted that Christ is not the natural father of men, for the nature which He communicates to them is in no way due to them.<sup>29</sup> Hence, its communication is entirely gratuitous;<sup>30</sup> it is by adoption that men become sons of Christ. Because Christ's fatherhood is one of adoption does not mean, however, that it is less than human paternity. On the contrary, His fatherhood is the fullest participation in the paternity of God the Father; it is God Himself Who gives the form to Christ's fatherhood, since the nature which Christ communicates is divine. Obviously, then, Christ's fatherhood is in the supernatural order and exceeds human paternity as heaven exceeds earth.

Despite the infinite superiority of Christ's paternity over human fatherhood, it is not the plenitude of paternity which is proper to the First Person of the Blessed Trinity Who generates a Son in an identity of nature; for men proceed from Christ only by way of a similitude of nature. Moreover, Christ, in Baptism, does not generate sons who have reached their final perfection. The grace, the participation in Christ's divine nature which they receive, is but the "seed of glory."<sup>31</sup> And as the sons born of Christ have not attained their perfection, He has provided for their growth, nourishment, strength, and protection through the medium of the other sacraments.<sup>32</sup> Conse-

<sup>28</sup> *Pater futuri saeculi. (Isaias, ix, 6).*

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 2, a. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II q. 112, a. 1; q. 114, aa. 2, 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 62, a. 3: *Gratia gratum faciens hoc modo comparatur ad beatitudinem, sicut ratio seminalis in natura ad effectum naturalem: unde . . . gratia semen Dei nominatur.*

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, III, q. 62, a. 2; q. 65, a. 4; q. 72, a. 1, ad 3.

quently, Christ's work as the Father of each man is not complete with his generation, but continues until he reaches the stature of the "perfect man" in the life of glory.

Christ, acting as the perfect and all-loving Father, nourishes His children throughout their lives with the spiritual food of His own Body and Blood. He strengthens them and gives them courage to meet life's battles in the Sacrament of Confirmation. And when His children are enfeebled with the disease of sin, He places His healing hand upon them in the Sacrament of Penance and restores them to health. When His children are weak and famished and at the point of death, He is with them in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, giving them added vigor to fight on to the end. It is also the duty of a father to rule and to govern.<sup>33</sup> Christ, being "the Father of the world to come," sees to its rule and governance by communicating His power and grace in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which men are constituted His magistrates. A father must also propagate his species. Christ provides for the perpetuation of His divine society, and assures its members of all the supernatural helps necessary for their perfection by giving special grace for this purpose to those who are united in the holy Sacrament of Matrimony.

In as much as Christ, by His priestly sacrifice,<sup>34</sup> merited the grace necessary for man's spiritual generation and his perfection in

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 3.

<sup>34</sup> All the meritorious actions of Christ were priestly acts, since of themselves they had infinite value, as proceeding from a divine Person. Nevertheless the merits of His acts were ordained by God to be consummated in His Passion and death upon the Cross. Cf. DURST, "De Characteribus Sacramentalibus," *Xenia Thomistica*, Vol. II, 1924 (pp. 541-581); p. 559: *Fontes autem revelationis constanter adscribunt redemptionem nostram pretioso sanguini Christi et ejus passioni et morti, ergo cultui quem in sacrificio crucis exhibuit; ex quo sequitur, secundum liberum decretum Dei singula opera Christi non distributive sed collective sumpta simul cum sacrificio crucis habuit valorem satisfactorium in actu secundo. Christus autem per hoc, quod moriens in cruce Deo cultum in forma veri et sacrificii realis exhibuit, sacerdos in stricto sensu evasit, ergo ut verus sacerdos salutem nostram operatus est.*

the supernatural life, and in as much as He efficiently communicates this grace through the sacraments, there can be no doubt that He is, as St. Thomas says, "the principal father of all."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Comm. in I ad Corinthios*, cap. iv, lect. 3.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE PRIEST'S PRIMARY CLAIM TO FATHERHOOD PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE PATERNITY

Christ is the Father of men because He is the great High Priest. Moreover, He is the only High Priest of the New Law, as is evident from the following words of the Council of Ephesus: "If anyone say that the very Word of God did not become our High Priest and Apostle, as though this were to be said of another one, the man born of a woman . . . let him be anathema."<sup>1</sup> Christ the priest is the source of all priestly power; He "is the fountain-head of the entire priesthood."<sup>2</sup> As we have seen, it was as High Priest that Christ fulfilled His role as the Father of men.

Since His Ascension into heaven, however, Christ is not present upon earth as a visible priest. Nevertheless, in as much as He is the everlasting propitiation for sin,<sup>3</sup> "always living to make intercession for us,"<sup>4</sup> He continues to function as our High Priest in heaven.

Although Christ the Priest is no longer visibly present upon earth, the fruits of His priesthood are being daily transmitted to men. Since our divine Lord understood perfectly the nature of man and his need for visible signs and institutions,<sup>5</sup> He established upon earth a visible priesthood,<sup>6</sup> whose members He empowered<sup>7</sup> to communicate

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<sup>1</sup> *Conc. Ephesinum*, Anathematismi Cyrilli, Can. 10; Denz., 122: Si quis ergo Pontificem et Apostolum nostrum dicit factum non ipsum Dei Verbum . . . sed velut alterum praeter ipsum . . . A.S.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 22, a. 4: Christus autem est fons totius sacerdotii.

<sup>3</sup> *I Joh.*, ii, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Heb.*, vii, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Catechis. Concilii Trident.*, Pars. II, cap. I, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Conc. Trident.*, sess. XXII, cap. I; Denz., 938.

<sup>7</sup> *Matt.*, xxviii, 18-20.

to men the redemptive grace merited by His priestly sacrifice. The members of this visible priesthood are not merely Christ's administrative successors but rather they are in very truth partakers of His priesthood. They are more than representatives of the great High Priest, for they act in the very person of Christ.<sup>8</sup> For this reason St. Paul could say: "For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes I have done it in the person of Christ."<sup>9</sup> Thus the priest becomes identified with the great High Priest in all his ministerial acts. His official acts are Christ's acts, for Our Blessed Lord Himself says of His priests: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."<sup>10</sup> The members of the priesthood of the New Law, then, are equipped with Christ's divine authority and power so that they can bring to men the salvific effects of His sacrifice. They are thus made sharers in the eternal priesthood of Christ; in fact, the priesthood of Christ and that of His ministers is one and the same thing.

Christ instituted the priesthood of the New Law, when, at the Last Supper, He commanded His Apostles to continue the Eucharistic Sacrifice which He had just performed. By the words, "Do this for a commemoration of Me," He conferred upon them the power proper to priests of the New Law, the power to offer the same sacrifice.<sup>11</sup> The Apostles and their successors, to whom they were to transmit this sacred power,<sup>12</sup> are thus made participants in the priesthood

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<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theol.*, Loc. cit.: Sacerdos autem novae legis in persona ipsius (Christi) operatur.

<sup>9</sup> *I Cor.*, ii, 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Luke*, x, 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Conc. Trident.*, sess. XXII, cap. 9, can. 2; Denz., 949: Si quis dixerit, illis verbis: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*, Christum non instituisse Apostolos sacerdotes, aut non ordinasse, ut ipsi aliisque sacerdotibus offerrent corpus et sanguinem suum: A.S.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 1: Denz., 938: . . . Dominus noster . . . sacerdotem secundum ordinem Melchisedech se in aeternum constitutum declarans, corpus et sanguinem suum sub speciebus panis et vini Deo Patri obtulit ac sub earundem rerum

of Christ. This participation is effected by means of the character of the sacrament of Holy Orders, by which men are configured to the one great High Priest.

Originally, the term character was used to signify an image or figure which was indelibly imprinted or carved in wood or stone. Of its very nature, then, a character is something permanent and inefaceable. Later, the word came to be used to denote a sign bringing about a resemblance between its bearer and the person in whose name he acted. "Thus soldiers, who are assigned to military service, are marked with their leader's sign, by which they are, in a fashion, likened to him."<sup>15</sup> This figure has been borrowed to designate the power conferred by certain of the sacraments by which men are configured to Christ and made participants in His priesthood.<sup>16</sup>

"A character," says St. Thomas, "is properly a kind of seal, whereby something is marked as being ordained to some particular end."<sup>16</sup> More specifically "a character is a kind of seal by which the soul is marked, so that it may receive or bestow on others things pertaining to Divine worship."<sup>16</sup> If the character is one by which we receive things pertaining to the divine cult it is passive.<sup>17</sup> If, however, by the character we bestow things pertaining to the divine worship, then, it is an active power.<sup>18</sup> While it is true that all sacramental characters are "certain participations in Christ's priesthood, flowing from Christ Himself,"<sup>19</sup> the character of sacred ordination is a much

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symbolis Apostolis (quos tunc Novi Testamenti sacerdotes constituēbat), ut sumerent, tradidit et eisdem eorumque in sacerdotio successoribus, ut offerrent, praecepit per haec verba: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*. . .

<sup>15</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 3, ad 2: . . . milites, qui deputantur ad pugnam, insigniuntur signo ducis, quo quodammodo ei configurantur.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, a. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 3: Character proprie est signaculum quoddam quo aliquid insignitur ut ordinandum in aliquem finem.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4: Character est quoddam signaculum quo anima insignitur ad suscipiendum vel aliis tradendum ea quae sunt divini cultus.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, a. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 3: . . . quaedam participationes sacerdotii Christi ab ipso Christo derivatae.

fuller participation in His priesthood, and is the closest configuration to Christ in His office as Priest. By configuration is meant the conformity of the priest to the one great High Priest. Just as Christ is the image of the Father,<sup>20</sup> so the priest is the image of Christ, because by the character of Sacred Orders the priesthood of Christ is impressed upon him, thus making him the minister of the grace merited for men by the priestly act of Christ. By this character the priest is invested with divine authority and given the power to act in the very person of Christ. In a word, he thus becomes "another Christ."

It is by this sacramental character of Holy Orders, then, that men are configured to Christ, the great High Priest, and are given an intimate share in His priesthood. By this sharing in Christ's priesthood they become the instrumental efficient causes of the grace by which men are born and perfected in the supernatural life. Just as Christ's fatherhood of men is, as we have seen, the immediate consequent of His priesthood, so, too, the fatherhood of the priest immediately flows from his priesthood; for whoever shares in Christ's priesthood by reason of a sacerdotal character, by that very fact, participates in the divine paternity.

Therefore, when one is ordained a priest of the New Law, he immediately, by that very fact, becomes a father of men. By reason of his office, the priest is the minister of the grace merited by the priestly act of Christ; and in as much as Christ merited this grace for all men, the priest, who by virtue of his office takes the place of Christ, is virtually the father of all. Consequently, St. John Chrysostom can say that the priest is "the common father of the whole world."<sup>21</sup> At the same time the priest, by reason of his sacerdotal office, is the actual father of all those to whom this regenerative grace is communicated through the sacraments, and particularly the sacrament of Baptism; for it is by means of the grace communicated in

<sup>20</sup> Coloss., i, 15.

<sup>21</sup> *1st 1st Tim.*, cap. ii, Hom. VI; P.L., 62, 529: Quasi communis totius orbis pater sacerdos est.

the sacraments, of which the priest by reason of his office is the minister, that men are born and grow in the supernatural life. Thus St. Gregory, St. Jerome and St. Alphonsus rightly call the priest "the Father of Christians."<sup>22</sup>

The priest has still another claim to fatherhood in the case of those whom he personally generates into the spiritual life by Baptism. This same relation of spiritual paternity would, of course, likewise result in the case of a layman's conferring the sacrament. However, in the latter instance, it is to be noted that one so acting does not function as a cause of spiritual life by virtue of his office, that is, by reason of sharing in Christ's priesthood through a sacerdotal character. The layman who baptizes in case of necessity, although acting as an instrumental generative principle of spiritual life, does not exercise the ministry of the Church,<sup>23</sup> nor, indeed, share in the priesthood of Christ through the character of sacred ordination. He becomes a father only by reason of the act he performs, not by reason of his office.<sup>24</sup>

The priest, however, does not have to wait until he begets a child to become a father. The sacrament of Holy Orders not only gives the sacramental grace for properly disposing its recipients to perform the paternal functions but it also actually constitutes men in the office of fatherhood. Therefore, the moment a man becomes a priest he likewise becomes a father. By the priesthood of Christ, in which he shares, all men who are children of Christ have been begotten. In as much as the priest stands in the place of Christ and acts in the person of Christ he is, by reason of his priestly office, the father of every man who has become a child of Christ by Baptism. Moreover, he is the father of all men virtually, even those who are

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. ST. ALPHONSUS, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest or Sacerd* (New York: 1888), pp. 144, 234.

<sup>23</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 6, ad 3: In articulo tamen necessitatis non peccaret baptizando in casu in quo etiam posset laicus dispensare. Sic enim patet quod non exhibet se ministrum Ecclesiae, sed subvenit necessitatem patienti.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, q. 67, a. 3, ad 1 & 2.



not Christians, since by Christ's priesthood, in which he participates and the fruits of which he is the minister, there is merited for all the grace to become sons of Christ. Thus the priest shares in the supernatural adoptive fatherhood of Christ which is the closest possible participation in the fullness of divine paternity. While there are many other reasons why the priest can lay claim to the title of spiritual paternity, they are of relatively minor significance when compared to this intimate participation in the fatherhood of God.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PRIEST'S SECONDARY CLAIM TO FATHERHOOD—THE SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY

We have arrived at the priest's claim to fatherhood by his participation in the one, eternal priesthood of Christ. As we have seen, this primary claim of the priest to spiritual paternity does not arise from his exercise of the particular functions of a father, but even before the priest personally generates he is a father; for he participates in the divine paternity by the very fact that he is a priest. Since his priesthood and that of Christ are one, the moment he shares in the priesthood he is, by reason of his office, the father of all those who have become sons of God through the saving grace of Christ the Priest. Should a priest never personally communicate to others the principle of divine life, he would nevertheless be truly a father; for by his priesthood he participates in the fatherhood of God, which is the fundamental claim to true paternity.

However, even if we were unable to come to a knowledge of the participation of the priest in the divine paternity by his sharing Christ's priesthood, it would be evident that the priest is a father in as much as the performance of those functions which are proper to a father pertains to the very nature of the sacerdotal office. In other words, each and every duty which belongs to the integral nature of participated fatherhood is, in the supernatural order, a function proper to priests of the New Law.

From the very notion of fatherhood we know that it belongs to the paternal office to beget offspring and to bring that offspring to its integral perfection. Now the requisites for the life of an individual in the natural and supernatural order are parallel. Everyone recognizes the five following indispensable needs for the natural life of

the individual man: birth, growth, nourishment, the removal of disease, and the increase of waning strength. Therefore, the supplying of the foregoing necessities belongs properly to the office of a father.

In order to live the supernatural life man must be born spiritually; and his life must be preserved and increased. But as we have seen, man is born into the supernatural life by the influx into his soul of the grace won for him by the priestly sacrifice of Christ. It is this grace which is the principle of man's new life. Consequently, those who communicate to man this grace and preserve it in his soul are fathers in as much as by so acting they perform functions which pertain to the very nature of fatherhood.

For the communication of this divine life to the souls of men Christ instituted the seven sacraments of the New Law. It is well to note that He instituted *seven* sacraments, not more nor less, because the requisites for the individual and social life of man in the supernatural order, as well as in the natural order, are seven. *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, in a beautiful analogy between the natural and spiritual life which it borrows from St. Thomas, shows the fittingness of seven sacraments for the communication and preservation of supernatural life.

"In order to exist, to preserve existence, and to contribute to his own and to the public good, seven things seem necessary to man: to be born, to grow, to be nurtured, to be cured when sick, when weak to be strengthened; as far as regards the public weal: to have magistrates invested with authority to govern, and, finally, to perpetuate himself and his species by legitimate offspring. Analogous then as all these things obviously are to that life by which the soul lives to God, we discover in them a reason to account for the number of the sacraments. Amongst them, the first is Baptism, the gate, as it were, to all the other sacraments, by which we are born again to Christ. The next is Confirma-

tion, by which we grow up, and are strengthened in the grace of God: for, as St. Augustine observes, "to the Apostles who have already received baptism, the Redeemer said: 'stay you in the city till you be imbued with power from on high.'" The third is the Eucharist, that true bread from heaven which nourishes our souls to eternal life, according to these words of the Saviour: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." The fourth is Penance, by which the soul, which has caught the contagion of sin, is restored to spiritual health. The fifth is Extreme Unction, which obliterates the traces of sin, and invigorates the powers of the soul; of which St. James says: "if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." The sixth is Holy Orders, which gives power to perpetuate in the Church the public administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of all the sacred functions of the ministry. The seventh and last is Matrimony, a sacrament instituted for the legitimate union of man and woman, for the conservation of the human race, and the education of children, in the knowledge of religion, and the love and fear of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechis. Concilii Trident.*, Pars II, Cap. 1, No. 20-21. Cf. *Somma Theol.*, III, q. 65, a. 1: Vita enim spiritualis conformitatem aliquam habet ad vitam corporalem: sicut et cetera corporalia similitudinem quandam spiritualium habent. In vita autem corporali dupliciter aliquis perficitur: uno modo, quantum ad personam propriam; alio modo, per respectum ad totam communitatem societatis in qua vivit, quia homo naturaliter est animal sociale. Respectu autem sui ipsius perficitur homo in vita corporali dupliciter: uno modo per se, acquirendo scilicet aliquam vitæ perfectionem; alio modo, per accidens, scilicet removendo impedimenta vitæ, puta aegritudines, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Per se autem perficitur corporalis vita tripliciter. Primo quidem, per generationem, per quam homo incipit esse at vivere. Et loco huius in spiritali vita est *baptismus*, qui est spiritalis regeneratio: secundum illud *ad Tit. III: Per lavacrum regenerationis*, etc.—Secunda, per augmentum, quo aliquis perducitur ad perfectam quantitatem et virtutem. Et loco huius in spiritali vita est *confirmatio*, in qua datur Spiritus Sanctus ad robor. Unde dicitur discipulis iam baptizatis, Luc. ult.: *Sedete in civitate quousque induerint virtute ex alto*.—Tertio, per nutritionem, qua conservatur in homine vita et virtus. Et loco huius in spiritali vita

Of these seven sacraments the first five are necessary for the life of the individual. Therefore the minister of these five sacraments is truly a father; for in administering them he generates new creatures and brings those creatures to their perfection.

By virtue of his sacerdotal office, the priest is the ordinary dispenser of the grace of the sacraments and it pertains to the very essence of the priestly office to administer the first five sacraments. Moreover, it is the five functions performed in the administration of these sacraments which constitute the integral nature of participated fatherhood. Consequently, by reason of his sacramental ministry the priest is truly a father.

The priest is not the minister of the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony because the grace communicated by these sacraments is not directly ordained to supernatural generation and the perfection of the individual. The needs supplied by these two sacraments are necessities not of the individual, but of the social order. Both provide for the perpetuation of society; the one by giving the grace to actually constitute men fathers in the supernatural order, the other by imparting the grace to dispose men to become good fathers in the natural order. But neither to constitute men fathers nor to directly dispose

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est Eucharistia. Unde dicitur Ican. VI: *Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis et biberitis eius sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.*

Et hoc quidem sufficeret homini si haberet et corporaliter et spiritualiter impassibilem vitam: sed quia homo incurrit interdum et corporalem infirmitatem et spiritualem, scilicet peccatum, ideo necessaria est homini curatio ab infirmitate. Quae quidem est duplex. Una quidem est sanatio, quae sanitatem restituit. Et loco huius in spiritali vita est poenitentia: secundum illud Psalmi: *Sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.*—Alia autem est restitutio valetudinis pristinae per convenientiam et exercitium. Et loco huius in spiritali vita est extrema unctio, quae removet peccatorum reliquias, et hominem paratum reddit ad finalem gloriam. Unde dicitur Iac. V: *Et si in peccatis sit, dimittetur ei.*

Perficetur autem homo in ordine ad totam communitatem dupliciter. Uno modo, per hoc quod accipit potestatem regendi multitudinem, et exercendi actus publicos. Et loco huius in spiritali vita est sacramentum ordinis: secundum illud *Heb. VII*, quod sacerdotes hostias offerunt non solum pro se, sed etiam pro populo.—Secundo, quantum ad naturalem propagationem. Quod fit per matrimonium, tam in corporali quam in spiritali vita: eo quod est non solum sacramentum, sed naturae officium.

men for the fitting exercise of the paternal functions pertains properly to the office of a father. Hence, one in so acting does not function properly in the office of fatherhood, although such action is intimately connected with it. Consequently, any man in assuming the office of either a natural or spiritual father must do so of his own accord. Neither his natural or spiritual father can compel him to do so, for they have no authority in this matter, which is ordained to the public and not to the individual good.

Since it pertains to the very essence of the priesthood to administer those sacraments, and only those sacraments, which are directly ordained to spiritual birth and to the perfection of supernatural generation, it is evident that the priestly office is, of its very nature, a paternal office. The priest is a principle of the transmission and the preservation of the divine life in the souls of men. The divinity of Christ the Priest is, of course, the primary principle of this divine life, but in as much as the Great High Priest is no longer visibly present upon this earth He has deputed His priests to act in His person<sup>2</sup> in the communication of this supernatural life. That Christ has given those who are configured to Him by the sacramental character of Holy Orders the power to communicate this new life by administering the sacraments necessary for man's generation and continued existence in the supernatural order is a doctrine defined by the Church,<sup>3</sup> and evident from the words of Sacred Scripture.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> PIUS XII, Encyclica *Mediator Dei et hominum*, (Roma: 1947). *Idem itaque sacerdos, Christus Iesus, cuius quidem sacram personam eius administer gerit. Hic siquidem, ob consecrationem quam accepit sacerdotalem, Summo Sacerdoti assimilatur, ac potestate fruitor operandi virtute ac persona ipsius Christi. Quamobrem actione sua sacerdotali Christo quodammodo "linguam suam commodat, manum porrigit."*

<sup>3</sup> Joannes XXII, *Constitut. "Gloriosam Ecclesiam,"* 23 Jan., 1318; Denz. 486. S. Pius V, Bulla "*Ex omnibus afflictionibus,*" 1 Oct., 1567; Denz. 1058.

<sup>4</sup> *I Cor.*, iv, 1: Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi, et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei.

*Matt.*, xxviii, 19: Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eas. . .

*Luke*, xxii, 19: Et accepto pane gratias egit, et fregit, et dedit eis, dicens:

While the Divinity of Christ is the primary principle in the communication of divine life, there are, besides the sacraments, two secondary and instrumental principles, one of which is conjoined to the Divinity, the other of which is separated. The Humanity of Christ is the secondary conjoined principle, whereas the priest is the secondary separated principle. All these principles operate in the communication of divine life; moreover, the secondary separated principle, or the priest, has the same power as the conjoined principle, in as much as the former has given His power to the latter.<sup>5</sup> Hence the total effect of the simultaneous operation of all these principles is attributed to each of them;<sup>6</sup> all of them are causes of grace, of supernatural life. However, the three secondary principles do not operate in the same way in the transmission of grace.<sup>7</sup> The Humanity of Christ and the Priest are animated instruments of the Divinity and therefore operate personally. The Sacraments on the other hand, being inanimated principles cannot operate personally. Since the relationship of fatherhood can be properly attributed only to living, knowing beings,<sup>8</sup> it cannot

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Hoc est corpus meum quod pro vobis datur; hoc facite in meam commemorationem.

*JOHN*, xx, 23: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remiseritis peccata, remittantur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt.

*JAMES*, v. 14: Infirmatur quis in vobis? Inducati presbyteros ecclesiae, et orent super eum, ungentes eum oleo in nomine Domini.

<sup>5</sup> *Matt.*, xxviii, 18; *John*, xx, 21. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 64, aa. 1, 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, L. III, cap. 70: . . . idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento; et principali agenti etiam totus.

<sup>7</sup> *IV Sent.*, d. 8, q. 2, a. 3, ad 9: Dicendum quod quando aliquod opus perficitur pluribus instrumentis, virtus instrumentalis non est complete in uno, sed incomplete in utroque, sicut manu et penna scribitur.

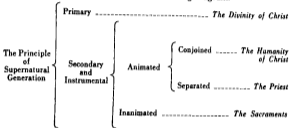
Et . . . quia virtus instrumentalis ad faciendum praedictam conversionem non tantum est in verbo sed in sacerdote; sed in utroque incomplete, quia nec sacerdos sine verbo, nec verbum sine sacerdote conficere potest.

Et quia sacerdos est similior principali agenti quam verbum, quia gerit ejus figuram, ideo, simpliciter loquendo, sua virtus instrumentalis est major et dignior, unde etiam permanet et ad multos hujusmodi effectus se habet, virtus autem verbi transit et ad semel tantum est; sed secundum quid est potentiar virtus verbi, in quantum effectui propinquior, quasi signum ipsius: sicut etiam penna est scripturae propinquior, sed manus scribenti.

<sup>8</sup> *ST. THOMAS*, *Ad Ephesios*, cap. III, lect. 4.

be properly attributed to the sacraments. But fatherhood, the relationship of the principle of generation in perfect living beings, is rightly attributed to Christ and the priest in as much as they act personally as animated principles of a true generation.

The rôle of the priest in the communication of divine life is more readily seen from its place in the following diagram.



In much the same way, then, as a human parent is called father in the order of intrinsic causality because he is a secondary principle in the production of a human being,<sup>9</sup> so a priest, denominated father in the order of extrinsic causality, is a secondary, although instrumental, principle after God in the communication of spiritual life.

Since, then, those who share in the priesthood of Christ by a sacerdotal character are truly efficient, instrumental principles of supernatural generation, and since to such principles is rightly attributed paternity, there can be no doubt concerning the priest's claim to fatherhood by reason of his sacramental ministry.

We shall now show how in administering each of the sacraments necessary for integral spiritual life the priest performs a function proper to the office of fatherhood.

The Sacrament by which men are born into the supernatural life is Baptism.<sup>10</sup> For this reason St. Paul refers to it as "the laver of

<sup>9</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 101, a. 1: Deus . . . est nobis essendi . . . primum principium. Secundario vero nostri esse . . . principium sunt parentes.

<sup>10</sup> *Conc. Trident.*, sess. ii, cap. II; *Denz.* 895; *Rom.*, vi, 1-8.



regeneration."<sup>11</sup> Through Baptism sanctifying grace is infused into men's souls so that they become partakers of the divine nature and are thus made sons of God. Since, however, it is the priest who is the ordinary minister of Baptism and since this sacrament effects a true generation, the priest in administering it is performing the primary function of a father. It is by a right inherent in the sacerdotal office that the priest administers this sacrament; for ". . . by Baptism a man becomes a participator in ecclesiastical unity, wherefore also he receives the right to approach Our Lord's Table. Consequently, just as it belongs to a priest to consecrate the Eucharist, which is the principal cause of the priesthood, so it is the proper office of a priest to baptize: since it belongs to one and the same to produce the whole and to dispose the part in the whole."<sup>12</sup>

The priest, then, is a spiritual father participating in the supernatural fatherhood of Christ, for he is the principle of man's generation into the divine life. Hence, says St. John Chrysostom: "It is to priests that spiritual birth and regeneration by Baptism is entrusted. By them we put on Christ and are united to the Son of God and become partakers of that blessed head. Hence we should regard them as more august than princes and kings and more venerable than parents. For the latter begot us of blood and the flesh, but priests are the cause of our generation from God, of our spiritual regeneration, of our true freedom and sonship according to grace."<sup>13</sup> From these

<sup>11</sup> *Titus*, iii, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 67, a. 2: Per baptismum autem aliquis fit particeps ecclesiasticæ unitatis: unde et accipit ius accedendi ad mensam Domini. Et ideo, sicut ad sacerdotem pertinet consecrare Eucharistiam, ad quod principaliter ordinatur sacerdotium, ita ad proprium officium sacerdotis pertinet baptizare; eiusdem enim videtur esse operari totum, et partem in toto disponere.

<sup>13</sup> *De Sacerdotio*, lib. iii, n. 6, in PG XLVIII, 643-44; Hi namque sunt, hi sunt, quibus concediti sunt spirituales partus et generatio per baptismum; per hos Christum induimus, et cum Filio Dei sepelimur, membra beati illius corporis efficimur. Ita non modo principibus ac regibus formidabiliores sed patribus etiam venerabiliores nobis iure fuerint. Illi enim ex sanguinibus exque voluntate carnis nos genuerunt; hi vero illius quæ ex Deo est generationis auctores sunt, beatæ nempe illius regenerationis, veræ libertatis, et illius quæ secundum gratiam est adoptiōis.

words of the great Father of the Church it is obvious that he ascribes to the priest the conferring of divine sonship, which is the effect of the priestly sacrifice of Christ, in Whose priesthood he participates.

Baptism alone, however, like human birth, does not fulfill all the implications integral to the generation of a being which has not yet reached its perfection. Should the newly born spiritual child be left to himself, he would not grow to maturity, he would be helpless against the attacks of the enemies of his spiritual life, or he would die from the lack of care and nourishment.

Just as in the natural order it is necessary that a child be brought to maturity and be strengthened so that he will be able to repel any advances of the enemies of his natural life, so, too, the spiritual child must be strengthened so that he will be able to ward off any attack upon his supernatural life. For this purpose he receives a more abundant infusion of grace in the sacrament of Confirmation. This sacrament is compared to Baptism as a growth to generation.<sup>14</sup> Confirmation brings the child to spiritual maturity:<sup>15</sup> for by it "the fullness of the Holy Ghost is given for the spiritual strength that belongs to the perfect age."<sup>16</sup> By the character impressed upon the soul in this sac-

<sup>14</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 72, a. 1: Sacramenta novae legis ordinantur ad speciales gratiae effectus: et ideo, ubi occurrit aliquis specialis effectus gratiae, ibi ordinatur speciale sacramentum. Quia vero sensibilia et corporalia gerunt spiritualium et intelligibilium similitudinem, ex his quae in vita corporali aguntur, percipere possumus quid in spirituali vita speciale existat. Manifestum est autem quod in vita corporali specialis quaedam perfectio est quod homo ad perfectam aetatem perveniat, et perfectas actiones hominis agere possit: unde et Apostolus dicit, I Cor. XIII: *Cum autem factus sum vir, evocatus quae erant paruuli.* Et inde etiam est quod, praeter motum generationis, quo aliquis accipit vitam corporalem, est motus augmenti, quo aliquis perducitur ad perfectam aetatem. Sic igitur et vitam spiritualem homo accipit per baptismum, qui est spiritualis regeneratio. In confirmatione autem homo accipit quasi quandam aetatem perfectam spiritualis vitae. Unde Melchisedes Papa dicit: *Spiritus Sanctus, qui super aquas baptismi salutifero descendit lapsu, in fonte plenitudinem tribuit ad innocenciam, in confirmatione augmentum praestat ad gratiam. In baptismo regeneramur ad vitam, post baptismum roboramur.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 2: In hoc sacramento (Confirmationis) datur plenitudo Spiritus Sancti ad robur spirituale, quod competit perfectae aetati.

rament, the recipient has a perpetual title to actual divine assistance in the defense of his spiritual life.<sup>17</sup>

In administering Confirmation, the priest is perfecting and bringing to spiritual maturity the child begotten in Baptism. He is thus performing a paternal act which pertains to the perfection of his spiritual child. While the simple priest is not the ordinary minister of Confirmation, when he does administer this sacrament, he is performing a function which belongs primarily to the sacerdotal office; for to confirm is an act of Orders. While the general practice of the Church has ever been that Bishops should administer this sacrament, the fundamental reason why they can administer it is because of the power they have by reason of their sacerdotal character. This is evident from the fact that in the eastern Churches the priests are commonly the ministers and their administrations are recognized by the Church as valid.<sup>18</sup> However, the Bishop, not the priest, is the ordinary minister of this sacrament, as the Council of Trent explicitly declares.<sup>19</sup> For valid administration of Confirmation the priests needs the delegation of the Supreme Pontiff. But since by delegation the character received in Holy Orders is in no way changed, the fact remains that the power to confirm arises from the sacerdotal character, even though this power may not be validly exercised without proper delegation.

Thus the administration of this sacrament, whether it be done by a Bishop or a simple priest, is an act that is performed primarily in virtue of participation in Christ's priesthood. And of its very nature it is a paternal act for it has as its purpose the perfection of children regenerated in Baptism.

Not only must a child be free from outward attack, but he must be nurtured so that the spiritual life within him may be preserved and

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, a. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Codes Juris Canonici*, can. 782, No. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Sess. vii, *Canonibus de Sacramento Confirmationis*, can. 3; *Denz.* 873; *Si quis dixerit, sanctae confirmationis ordinarium ministrum non esse solum episcopum, sed quemvis simplicem sacerdotem*: A.S.

perfected.<sup>20</sup> In view of this fact Christ instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for nourishing the supernatural life of His children. The effect of the Eucharist is signified in the manner in which it is given, that is, by way of food. "And, therefore, this sacrament does for the spiritual life all that material bread does for bodily life; namely, by sustaining, giving increase, restoring, and giving delight."<sup>21</sup> Thus could Our Lord truly say, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."<sup>22</sup>

Just as man's natural life is sustained by material food, so, too, his spiritual life is sustained and invigorated by this Bread of Life. This spiritual food not only augments the supernatural life received in Baptism, but "whatever losses the soul sustains by falling into some slight offenses, these the Eucharist, which cancels lesser sins, repairs in the same manner (not to depart from the illustration already adduced) that natural food, as we know from experience, gradually repairs the daily waste caused by the vital heat of the system. Of this heavenly Sacrament justly, therefore, has St. Augustine said: 'This daily bread is taken as a remedy for daily infirmity.'<sup>23</sup>

The priest alone is the ordinary minister of this Living Bread, as is evident from the words of Christ to His Apostles, "Do this for a commemoration of Me," by which words priests alone were designated.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 79, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, corpus: Et ideo omnem effectum quem cibus et potus materialis facit quantum ad vitam corporalem, quod scilicet sustentat, auget, reparat et delectat, hoc totum facit hoc sacramentum quantum ad vitam spiritualem.

<sup>22</sup> *John*, vi, 56.

<sup>23</sup> *Catechis. Concilii Trident.*, Pars. II, cap. 4, No. 52: Quidquid enim cupiditatis ardore anima amisit, dum levi aliqua in re parum offendit, id totum eucharistia, eas ipsas minores culpas abstergens, restituit. Quemadmodum etiam (neque enim a proposita similitudine discedendum videtur) quod innati caloribus quotidie detrahitur ac deperit, paulatim addi et refici naturali alimento sentimus. Quare merito a divo Ambrosio de hoc caelesti sacramento dictum est: "Iste panis quotidianus sumitur in remedium quotidianae infirmitatis."

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can. 845, No. 1; also *Conc. Trident.*, sess. xiii, c. 8; sess. xxiii, c. 1.

Since the dispensing of the Eucharist is manifestly a spiritual feeding, a means of preserving and augmenting the supernatural life given in Baptism, and since such an act is proper to a father, there can be no doubt that the priest in administering this Sacrament is, indeed, functioning as a spiritual father.

Besides nourishing his children, a father has also the duty of restoring them to health when they are afflicted with sickness and disease. This is done in the natural order by procuring the proper medicaments and by providing special care. In the sacrament of Penance, Christ has provided for the cure of His spiritual children who are suffering from the disease of sin; for "as a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him."<sup>25</sup> It is He "Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."<sup>26</sup> In this sacrament there is applied the grace that heals the wounds of the soul. Penance also makes provision for the paternal instruction and admonition necessary for the preservation and improvement of spiritual health. Just as the natural child must be taught the habits of good health, so, too, the child of God must be instructed in the rules for safeguarding his spiritual health. Thus this sacrament furnishes not only a cure for spiritual sickness, but it also gives individual instruction and direction which will enable its recipient to live the supernatural life in its fullness.

Priests, and priests alone, are the ministers of this sacrament; for Christ's words, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained,"<sup>27</sup> were directed to them alone. As can be readily seen, all the duties of the minister of the sacrament of Penance are paternal ones; for a father is obliged to care for his child in time of sickness, and to rule, govern and instruct him so that he may reach the perfection of life. Therefore, the priest's rôle in this sacrament is above all else that of a father.

<sup>25</sup> *Psalms* cii, 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *John*, xx, 23.

A father must care for his children not only in time of mortal sickness, but he must provide a cure for their less serious illnesses. Moreover, after the child has been restored to health, it is the duty of his father to see to the removal of any defect, debility or weakness which results from the sickness. The father must take care especially that the enemies of the life of the child are not permitted to take advantage of such debility and weakness.

In the supernatural order the child is often sick with the less devastating disease of venial sin. Moreover, he is being constantly weakened by the effects which remain after sin, especially original sin.<sup>28</sup> Because of the debilitating effects of these remains of sin, the spiritual child needs special strength and assistance to overcome those who would prevent his attaining the perfection of his supernatural life. The time at which the enemies of his soul will be more prodigious than ever in their efforts to take advantage of such weakness is at the hour of death; for this is the last opportunity they have of preventing the child of God from reaching the stature of "the perfect man" in the life of glory.

Provision has been made for this need in the sacrament of Extreme Unction; for ". . . as in the other sacraments, our Redeemer prepared the greatest aids whereby during life Christians may preserve themselves whole from every grievous spiritual evil, so did He guard the close of life, by the sacrament of Extreme Unction, as with a most firm defense. For though our adversary seeks and seizes opportunities all our life long to be able in any way to devour our souls, yet there is no time wherein he strains more vehemently all the powers of his craft to ruin us utterly, and if he can possibly, to make us fall from trust in the mercy of God, than when he perceives the end of our life is at hand."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Summa Theol.*, Suppl., q. 30, a. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Conc. Trident.*, sess. xiv, cap. 9; *Denz.* 907: . . . Redemptor noster, qui servis suis quovis tempore voluit de salutaribus remediis adversus omnia omnium hostium tela esse prospectum, quemadmodum auxilia maxima in sacramentis aliis prae-paravit, quibus Christiani conservare se integros, dum viverent, ab omni graviore

Extreme Unction not only cures the disease of sin, but it also removes all the debilities that result from sin.<sup>30</sup> It also gives strength to the child of God at the very moment it needs it most, so that he may overcome the violent assaults of his enemies and thus attain the perfection of life.

"The proper ministers of this sacrament," says the Council of Trent, "are the presbyters of the Church by which name are to be understood . . . either bishops or priests, rightly ordained by the imposition of the hands of the priesthood."<sup>31</sup>

Since, then, priests are properly the ministers of Extreme Unction, and in as much as the functions performed by the ministers of this sacrament pertain directly to the paternal office, the priest in administering it is truly a father.

Thus the sacramental ministry of the priest in the supernatural order corresponds to the office of fatherhood in the natural order. However, the fatherhood of the priest, even in this respect, infinitely surpasses human paternity; for, as St. John Chrysostom so beautifully put it: ". . . God has given to priests greater power than to our natural parents, and so much greater as the future life excels the present. For our parents begot us to the present life, but priests to the life to come; and the former cannot ward off from their children the death of the body, nor hinder disease from attacking them; whereas the latter often preserve souls that are ill and about to die. . . . And not only in our regeneration have they the power to remit sin;

spiritus incommodo possint: ita extremæ unctionis sacramento finem vitæ tanquam firmissimo quodam præsidio munivit. Nam etsi adversarius noster occasiones per omnem vitam quaeret et capet, ut devorare animas nostras quoquo modo possit: nullum tamen tempus est, quo vehementius ille omnes suæ versutiae nervos intendat ad perdendos nos penitus, et a fiducia etiam, si possit, divinæ misericordiæ deturbandos, quam cum impendere nobis exitum vitæ perspiciat.

<sup>30</sup> *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Sess. xiv, cap. 3: Proprios huius sacramenti ministros esse Ecclesiae presbyteros, quo nomine intelligendi . . . aut episcopi aut sacerdotes ab ipsis rite ordinati per impositionem manuum presbyteri. Cf. *Canones de Extrema Unctione*, can. 4: Denz. 828.

but they also have the power to remit sins committed after regeneration. Moreover, parents according to nature can be of no assistance to their children if they chance offend anyone in dignity and power. But priests have often reconciled them, not with kings or princes, but with God Himself when incensed against them."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> De Sacerdotio, lib. III, n. 6, in PG XLVIII, 644: . . . majorem sacerdotibus quam parentibus potestatem dedit Deus: tantaque est inter utrosque differentia, quanta inter praesentem et futuram vitam. Nam illi quidem in hanc vitam, hi in futurum gignunt: atque illi ne corporalem quidem interitum a liberis amoliri possunt, non ingruentem morbum depellere; hi vero aegram et mox interituram animam saepe servarunt. . . . Neque enim tantum cum nos regenerant, sed etiam post regenerationem admissa peccata condonare possunt. Insuper naturales parentes, si viros quosdam principes et potentes eorum liberi offenderint, opem ipsis nullam afferre possunt. Sacerdotes vero non principes, non reges, sed ipsum Deum iratum illis saepe reconciliarunt.



## CONCLUSION

We have established by solid theological arguments that the priest is, indeed, the spiritual father of all. But such argumentation is of little value if its conclusion is not to be the driving force of priestly life. This doctrine imposes upon the priest the obligation of seeing in himself a spiritual father, for to be ignorant of this God-given rôle is to fail to understand the nature of the priesthood with the consequent impossibility of properly discharging its sacred obligations. In realizing that he is the spiritual father of the whole world, that it is of the very essence of the priestly office to take the place of Christ here on earth as the new Father of men, the conscientious priest cannot fail to see his obligation to conform himself more and more to his divine Model. He will study eagerly the life of Christ in search of His paternal virtues so that he may know just what virtues should be the special equipment of his own priestly life. Children are something of their father, they become like their father; and since the priest is a father who stands in the place of Christ, he must strive to have, in so far as it is possible, every paternal virtue which is to be found in Christ Himself so that his children, through him, may be more perfectly conformed to their Blessed Saviour. The matter of uncovering and delineating the precisely paternal virtues in the life of Christ is a study well worth development, as it will afford the priest very definite ideals to guide him in preparing himself for the fitting exercise of his paternal office.

In recognizing the nature and obligations of his rôle as spiritual father, the priest cannot but have a greater appreciation of the divine Fatherhood within the Godhead as well as of the participations in this divine Paternity by himself and human fathers. He will understand that all his strivings, as indeed the efforts of all fathers, are but a

reflection of the eternal divine action within the Blessed Trinity. He and all fathers are thus seen in their admirable rôles as coöperators with God in the communication of life.

Since the priest is to communicate and preserve spiritual life throughout the world, his obligations are without limit. First of all, there is the duty of teaching men that he is really and truly their father, and that consequently they have the right to expect of him every possible means of help for preserving and increasing the supernatural life in their souls. This the priest must teach by word; but the truth and implications of this doctrine will be more eloquently preached by the example of his life. The priest who is ever eager to communicate and preserve the divine life in the souls of men lets pass no opportunity to administer the Sacraments. Never will he go to the confessional without giving a word of paternal instruction and encouragement to lead his children to a more abundant sharing in the treasures of the spiritual life.

Just as no problem which concerns the progress of the natural life of his children escapes the vigilance of a human father, so, too, no action which has to do with the spiritual development of the child lies beyond the orbit of sacerdotal duty. In as much as every human action is good or bad, and therefore beneficial or detrimental to spiritual life, it is difficult to conceive of any human affair which does not concern the priest. This does not mean that one can do nothing without first consulting a priest, but it does imply that the priest has the duty of equipping his children with the knowledge necessary to perform all their actions well, to supernaturalize them, thus making them meritorious for improved spiritual health here below and for the perfection of spiritual life in the world to come. Nor is it always necessary that the priest personally perform all his paternal functions. There are, indeed, many which can and must be delegated, just as in the natural order parents must depute others to assist them in educating and safeguarding their children.

While spiritual fatherhood imposes upon the priest the cares and

obligations of a father, it lays upon the faithful the duties of children. They are bound to love, honor and respect the fathers of their spiritual lives. When the faithful begin to see the priest as he really is, the father and guardian of their souls, they will rush to him with all their problems, and much of the evil and unhappiness which results from a lack of paternal care and advice will be avoided. Those who are wracking their brains for a cure for the evils of our times and especially for the delinquency of the young should look well to this closer relationship between priest and people. In the spiritual life all men are children, and when they find in their priests all-loving fathers who are eagerly awaiting to help them, evils will be eradicated and progress in virtue and happiness will come and come quickly.

Should this doctrine become a living fact, a truth which, as God intended, would influence men's lives, there would be thrown open wide the road to peace and happiness. The faithful would have at their service an army of zealous fathers whose only thought would be to assist them in progressing in the spiritual life. The priests would have to work more, it is true; they would be overburdened, but they would be filled with a happiness which is but a foretaste of that eternal joy which will be theirs, when, at the end of their labors, they can report to their Master: "I have suffered the little children to come unto You."

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- <sup>o</sup> This edition is an adaptation of the longer multi-volume Oxford translation of Bekker's critical edition.
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