

The Dogmatic Theology on the Intention
of the Minister in the Confection
of the Sacraments

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Imprimi Potest:

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Abbas

Subiaco, Arkansas, August 4, 1948.

Nihil Obstat:

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Censor Deputatus

August 5, 1948

Imprimatur:

✠ PATRICK A. O'BOYLE, S.T.D.

Archbishop of Washington

August 5, 1948

**TO MY FATHER AND TO THE
MEMORY
OF MY MOTHER**

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PREFACE

On the third of March, 1547, the Council of Trent defined that the minister of the sacraments in the exercise of his office must have at least the intention of doing what the Church does. With the promulgation of this decree, argument about the necessity of intention ceased, but the words used by the Council "*intentio faciendi quod facit Ecclesia*" would not always be interpreted in the same way.

"Intention," "meaning," "mind," "sense" are so many practically equivalent terms which are constantly employed when interpreting the language and actions of others. By all these terms there is understood something internal to the speaker, and this is indicated by his words and actions. The object of speech is to manifest one's intentions, and speech is useful to the hearer in so far as it expresses the mind of the speaker. Words in themselves are but so much sound in the air or imprint upon paper, and they deceive the hearer and the reader if they do not express what the speaker or the writer intends.

Ordinarily, when a man speaks, the words he uses sufficiently declare his inner intention, but there are instances when the spoken word falls short of this result. As a general rule there is no doubt about the intention of the minister of the sacraments provided the matter and the form are correctly posited. It is taken for granted that the minister has the intention of doing what the Church does.

The words of the Council of Trent were interpreted differently by theologians. Two principal schools can be distinguished: one maintained that the phrase "*intentio faciendi quod facit Ecclesia*" meant merely the serious external performance of the sacramental actions without regard for the internal intention of the minister, even if by this intent he resolved not to do what the Church does; the other school declared that in addition to the serious external performance there was demanded in the minister the internal intention of conforming himself to the will of the Church.

It is objected that this latter doctrine makes the validity of every sacrament depend upon a purely internal element, which may or

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may not be present, thus leaving the recipient in suspense as to whether he actually received the sacrament.

It is true that without a special revelation no one can have absolute certainty that he has received a sacrament or that he is in the state of grace, but his assurance on this subject may approach so nearly to this absolute certainty as to make any misgiving on the part of the recipient foolish and vain. It must be remembered that God, who has bound Himself to give grace when the sacraments are duly received, has nowhere limited His power to give grace apart from these rites. One, therefore, who acts in good faith may have prudent assurance that no disaster will befall him through the deceit of the wicked minister.¹

This reply seems sufficient, but there were theologians who maintained that there was a possibility of having absolute certainty that a sacrament has been validly conferred. The leader of this group was Ambrosius Catharinus, who published a work entitled *De Intentione Ministri* during the Council of Trent. He held that the serious positing of the matter and the form alone was sufficient for the validity of the sacraments, regardless of the interior intention of the minister.

Since the Council did not make any decision about the quality of the object of the minister's intention, this remained a matter of controversy. The opinion of Catharinus had many followers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but during the nineteenth century the number of his followers was constantly on the decrease. At the end of the last century Pesch wrote that it should rather be said that the doctrine of external intention was *once* disputed than that it is *still* disputed.²

This brochure represents part of a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Sacred Theology of the Catholic University of America. The typewritten copy of the complete work is accessible at the library of this institution. In this synopsis we have attempted to treat the principal points in the development of the doctrine of the minister's intention. By reason of the briefness of the present work many points have been omitted. Yet we hope

¹ Hunter, S., *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. III, p. 210.

² *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 5, art. 3, prop. 24, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Vol. VI, n. 279, p. 110.

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that this synopsis will present the matter sufficiently to establish the principles and to defend the opinions upon which the conclusions are based.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my religious superiors for the opportunity of pursuing higher studies at the Catholic University of America. A special debt of gratitude is due to my major professor, the Rev. Eugene M. Burke, C.S.P., S.T.D., for his generous and patient cooperation in directing this study. I likewise express my thanks to the members of the Faculty of the School of Sacred Theology, and particularly to the Rev. Alfred C. Rush, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., and the Rev. Joseph C. Fenton, S.T.D., who read the dissertation. To the librarians of the Catholic University I wish to express my thanks for their many services and kindnesses.

ABBREVIATIONS

AER—*The American Ecclesiastical Review*

ASS—*Acta Sanctae Sedis*

CSEL—*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

CSCPF—*Collectanea Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*

DBU—Denzinger-Bannwort-Umberg, *Enchiridion Symbolorum et
Definitionum*

DThC—*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*

ER—*The Ecclesiastical Review*

Mansi—*Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Antiquissima Collectio*

OL—*Lutheri Opera Latina*, Erlangen and Frankfurt Edition

PG—*Patrologia Graeca*

PL—*Patrologia Latina*

INTRODUCTION

The source and wellspring of all graces under the present dispensation is the Sacrifice of the Cross, from which the redemptive power of Christ flows into the souls of men through the channels of the seven sacraments.¹ At the creation of Adam both he and all the future members of the human race were given a supernatural destiny by which they would some day be united with God in the beatific vision. For the attainment of this end man was given the means which are known as the benefits of original justice. When Adam committed original sin, the means for attaining this lofty end were lost; however, man did not lose his supernatural destiny. A restoration of at least some of these benefits was a necessity for fallen man in order that he might attain salvation. In the fullness of time God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who by His Passion and death restored the necessary means which man had forfeited, and again made it possible for him to attain the beatific vision through the instrumentality of sanctifying grace, which would reestablish the bond of friendship and love between the Creator and the creature. Hence, the term "restoration" looks fundamentally to this bond. Catholic Christianity directs itself principally to the reestablishment of this supernatural union between God and man by a transformation of the individual by infusing into him the power of God which is called grace; this transformation is achieved in the historical order by the redemptive work of Christ. The power to unite ourselves with this work is communicated to us by the sacraments² and by faith.³ In short, what Christ merited by His

¹ Pohle, J.-Preuss, A., *The Sacraments*, Vol. I, p. 1.

² Burke, E., "The Nature of a Sacrament," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 113 (July, 1945), 33-34.

³ Vonier, A., *Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, pp. 1-9. In this passage Vonier shows the importance of faith as a connecting link between the sacraments and Christ's redemptive work. If the sacraments are received without faith, the recipient does not derive profit from them.

Passion and death more than 1900 years ago is applied to us in 1949 by the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Since the sacraments are of such great importance to every individual on his way to eternal salvation, it follows that it is of equal importance that the recipients of the sacraments dispose themselves well in order to receive their full benefit and that the ministers use the care and diligence necessary for their valid confection and administration.

Although this study is concerned principally with the intention of the minister of the sacraments, it will be worth while to review briefly other related dogmas which concern the minister of the sacraments, which are principally the following: 1. The validity of the sacraments does not depend on the personal worthiness of the minister. 2. The validity of the sacraments does not depend on the orthodox belief of the minister. 3. For the valid confection of all the sacraments except Baptism there is required in addition to the intention of the minister also the character which is received through Baptism. In addition to this there is required the sacerdotal character for the valid confection of all the sacraments except Baptism and Matrimony, and the minister of Major Orders must be a bishop. The final part of the introduction will deal with intention in general, thus setting the stage for the principal concern of the study.

The Validity of the Sacraments and the Personal Unworthiness of the Minister

The proposition that the validity of the sacraments does not depend on the personal worthiness of the minister embodies an article of faith. In the early centuries of the Church the Donatists asserted that a minister must be in the state of sanctifying grace in order to confer a sacrament validly. This doctrine was revived in the Middle Ages by the Waldensians, the Fraticelli, the Albigensians, the Wicliffites, and the Hussites. But it is clear from various ecclesiastical decrees that their teaching is condemned by the Church.

One of the most explicit statements in regard to the sanctity of the minister comes from the pen of Innocent III in the year 1210 when he prescribed a profession of faith for certain Waldensians

who wished to free themselves from the bond of excommunication and return to the Church :

Although they [the sacraments] may be administered by a sinful priest, provided only that the Church receive him, we do not reprobate the sacraments which are celebrated in the Church with the cooperation of the inestimable and invisible power of the Holy Spirit ; nor do we retract from the ecclesiastical offices or blessings celebrated by them, but we accept them most benevolently, as if [they were celebrated] by one who is most just, because the wickedness of the Bishop or priest works injury neither to the baptism of an infant, nor to the consecration of the Eucharist, nor to the other ecclesiastical offices which they celebrate for their subjects.⁴

In 1418 the Council of Constance condemned Wiclif's assertion that a bishop or a priest who is in the state of mortal sin can neither baptize nor consecrate nor confer Holy Orders.⁵ Finally the Council of Trent defined :

If anyone says that a minister who is in mortal sin, though he observe all the essentials that pertain to the effecting or conferring of a sacrament, neither effects nor confers the Sacrament, let him be anathema.⁶

The fact that the valid confection of the sacraments does not depend upon the personal holiness or unworthiness of the minister cannot be proved from Sacred Scripture, but rests entirely upon tradition and reason. The early champion for the true Catholic teaching on this question was St. Optatus, who in his work *De Schismate Donatistarum*, written about 370, demonstrated that the validity of a sacrament does not depend on the disposition of the

⁴ *Regestorum Lib. XI* (PL 215, 1511) *Sacramenta quoque quae in ea celebrantur inestimabili atque invisibili virtute Spiritus Sancti cooperante, licet a peccatore sacerdote ministrentur, dum Ecclesia eum recipit, in nullo reprobamus, nec ecclesiasticis officiis vel benedictionibus ab eo celebratis detrahimus, sed benevolens animo tamquam a iustissimo amplectimur ; quia non nocet malitia episcopi vel presbyteri neque ad baptismum infantis, neque ad Eucharistiam consecrandam, nec ad caetera ecclesiastica officia subditis celebrata.*

⁵ Session VIII (Mansi 27, 1207) ; DBU 584.

⁶ Session VII, can. 12 (Mansi 28, 53) ; DBU 855.

minister.⁷ But it was St. Augustine who crushed the new heresy with his monumental work against the Donatists. The comparison which he makes between the law and the use of the law is characteristic of his solution of the problem. He asserts that as the law is still a good law in spite of the fact that it is transgressed, the same can be said of Baptism. Although the sacrament is used unlawfully either because the minister lives in heresy or because he lives an evil life, yet "he cannot cause that the Baptism should be otherwise than good, or altogether null and void."⁸

In this same period in the East St. John Chrysostom made the following statement:

It may happen that the rulers of a nation are bad and corrupt, and their subjects good and pious, that the laity live moral lives while the priests are guilty of iniquity. But if grace always required worthy [ministers], there would be no baptism, no body of Christ [Eucharist], no sacrifice [of the Mass]. Now God is wont to operate through unworthy men, and the grace of Baptism is in no wise stained by the sinful life of the priest.⁹

There were other writers of the patristic period who used striking metaphors. Gregory of Nazianzus compared a sacrament with a signet ring and said that the emperor's iron ring has the same power of making a mark as a ring of gold.¹⁰ St. Augustine called attention to the fact that the rays of the sun shine upon filth without being contaminated by it.¹¹

The Validity of the Sacraments and the Unorthodox Belief of the Minister

That the validity of the sacraments does not depend on the orthodox belief of the minister is a "matter of faith" at least in

⁷ Lib. V, n. 6 (PL 11, 1056-1057).

⁸ *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, Lib. V, cap. 8, n. 9 (CSEL 51, 269, Petschenig) . . . sic nullo modo facit ut baptismus bonus non sit aut ut omnino baptismus non sit . . .

⁹ *In Epistolam I ad Corinthios*, Hom. 8, n. 1 (PG 61, 69).

¹⁰ *In Sanctum Baptisma*, Oratio 40, n. 26 (PG 36, 395).

¹¹ *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, Lib. III, cap. 10, n. 15 (CSEL 51, 205-206, Petschenig).

regard to the sacrament of Baptism, since it is the formal and solemn teaching of the Council of Trent that heretics baptize validly if they observe the prescribed form and have the intention of doing what the Church does :

If anyone says that Baptism which is given by heretics in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, with the intention of doing what the Church does, is not a true Baptism, let him be anathema.¹³

Although there is no explicit definition in regard to the other sacraments, it is regarded as *fidei proximum* that the heretics can validly administer all of them with the exception of Penance, which cannot be validly conferred by heretical and schismatic priests, except in the case of urgent necessity; but this is not on account of their lack of orthodoxy but due to the fact that they have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The problem of the value of Baptism conferred by the heretics arose in the first half of the third century. There was no such problem previously, since up to that date there had been no heretical sect separated altogether from the Church and which was organized to such a degree as to administer the sacraments as a distinct church. It is true that there had been heretics more or less isolated and hidden among the faithful, but when they were converted and returned to the true faith, it was not necessary to question the validity of their Baptism since, they had received it in the true Church. Penance alone was demanded of them.

Near the end of the second century Marcionism and, somewhat later, Montanism formed independent Churches whose leaders baptized their adherents. When several of those who had been baptized in heresy abandoned their sect and asked to enter the Church, the problem concerning their Baptism arose. Some contended that the sacrament conferred in heresy was null and thus was to be repeated; others were of the opposite opinion.

It was a conflict of practices that made the question, chiefly disciplinary at first, a question of doctrine and principle. Two practices were adopted: At Rome, Caesarea in Palestine, and

¹³ Session VII, can. 4, *De Sacramento Baptismi* (Mansi 33, 53); DBU 860.

Alexandria the Baptism conferred in the heretical sect was looked upon as valid, provided the essential rites had been observed. The authorities of the Church were satisfied with reconciling the heretics to the Church by the imposition of hands and unction with oil, the ceremony called the *consignatio*.¹³ In Africa and particularly at Carthage, and in the Churches of Syria and Asia Minor, the Baptism conferred in heresy was on the contrary deemed worthless. The Christian initiation performed in the heretical sect was looked upon as null and to be wholly repeated.

The leader of the so-called "rebaptizers" was St. Cyprian,¹⁴ and in opposition to him there was Pope St. Stephen. Their conflicting views resulted in a controversy which brought the question into the doctrinal phase.

The teaching of St. Cyprian was based upon that of Tertullian, who in his treatise on Baptism, written about the year 200, said that the principal reason for discarding the baptism conferred by heretics was the fact that they were outside the unity of the Church. According to the teaching of St. Paul there is only one Baptism, just as there is only one God and one Church. Tertullian concluded that since the heretics have neither our God, nor our Christ,

¹³ According to St. Cyprian, *Epistola* 73, 6 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 782-783, Hartel), it seems that the rite of imparting the Holy Spirit was the same for the reconciliation of the heretics as for Confirmation. For a clarification of this point the following excerpt is taken from Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 340: "It may here be useful to point out a difference of expression which is constantly found in the texts when the rite of imparting the Holy Spirit is in question, depending on whether it is regarded as occurring in the celebration of the ordinary Confirmation, or in connection with the reconciliation of heretics. Sometimes it is Unction, or the charismatio that is spoken of; at others the laying on of hands. But we have only to compare the texts to see that the one hardly ever goes without the other. As a rule the Roman texts employ the term *consignatio* when it is a question of ordinary Confirmation, and that of *manus impositio* for the reconciliation of heretics. It is even possible that, in countries where the Roman rite was followed, the whole ceremony was not repeated for the converted heretics.

¹⁴ Cyprian did not believe in rebaptism in the strict sense of the word. When he insisted that those who came into the Church be baptized, he was convinced that what they had received in heresy was no baptism at all. Thus with him it was not a question of receiving the sacrament again, but of receiving it for the first time.

nor our Baptism, they have no Baptism at all; otherwise it would have to be admitted that there were two Baptisms.¹⁶ His conclusion was that a man who had been baptized in heresy must be looked upon as a heathen or even less than a heathen.¹⁶

St. Cyprian took up that argument and strengthened it with his teaching on the Church.¹⁷ This was done with little difficulty by the author of *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate*. His principal argument is that there is only one Baptism, one Church, one Christ, and one God, and that this Baptism is found only in the unity of the Church; to break, then, with the unity of the Church is to break with Baptism, the sacrament of unity.¹⁸ How could he who is impure and does not possess the Holy Ghost purify and sanctify the water?¹⁹ How, he asks, could he who has neither the true faith, nor grace, nor the Holy Ghost, make others share in these gifts?²⁰ In his argumentation St. Cyprian does not distinguish at all between the validity of Baptism and its fruitful reception, a fact which accounts for many of his involuntary errors.

To the conception of St. Cyprian on the efficacy of the sacraments, Pope St. Stephen opposed another conception based on the immemorial custom of the Roman Church and which supposed the objective value of Baptism. Nobody, says the Pope, must rebaptize the heretics who come back to the Church, but he must

¹⁶ *De Baptismo*, 15 (CSEL 20, 213, Reifferscheid-Wissowa).

¹⁷ *De Pudicitia*, 19 (CSEL 20, 262, Reifferscheid-Wissowa).

¹⁸ *Epistolae* 69-74 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 749-809, Hartel).

¹⁹ *Epistola* 74, 11 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 808) Traditum est nobis quod sit unus Deus et Christus unus et una spes et fides una et una ecclesia et baptisma unum non nisi in una ecclesia constitutum, a qua (unitate) quisquis discesserit cum haereticis necesse est inveniatur, quod cum contra ecclesiam vindicant, sacramentum divinae traditionis impugnat.

²⁰ *Epistola* 70, 1 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 767-768) Quomodo autem mundare et sanctificare aquam potest qui ipse immundus est? Cum Dominus dicat in Numeris: et omnia quaecumque tetigerit immundus immunda erunt. Aut quomodo baptizans dare alteri remissam peccatorum potest qui ipse sua peccata deponere extra ecclesiam potest?

²⁰ *Epistola* 20, 2 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 796) Quis autem potest dare quod ipse non habeat, aut quomodo potest spiritualia gerere qui ipse amiserit Spiritum Sanctum. Et idcirco baptizandus est et innovandus qui ad ecclesiam rudis venit, ut intus per sanctos sanctificetur.

be content, according to the custom, to impose hands on them for penance.²¹

The greatest authority on the subject of sacramental validity and efficacy was St. Augustine whose doctrine, although it concerned chiefly the sacraments of Baptism and Orders, can be equally applicable to the remaining sacraments. He first distinguished explicitly the validity of the sacrament from its efficacy, which is the principal benefit derived from the sacrament in so far as spiritual advancement is concerned. He remarked that it was the failure of St. Cyprian to make this distinction that caused him to fall into error.²² He made the significant statement: "But it is one thing not to have, another to have so as to be of no use."²³ Thus a sacrament may exist, and yet the subject may not receive the grace which ought to come with it, and in reality does come when no obstacle is placed in the way.

For sacramental validity neither faith nor sanctity is required in the minister. St. Augustine proved this proposition by the practice of the Church of not repeating the baptism or ordination of those who, after having received these two sacraments, went over into heresy or schism and afterwards returned to the Catholic Church. He eloquently pointed out that they did not receive the sacraments again since they had not forfeited them; in fact this would be impossible. Since they had not forfeited them, they could still exercise their prerogatives, and it is for this reason that a wicked priest can and does baptize validly, and that a wicked bishop can confer Orders validly.²⁴ This would also be true of one who had received these sacraments while in heresy, for in the words of the Bishop of Hippo:

²¹ This idea of St. Stephen is found in one of the letters of St. Cyprian in which he quotes the Pope. *Epistola* 74, 1 (CSEL 3, pt. 2, 799) Si qui ergo a quacunque haeresi venirent ad uos, nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est, ut manus illis imponatur in poenitentiam, cum ipsi haeretici proprie alterutrum ad se uenientes non baptizent, sed communicent tantum.

²² *De Baptismo* 6, 1 (CSEL 51, 297-298, Petschenig).

²³ *De Baptismo* 4, 24 (CSEL 51, 250-251) Sed aliud est non habere aliud non utiliter, qui non habet, ut habeat baptizandus est, qui autem non utiliter habet, ut utiliter habeat corrigendus.

²⁴ *De Baptismo* 1, 2 (CSEL 51, 146).

When Baptism is given in the words of the Gospel, however great be the perverseness of understanding on the part either of him through whom, or of him to whom it is given, the sacrament itself is holy in itself on account of Him whose sacrament it is.²⁶

St. Augustine drew a second reason from the doctrine of character. Baptism and ordination are not repeated in the Church because both stamp the one receiving them with an indelible character which remains even in schism and heresy.²⁶ It is a consecration which cannot be destroyed; thus the conclusion is the same: Once validly ordained, the minister can baptize and confer the other sacraments validly even though he is separated from the Church.

The doctrine of St. Augustine was repeated at a later date by Innocent III in his reply to the faithful who were uneasy and fearful about the validity of the Eucharistic consecration when celebrated by unworthy ministers. In his treatise on the *Sacred Mystery of the Altar* he made clear that the wickedness of the priest did not impede the effect of the sacrament, just as the weakness of the doctor does not affect the power of the medicine which he gives to a patient.²⁷

A similar fear of the faithful on the occasion of the evil of simoniacal ordinations resulted in the formulas which are well known today, namely, *opus operatum* and *opus operans*. The former refers to the sacrament itself and the latter refers to the minister of the sacraments. Although an unworthy minister sins mortally when he confects the sacraments, the sacraments are not affected in the least. This distinction between the action of the minister and the rite itself was to be used by the majority of later theologians.

²⁶ *De Baptismo* 4, 12, n. 18 (CSEL 51, 244) . . . cum baptisma uerbis evangelicis datur, qualibet ea perversitate intelligat ille per quem datur vel ille cui datur, ipsum per se sanctum est propter illum cuius est.

²⁶ *Contra Epistolam Pormeniani* 2, 28 (CSEL 51, 79) . . . nulla ostenditur causa cur ille qui ipsum baptismum amittere non potest, ius dandi potest amittere. Utrumque enim sacramentum est, et quadam consecratione utrumque homini datur, illud cum baptizatur, illud cum ordinatur, ideoque in Catholica utrumque non licet iterari.

²⁷ *De Sacro Altaris Mystero Libri Sex*, Lib. III (PL 217, 844).

Peter of Potiers (d. 1205) is regarded as the first to apply these terms to Baptism,^{27a} in order to show that the value of the sacrament does not depend on the merits of the minister.²⁸ St. Augustine had made the same distinction centuries earlier without using these technical terms.

The Requirement of Character

It has already been mentioned that the minister must have at least the intention of doing what the Church does for the valid confection of a sacrament. But with the exception of Baptism, which Soto called the gate to the other sacraments,²⁹ there is another requirement which must be present in the minister, namely, sacramental character, which is a participation in the priesthood of Christ. The concept of character as a participation in the priesthood of Christ is lucidly expressed by St. Thomas:

Sacramental character is a participation of the priesthood of Christ in His faithful, which is such that, as Christ has the full power of spiritual priesthood, so His faithful are configured to Him in that they share some spiritual power in respect to the sacraments and in regard to whatever pertains to divine worship.³⁰

In a work published in 1947, J. Rea, after making a thorough study of character in the writings of the Angelic Doctor, expressed the same concept with even greater clarity:

Since Christian priesthood, or the potency for Christian worship, is given only through the sacramental character, which is a participation in the priesthood of Christ, all priesthood in the Church is, of necessity, participated priesthood. Thus Christ the Priest not only began the rite of the Christian religion on the Cross, but it is He who principally continues it in the Church.

^{27a} Cf. Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 162.

²⁸ *Sententiarum*, Lib. V (PL 211, 1235) . . . baptizatio dicitur actio illius qua baptizat quae est aliud opus quam baptismus, quia est opus operans, sed baptismus est opus operatum ut ita liceat loqui.

²⁹ *In IV Sent.*, D. I, q. 4, a. 6, Tom. I, p. 90; cf. *Summa Theologica* III, q. 63, a. 6 c.

³⁰ *Summa Theologica* III, q. 63, a. 5.

He is so far the source and origin of all priesthood, that all other priests only act in His name and by His power.⁸¹

The basis of the doctrine of character is the fact that all divine worship in the sacraments is dependent upon Christ the priest, who was the source of all merits by his priestly sacrifice on Calvary. In order to dispense these treasures to others the minister must have a special deputation from Christ which takes the form of a participation in His power, and by which the minister is configured to Christ.⁸² It is only by being configured to Christ through the sacrament of Baptism that the Christian is enabled to receive the other sacraments, and unless he is configured in this way his participation in the sacramental actions is without value, because it does not partake of the nature of Christian worship.⁸³ For the valid reception of the sacraments other than Baptism it is necessary to receive them as a minister of Christ, as one wearing the insignia of the army of Christ.

This deputation to Christian worship which is conferred by character can be demonstrated by the analogy of power which is vested in a government. The rulers have charge of the country's treasury from which money is dispensed to help the people. No private individual may validly distribute any of the money unless he is deputed or authorized to exercise that office. Similarly no private individual can validly represent his country as an ambassador unless he is assigned and empowered to do that work. By this deputation or assignment he participates in the power which properly belongs to the head of the country. The analogy demonstrates the idea of character if exception is made for the fact that character is a spiritual and indelible sign in the soul which can never be lost. It is intrinsic to the individual, whereas, in the cases mentioned, the authorization and deputation can be withdrawn.

It is not the purpose of the author to go into a more detailed study of character and to prove that it is a reality, for there are

⁸¹ *Common Priesthood of the Mystical Body*, p. 189.

⁸² McCormack, S., "The Configuration of Sacramental Character," *The Thomist*, Vol. III, pp. 458 sqq. This article is an excellent treatise on the subject of configuration of sacramental character.

⁸³ Rea, J., *op. cit.*, p. 195.

many excellent works on the subject, such as those of Franzelin,³⁴ Durst,³⁵ Ferland,³⁶ Doronzo,³⁷ Hesburgh,³⁸ and Rea,³⁹ to mention only a few. It is sufficient here to recall that in spite of the contention of Calvin,⁴⁰ Chemnitz,⁴¹ and Luther⁴² that character was unknown in the early Church, it is a reality which has been taught in the Church from her early history down through the centuries by such authorities as St. Augustine⁴³ and St. Thomas⁴⁴ and the scholastics, and which in modern times has been declared to be a matter of faith, when the assembled Fathers of the Council of Trent decreed that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer a character.⁴⁵

For the present work it is important to know that the Baptismal character enables the recipient to receive the other six sacraments validly and to administer the sacrament of Matrimony. In addition to the baptismal character the sacerdotal character is an absolute necessity in the minister of Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Holy Orders and Extreme Unction.

³⁴ *De Sacramentis*, Theses 12-13.

³⁵ "De Characteribus Sacramentalibus" (*Xenia Thomistica II*) pp. 541 sqq.

³⁶ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 2, pp. 441 sqq.

³⁷ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, pp. 264 sqq.

³⁸ *The Theology of Catholic Action*, pp. 107 sqq.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 172 sqq.

⁴⁰ *Antidotum Concilii Tridentini*, ad Sess. VII, can. 9 (*Opera Omnia* 7, 496).

⁴¹ *Examen Decretorum Concilii Tridentini*, Pars II, Sess. VII, can. 9, p. 26: Sed sit sane haec una prima et sola autoritas, qua opinio characteris, et scripturae et veteribus ignota, Ecclesiae obruta est. Ex autore certe colligi potest, quale sit dogma. Ille enim Innocentius est, qui Decretales edidit.

⁴² *De Captivitate Babylonica*. Cf. Jacobs, H., *Works of Martin Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 277, 284.

⁴³ *Epistola* (98) ad Bonifacium 5 (CSEL 34, pt. 2, 527, Goldbacher).

⁴⁴ In IV *Sententiarum*, Dist. IV, q. 1 sqq. (*Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, Vol. 10, p. 86 sqq.) *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 68 (six articles).

⁴⁵ Session VII, can. 9 (Mansi 33, 53) DBU 852: Si quis dixerit, in tribus sacramentis, baptismo scilicet, confirmatione et ordine, non imprimi characterem in anima, hoc est signum quodam spirituale et indelebile, unde ea iterari non possunt, A.S.

The Nature of Intention in General

It is by the will that a man's life is good or bad,⁴⁶ and by will must be understood the secret impulse by which that faculty turns to a certain object or to a certain end in preference to others. Reason also is directly involved, since it is impossible to tend to any end without some knowledge of the end; but the appetite or desire thus lit up by reason is precisely what is called will. Thus, it is evident that intention is essentially voluntary. It is enough to reflect on the place it occupies in the complex structure of the voluntary act to see the determining role it plays there. Man tends to his goal by simple acts, but to attain them he has further to choose; in other words, he must will the means. The choice, in its turn, presupposes rational deliberation, and this deliberation brings his intellectual and moral virtues into play, and lasts until the will, now judging itself sufficiently enlightened, decides to use these means rather than another. The operation is thus analyzed into a number of distinct elements, but in reality a single movement runs through it from beginning to end, the movement of intention.⁴⁷

Since the intention of the end is the root, source and cause of the choice of the means, it is clear that the moral qualifications of the intention will affect and in large measure determine the morality of the whole act. Thus, if one man kills another, the imputability of the act will depend upon his will or intention. The accidental killing of a man is not a crime and is not judged to be such, although the physical effect may be the same as that of a deliberate murder. - The physical action is the same in both cases, but in one the criminal intention was lacking, with the result that there is no guilt and consequently no punishment.

This is the case in American civil law⁴⁸ and was the case in Ancient Talmudic Law, in which a crime consisted of two elements, the criminal act and the mental or criminal intent. According to that ancient code, if A aimed a stone at a part of B's

⁴⁶ St. Augustine, *Retractiones*, 1, 9, 4 (PL 32, 596) *Voluntas quippe est qua peccatur et recte vivitur.*

⁴⁷ Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, p. 347.

⁴⁸ Mikell, W., "Criminal Law," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. VI, pp. 717-718.

body where a mortal wound could not be inflicted, and the stone struck a more delicate part and caused death, the individual who threw the stone was not guilty of murder due to the lack of the intent to kill.⁴⁹ Although this contention would carry little or no weight in the courts of the present day, the example does serve to illustrate the power of intention.

Speaking of intention, St. Thomas calls it an act of the will, saying that from the very signification of the word it means to tend to something.⁵⁰ He explains that both the action of the mover and the movement of the thing moved is due to the action of the mover, and consequently that intention belongs principally and first to that which moves to an end. Citing the example that the architect or anyone else who is in authority moves others by his commands to do that which he intends, he concludes that it is evident that intention is, properly speaking, an act of the will.⁵¹

According to the Angelic Doctor there is really a twofold action in a voluntary action, the interior act of the will and the external action, and each of these has its own object. The end is properly the object of the interior act of the will.⁵²

Applying this to the sacrament of Baptism, for example, it is clear that in Baptism the object of the external action is to wash; but the object of the more important internal action, which is intention properly so-called, must be determined by the agent for the effecting of the sacramental washing. Otherwise it might well be only the external washing of the body.

Both in moral philosophy and in moral theology great importance is attached to the internal consent as compared with the

⁴⁹ Higger, M., *Intention in Talmudic Law*, p. 24. Cf. Greenstone, J., "Intention," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VI, p. 610.

⁵⁰ *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, q. 12, a. 1 ad 3: *Intentio nominat actum voluntatis praesupposita ordinatione rationis ordinantis aliquid in finem*. Cf. Sasse, I., *Tractatus de Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 6, Th. 24, *Institutiones Theologicae de Sacramentis Ecclesiae*, Vol. I, p. 142; Noldin-Schmitt, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Tom. III, n. 9, Sect. 3, p. 17; Herve, J., *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol. III, n. 471, p. 483; Hugon, E., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 3, Art. 3, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, Vol. IV, p. 144.

⁵¹ *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, q. 12, a. 1 c: *Unde manifestum est quod intentio proprie est actus voluntatis*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, q. 18, a. 6 c.

external act which follows it. To sin is one thing; to put the sin into execution is another. So far does Abelard carry this distinction that not only does he regard the external evil deed as only improperly called sin, but even as adding nothing to the gravity of sin. But the civil law does not ordinarily look upon external deeds in this way, for it happens that men are punished for bad exterior acts rather than for formal sins. The law is not directly concerned with moral good or evil but rather with the maintenance of social order, and hence the extreme importance it attaches to the execution or nonexecution of the bad act. But such is not the case with God, for He takes into account not so much what we do as the spirit in which it is done, and He weighs our guilt by our intention "seeing in a most wonderful manner what none other sees; He takes no account of actions when He punishes sins, but the intention only, while we, on the contrary, take no account of the intention which quite escapes us, but punish the action we see." ⁶⁸

It seems that the same principle can be applied in the confectio of the sacraments. If the minister intends to confect a sacrament while performing the sacramental actions, a sacrament is confected; otherwise his actions would have no sacramental effect, although this might not be apparent to men. This was the teaching of the Salmanticenses, who said that intention is part of man's free will, by which he is enabled to perform an act for one purpose now, and for another at a different time. The final determination belongs to him. He is morally responsible for that which he intends. For this reason he can determine in the sacramental action whether he desires to confect a true sacrament, or merely to pretend that he confers a sacrament. God could have disposed things in such a manner that whenever a qualified minister performed the actions and pronounced the words prescribed for the sacraments, they would be infallibly effected without regard to whether the necessary actions were done as a joke, or seriously, or for any other intention whatsoever. He could have ordained that intention is wholly unnecessary, but He disposed otherwise,

⁶⁸ Abelard, *Scito Te Ipsum*, Cap. 5 (PL 178, 648).

namely, that the sacrament is not confectioned unless the minister acts seriously and with intention.⁸⁴

It is quite true that the sacraments produce their effects *ex opere operato* regardless of the faith or probity of the minister, but at the same time it must be remembered that when the intention is lacking, there is no sacrament present to produce those effects. The theologians who coined the expression presupposed the presence of a true sacrament.

It was for this reason that the Council of Trent defined the dogma of the necessity of intention in the confection of the sacraments against the false teaching of the reformers. This intention is to will to do that which Christ willed, since the intention of the Church is the intention and will of Christ.

After the condemnation of the heretical assertions that intention was not necessary, theologians began to speculate on the expression *quod facit Ecclesia*. What did the Council of Trent mean by the expression? Some held that the true internal intention was necessary and required by the Council.⁸⁵ Others held that a sacrament is confectioned as often as the external elements of a sacrament are done seriously even if by the interior intention the minister does not intend to confection a sacrament.⁸⁶ A thorough examination of these divergent views will be the chief concern of the following chapters.

⁸⁴ Salmanticenses, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 7, Dub. 2, *Cursus Theologicus*, Vol. XVII, pp. 502-503: . . . quoniam licet Deus potuerit ita disponere, quod ubi minister exhiberet materiam, et formam ab ipso Deo praescriptas, ex quacumque intentione bona, vel mala, seria, vel jocosa, quin et absque ulla intentione, sed a casu et praeter intentionem, perficeretur sacramentum . . . nihilominus de facto aliter disposuit, nempe non aliter confici sacramentum nisi minister agat serio et ex proposito exhibendi materiam, et formam, illasque subjecto applicando.

⁸⁵ Bellarmine, Suarez, De Lugo, Franzelin, etc.

⁸⁶ Catharinus, Contenson, Salmeron, Farvacques, Serry, etc.

CHAPTER I

DOGMA OF SACRAMENTAL INTENTION

A. INTENTION IN THE PROTESTANT SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

It was but the logical consequence of the sacramental principles of the Reformation to deny the necessity of any intention in the minister of the sacraments, since according to this new theology the sacraments have no other purpose than to excite and stir up faith in the subject by recalling the divine promises. Since the efficacy of the sacraments comes from the faith of the recipient, it is not difficult to understand that the end of the sacraments may be attained independently of all intention on the part of the minister. Luther's sacramental teaching is well summed up in his work *De Captivitate Babylonica*:

Baptism truly saves in whatever way it is administered if only it be not administered in the name of man but of God. Nay, I have no doubt that if one received Baptism in the name of the Lord, even though the wicked minister should not give it in the name of the Lord, he would be truly baptized in the name of the Lord. For the effect of Baptism depends not so much on the faith or use of him who confers it as on the faith or use of him that receives it. . . .¹

Luther was not satisfied with this destruction of the Catholic sacramental ideal, but by a systematic elimination finally reduced the number of the sacraments to two, Baptism and the Eucharist. The others lacked some essential of the new Protestant theology.

¹ *De Captivitate Babylonica Praeludium (Opera Latina Varii Argumenti—* hereafter designated by letters OL—Vol. V, pp. 61–62): Quocumque modo tradatur baptismus, modo non in nomine Domini tradatur, vere salvum facit. Imo non dubitem si quis in nomine Domini suscipiat, etiam si impius minister non det in nomine Domini, vere baptizatum esse in nomine Domini. Non in conferentis tantum, quantum in suscipientis fide vel usu sita est virtus baptismi. . . . N.B. The translations used in the text are taken from that made by A. Steinhäuser, which is found in *The Works of Martin Luther*, edited by H. Jacobs.

Thus, for the Catholic system of objectively efficacious signs conferring the necessary graces at the various stages in the life of man, Luther substituted two signs designed only to call to the attention of the recipients that God had promised to forgive sins. Their entire efficacy lay in the word of promise as apprehended by the faith of the believer.³ Their ultimate effect is nothing intrinsic to the soul but a mere assurance of God's forgiveness, quite removed from any relation to sanctity in the individual. The soul could now be sanctified without the destruction of sin.

With such a concept of a sacrament Luther could make the following statement:

All we believe we receive, that we actually do receive, regardless of what the minister does or does not do, even though he act through dissimulation or in open mockery. . . .³ The penitent who believes he is really absolved, is certainly absolved, even though the priest pronounce the words solely for amusement's sake.⁴

The duty of the priest was merely to exhibit the words of the promise, for the faith of the recipient would accomplish the rest. The words would be shown effectively regardless of the manner in which they pronounced them, whether with the intention of confecting a sacrament or of making a mockery of them. A true intention was not necessary.

³OL 5, 63, 64: . . . tota eorum efficacia est fides ipsa, non operatio. Qui enim eis credit, is implet ea, etiamsi nihil operatur. . . . Ita baptismus neminem justificat, nec illi prodest, sed fides in verbum promissionis, cui addatur baptismus, haec enim justificat. . . . At sacramenta non implentur dum fiunt, sed dum creduntur. Cf. Grisar, *Luther*, vol. IV, p. 486; Köstlin, *J., The Theology of Luther*, vol. II, pp. 502-506.

⁴This was the thirteenth error concerning the sacraments in general, and was proposed on January 17, 1547, by Cardinal S. Crucis for judgment at the Council of Trent; it reads as follows: "Intentionem ministrorum non requiri; nihilque agere in sacramentis. Lutherus de Capt. Babil. Quicquid credimus non accepturos esse, revera accepimus: quicquid agat, non agat, simulat aut jocetur minister." (Theiner, A., *Acta Concilii Tridentini*, vol. I, p. 384).

⁴The twelfth proposition of Luther which was condemned by Leo X; Mansi 32, 1052 (DBU 752): Si per impossibile confessus non esset contritus, aut sacerdos non serio sed joco absolveret, si tamen credat se absolutum, verissime est absolutus.

Chemnitz had the same idea when he made the comparison between the sacraments and the Gospel, saying that the words of the Gospel continue to be the words of the Gospel and to produce their salutary effects regardless of the manner in which they are pronounced, whether with intention or without it. He came to the conclusion that as a corruption of the Gospel could come about only by a corruption of the words, the same would be the case with the sacraments. They are corrupted or invalidated only by a change in their outward administration or confection.⁸

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, attributing to the sacramental rites an objective efficacy, looks upon the administration of the sacraments as a moral act of Christ who is represented by the minister. Since the minister is Christ's representative and makes use of the power coming from Christ, the Church considers it necessary that the minister of the sacrament conform himself to the will of Him whose place he takes. It was, then, with good reason that the Church condemned the sacramental teaching of Luther and the other Reformers.

B. DOGMATIC DEVELOPMENT—PAPAL AND CONCILIAR DEFINITIONS

As the belief in the necessity of intention was expressed more in practice than in theory for several centuries in the early history of the Church there was no explicit teaching about the need of intention in particular, if an exception is made for it in the writings of St. Augustine against the Donatists. But even in this passage many commentators deny that he was speaking of intention.

However in the thirteenth century the doctrine was being taught in most of the schools and it was at this time that the Church was beginning to propose it to the belief of the faithful and to defend it against heretics. This marked the beginning of a gradual

⁸ Chemnitius, M., *Examen Decretorum Concilii Tridentini*, Pars II, p. 29-30: . . . verbum Evangelii quando ita praedicatur sicut divinitus patefactum est, verum esse et virtutem dei esse, ad salutem homini credenti: etiamsi si ille qui annunciat, vel non adferat, vel subtrahet intentionem. . . . Eadem certa ratio esse debet etiam in sacramento, quod est verbum visibile: ut fides statuit, Sacramentum verum esse, et habere veram efficaciam, quando juxta institutionem administratur, quicquid minister vel cogitet, vel credat, vel intendat, modo institutionem Christi in administrationem servet.

development of what was to culminate in the dogmatic definition of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.

But it must be noted that all these definitions on the part of the Church including that of the Council of Trent, pointed principally to the need of an intention. The Church was not making declarations about the quality of the intention other than that it should be a serious one. This problem of the quality of the intention and its object was to be principally the concern of post-Tridentine theologians.

The first official mention of the need for intention was made on December 18, 1208, when Pope Innocent III imposed a profession of faith upon the Waldensians who were returning to Catholic unity. In this profession the minister of a sacrament is required to have an intention.

The Waldensians had been teaching that there were only two sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist. Consequently, not having a priesthood, it was their belief that the Eucharist was consecrated by one who was not a priest on condition that he were worthy. It was in combating this error that mention was made of the need of intention, for the profession demanded as conditions necessary for the Eucharistic consecration that the minister be a priest, that he pronounce the words of the canon of the Mass, and that this be done with a *faithful intention*.⁶

In the fifteenth century the Church came forth twice to proclaim that the minister of the sacrament must have the intention of doing what the Church does.

The followers of Wyclif and Huss declared that the validity of the sacraments depended upon the minister's faith and state of grace. It was for this reason that Pope Martin V in his Bull *Inter Cunctas* of February 22, 1418, prescribed that persons of doubtful orthodoxy should be cross-examined and asked a number of questions among which was the following:

Likewise, whether he believes that an evil priest,

⁶ *Regestorum Lib. XI* (PL 215, 1511; DBU 424): Ad quod officium (Eucharistiam consecrandi) tria sunt ut credimus, necessaria: scilicet certa persona, id est, presbyter ab episcopo, ut praediximus, ad illius proprie officium constitutus, et illa solennia verba quae a sanctis patribus in canone sunt expressa, et fidei intentio proferentis.

using the correct matter and form, and having the intention of doing what the Church does, truly absolves, truly baptizes, and truly confers the other sacraments.⁷

On November 22, 1439, Pope Eugene IV issued the famous *Decree for the Armenians*, which stated explicitly that the intention of doing what the Church does is one of the essential requirements for the validity of a sacrament:

All the sacraments are perfected by three things, namely, by things as the matter, by words as the form, and by the person of the minister conferring the sacrament with the *intention of doing what the Church does*: if any one of these be lacking, the sacrament is not perfected.⁸

Although the Decree does not have the value of a conciliary definition, being a practical instruction intended for the united Armenians and not for the whole Church, it is still of very great importance.⁹

Another indication of the mind of the Holy See on the subject of intention is contained in the Bull *Exsurge Domine* which was promulgated on June 15, 1520, in condemnation of forty-one propositions of Martin Luther, among which was the following:

If it is impossible for the penitent to be contrite, and if the priest should absolve jokingly and not seriously, if nevertheless he believes that he is absolved, he is truly absolved.¹⁰

⁷ Mansi 27, 1212; (DBU 672): Item, utrum credat, quod malus sacerdos cum debita materia et forma et cum intentione faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, vere conficiat, vere absolvat, vere baptizet, vere conferat alia sacramenta.

⁸ Mansi 31A, 1054 (DBU 695): Haec omnia sacramenta tribus perficiuntur, videlicet rebus tanquam materia, verbis tanquam forma, et persona ministri conferentis sacramentum cum intentione faciendi, quod facit Ecclesia: quorum si aliquod desit, non perficitur sacramentum.

⁹ [•] The *Decree for the Armenians* may not perhaps be an infallible document, but at all events it expressed, if not the definitive, at least the official teaching of the Latin Church in the middle of the fifteenth century: Cf. Moran, W., "The Church and the Sacraments," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 16 (1921) 229.

¹⁰ The twelfth error of Martin Luther. Cf. footnote n. 3.

While it is true that this condemned error does not state explicitly that intention is not necessary in the absolving priest, this is clearly implied in the jocose performance.

The crowning development of the doctrine of intention came with the solemn definition of the Council of Trent on March 3, 1547, when the canon on intention was promulgated:

If anyone says that in ministers, when they effect and confer the sacraments, there is not required at least the intention of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema.¹¹

The dogma of sacramental intention is, then, the technical expression of the traditional practice of the Church. The sixteenth-century reformers were, therefore, outside the traditional line of thought when they maintained that the sacraments would be valid even if the minister should be manifestly acting out of amusement as he united the matter and the form.

In all the preceding decrees of the Holy See the necessity for a true intention has been shown, but none of them deals directly and specifically with the quality of the object of the intention. They assert the need of intention in the minister, but they do not assert the need for an internal intention. A step toward the clarification of the exact meaning of the phrase *the intention of doing what the Church does* came from Alexander VIII through the Holy Office in 1690 with the condemnation of the following proposition of Farvacques:

That Baptism is valid which is conferred by the minister who observes the whole external rite and the form of baptizing, but inwardly resolves to himself in his heart: I do not intend what the Church does.¹²

This is a negative explanation of the object of intention, for it makes clear that if the minister does not intend to do what the

¹¹ Session VII, can. 11 (Mansi 33, 53; DBU 854): Si quis dixerit, in ministris, dum sacramenta conficiunt et conferunt, non requiri intentionem, saltem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia: A.S.

¹² DBU 1318: Valet baptismus collatus a ministro, qui omnem ritum externum formamque baptizandi observat, intus vero in corde suo apud se resolvit: Non intendo, quod facit Ecclesia.

Church does as he goes through the external rites, the sacrament is invalid. Although the proposition is not directed at Catharinus, it does seem to be a perfect presentation of the doctrine of external intention. To all appearances such a performance of Baptism would seem to fulfill all the requirements for validity, but, as the proposition states, there is present a hidden resolve not to do what the Church does, and this renders the sacrament invalid. Those who teach the sufficiency of the external intention attempt to show that the proposition does not concern them, but the school of internal intention seems to have an official pronouncement which fully justifies its teaching.

C. INDICATIONS FOR NEED OF INTENTION IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

Although there are no explicit references to intention as such in the pages of the Bible, the Catholic truth on this subject can be gathered from this source of revealed doctrine in those passages in which the sacraments are shown to have been instituted by Christ in such a way that He must have willed them to be conferred dependently upon the intention of the minister. This is especially clear in the sacrament of Penance, which was instituted with these words: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*¹³ In these words of institution Christ apparently leaves to the judgment of the Apostles whether or not the sins in question should be forgiven. If they considered the penitent worthy of absolution, they pronounced the formula of absolution with the intention of forgiving the sins. The effect of the sacrament was due not only to the power which they had received from Christ but also to their intention of putting it into practice, that is, of really effecting what the words signify.

In regard to the sacrament of Extreme Unction the priest is called in to pray over the sick man and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord,¹⁴ which indicates that the minister must intend to do what the Lord does.

In the sacrament of Matrimony the contract cannot have validity in the internal forum without the intention of the con-

¹³ John 20:22-23.

¹⁴ James 5:14.

tracting parties. Even the internal withholding of the consent of one of the parties would be sufficient to vitiate the contract in the sight of God, though in the external forum it would be considered valid unless the secret lack of intention could be proved.

The same conclusion could be deduced with the remainder of the sacraments, for by the very fact that a man is the minister of God it is fitting that he act according to his nature, that is, with intention. This ministerial duty of the Apostles which is used as an indication of the need for intention was mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians: *Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.*¹⁸

D. THE INTENTION OF DOING WHAT THE CHURCH DOES

After the necessity of intention was declared to be of faith at the seventh session of the Council of Trent, there could be no doubt about the absolute necessity of intention in the minister of the sacraments. No longer were theologians free to express their views which would contradict the decision of the Council, but the phrase used by the Council *to do what the Church does* was to become the focal point of much speculation. What is necessary in the minister that he intend to do what the Church does? The common opinion is that he must have the internal intention rather than the external, which is merely the external performance of the sacramental action without regard for any interior intention. This intention looks only to the positing of the matter and the form.

Since the opinion that the internal intention is necessary is the common opinion, the true meaning of internal intention must be sought. The question does not concern the serious performance of the external rites which consist of the matter and the form. Internal intention necessarily demands something over and above this.

For De Lugo the intention of doing what the Church does means to speak and to act as a minister of Christ, and for this it is necessary that the minister perform the sacramental actions in the name of Christ and not in his own. In addition to the will of

¹⁸ I Cor. 4:1.

performing the bare external ceremonies there must be present the will to submit to Christ's will and act as His instrument.¹⁶ As a minimum for validity Billuart demanded that the minister perform the external rites as something *sacred* and *religious*.¹⁷ For Cardinal Franzelin the additional element over and above the matter and the form consists in the intention of the minister to use his ministerial power and to act as a minister, which consists in acting in the name of the principal author rather than in his own.¹⁸ Billot called that the internal intention by which the minister not only wishes to put aside every sign of simulation from the external rite, but also resolves within himself: I wish to do that which the Church does.¹⁹ According to Hugon the Church performs a rite *formally sacred*. Since the minister must have the intention of doing what the Church does, he must have the intention of performing a rite formally sacred. Thus the minister who would resolve: *I do not intend what the Church does* while he performs the external actions would lack the internal intention and would not intend a rite formally sacred and consequently would not validly confect a sacrament.²⁰ This is substantially the same requirement which Ferland mentions. Speaking of the virtual intention, he makes it clear that even though the virtual intention is sufficient for validity, the minister must will to perform something *sacred* and *religious*. Ferland calls this the internal intention.²¹ It is the teaching of Doronzo that the internal intention has for its object something deeper than the bare external ceremony and he designates this as that which the true Church intends, namely, the notion of a sacrament, or other things indivisibly connected with it.²²

¹⁶ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 35, *Disputationes Scholasticæ et Morales*, Tom. III, pp. 377-378.

¹⁷ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Diss. 5, Art. 7, *Summa Sancti Thomæ*, Tom. VIII, p. 307.

¹⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 16, p. 201.

¹⁹ *De Ecclesiæ Sacramentis*, Thesis 18, Tom. I, p. 181.

²⁰ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Art. 3, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, Vol. IV, p. 149.

²¹ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 3, Art. 1, *Commentarius in Summam D. Thomæ*, p. 481.

²² *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Art. 37, p. 451.

This summarizes the thought of the great majority of theologians. Their reasonable demand is that the notion of a sacrament be a part of the minister's intention, although this need not be explicit, but may be present implicitly in the intention of doing what the Church does.

E. INTENTION OF THE END OF THE SACRAMENTS

It is not necessary for the validity of the sacrament that the minister wish the ultimate end of the sacrament, that is, eternal life for the recipient, or even the proximate end, e.g., in Baptism, to make one a member of the Church, or to confer grace. If this were necessary, the heretic who ignores the Church, and the pagan who knows nothing about the Church, would never be able to baptize validly.

The intention sufficient for validity may be had even by one who would not recognize the Catholic Church as the true Church and in baptizing would intend to do what his church does. The pagan who has the intention of doing what Christians do by the rite of Baptism would have intention sufficient for validity. However, these people cannot be the ministers of all the sacraments, for most of which there is required not only the intention but also the power which comes through ordination; even the ordinary Christians do not have the power to confect all the sacraments, as Luther falsely asserted.²³

The intention is sufficient also if the minister intends to do something which is equivalent to that which the Church does, that is, if he intends to do that which Christ instituted, or what is commanded in the Gospel, or what he sees others do.²⁴ This latter indication of the proper intention makes it understandable how a Jew or a pagan could have a sufficient intention. In a case of necessity a catechumen might call a pagan and ask him to pour water on his forehead and pronounce the words of Baptism according to the intention of the recipient. In fulfilling the request the pagan would have at least the implicit intention of doing what the Church does, and the Baptism would be valid. If the

²³ *Council of Trent*, Session VII, Can. 10 (Mansi 33, 53; DBU 853); cf. Theiner, A., *Acta Concilii Tridentini*, vol. 1, p. 384.

²⁴ Billot, L., *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, p. 180.

minister is a heretic and explicitly intends not to do what the Catholic Church does, but what his own Church does, thinking it to be the true Church, his intention is sufficient, provided he does not rule out what is essential in a sacrament. However, the minister must always act as a serious human agent, for a fictitious intention or an action in jest would be insufficient, since the Church does not act in that way, nor does the minister wish to perform a serious rite.²⁵

F. CONTROVERSY ON PROTESTANT BAPTISMS—INTENTION OF THE EFFECT

The discussion of the intention of doing what the Church does brings to mind a question as to the validity of Baptism performed in non-Catholic sects in which the ministers hold views about this sacrament which are incompatible with Catholic doctrine. This question was the center of a controversy between Dr. Donovan and Dr. Schaaf about a decade ago. In an article appearing in the *Ecclesiastical Review*²⁶ of February, 1926, Dr. Donovan comes to the conclusion that the beliefs of several of the principal non-Catholic sects are such that the respective ministers do not intend to do what the Church does when they baptize, the result being that the baptism administered by them should be considered invalid.²⁷ Dr. Schaaf in an article in the same periodical²⁸ shows from various decrees that the erroneous views of Protestants concerning the indissolubility of marriage do not prevent them from having the intention sufficient for contracting a valid marriage. From this it follows indirectly that Baptism administered by Protestant ministers is considered valid by the Church in spite of the respective heretical views. After citing several decrees of the Holy Office concerning the validity of marriages and baptisms, Dr. Schaaf makes reference to one reply of the Holy See which summarizes his whole argument of presumptive validity of Protestant baptisms.

²⁵ Davis, H., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, vol. III, p. 17.

²⁶ "Are Protestant Baptisms Ordinarily Valid?" *ER* 74 (1926) 158-180.

²⁷ The sects in question were the Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists.

²⁸ "The Invalidity of Sectarian Baptisms," *ER* 75 (1926) 358 sqq.

The Bishop of Nesqually had addressed to the Propaganda an inquiry concerning the validity of baptisms conferred by Methodists, against the validity of whose baptisms he alleged an insufficient and adverse intention and consequently the presumption of invalidity. The Bishop stated that the Methodists held so many errors about the necessity, the power, and the efficacy of the sacrament of Baptism that they considered it merely an indifferent rite which had been entirely omitted in the past and at a later time had been put into use again for the purpose of deceiving the faithful and attempting to show them that their false religion did not differ from the true religion.⁷⁹

To this question the Holy Office gave a very detailed answer which is one of the most explicit statements about the intention of doing what the Church does. In substance the reply lays down the following principles:

1. It is a dogma of faith that Baptism administered by anyone, whether a schismatic, a heretic, or even an infidel, must be considered valid, as long as in their administration those things are present by which the sacrament is perfected, namely, due matter, the prescribed form, and the person of the minister with the intention of doing what the Church does. Hence it follows that the peculiar errors which the ministers profess either privately or publicly do not at all affect baptism or any other sacrament.⁸⁰

2. The errors which the heretics profess privately or publicly are not incompatible with that intention which the ministers of the sacraments must have, namely, of doing what the Church does. Those errors in themselves cannot give rise to a general presumption against the validity of the sacraments in general and baptism in particular.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Sacra Congregatio Sancti Officii*, Jan. 24, 1877—CSCPF, n. 1465, Vol. II, pp. 99 sqq.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 99: *Etenim novit . . . dogma fidei esse Baptismum a quocumque sive schismatico, sive haeretico, sive etiam infideli administratum validum esse habendum, dummodo in eiusdem administratione singula concurrerint, quibus sacramentum perficitur, scilicet, debita materia, prescripta forma, et persona ministri cum intentione faciendi quod facit Ecclesia. Hinc consequitur errores peculiare, quos ministrantes sive privatim, sive etiam publice profitentur nihil officere posse validitati baptismi, vel cuiuscumque sacramenti . . .*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 100: *Videt igitur A. Tua . . . errores quos haeretici*

From these principles taken from the decision of the Holy Office it must be concluded that as a general rule the baptisms of heretics are valid in spite of the fact that their ministers hold beliefs entirely incompatible with the Catholic doctrine concerning Baptism, and deny all power of regeneration in that sacrament. Their error does not offer sufficient reason to conclude that they have an insufficient or adverse intention in regard to conferring the sacrament.

G. INTENTION AND ANGLICAN ORDERS

Closely connected with the doctrine of intention and forming a part of the official teaching of the Church on intention was the solution of the problem of Anglican Orders. The question about Anglican Orders did not concern the private beliefs of the Anglican Bishops but whether they intended to do what the Church does when they supposedly ordained.

This question was decisively answered on September 13, 1896, when Pope Leo XIII published his Apostolic letter, *Apostolicae Curae*,⁸² which declared that Anglican Orders are and always have been invalid, that is, those conferred according to the Edwardine Ritual, and for a twofold reason: the defect of the proper form, and the defect of the proper intention. The lack of proper intention was due in part to the change in form.

The controversy about Anglican Orders had its origin shortly after the reign of Henry VIII. He had thrown off the "yoke" of Rome, rejected the authority of the Roman Pontiff, and placed himself at the head of the Church of England, the Anglicans. These schismatics wanted to show their hatred for Rome by the introduction of a new ritual that would omit references to Catholic doctrines which they disliked. One of these doctrines was that of the real priesthood.

sive privatim, sive etiam publice profitentur, non esse impossibiles cum illa intentione, quam sacramentorum ministri de necessitate eorumdem sacramentorum tenentur habere, faciendi nempe quod facit Ecclesia, vel faciendi quod Christus voluit ut fieret; et eosdem errores per se non posse inducere generalem praesumptionem contra validitatem sacramentorum in genere, et Baptismi in specie. . . .

⁸² *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 193 sqq.; cf. Wynne, J., *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, pp. 392 sqq.

It is certain that during the first period of the Anglican schism (1534-1547) the Catholic liturgy was maintained intact, and the usual form of the Church was observed in the ordination ceremony. Concerning the validity of these ordinations, therefore, there was no question, nor does the Bull of Leo XIII have reference to them.

Until the reign of Edward VI the Catholic Pontifical was used in England, and this Ordinal fulfilled the essential requirements of a valid ordinal by signifying distinctly through its words and ceremonies the conveyance of that interior supernatural gift, the possession of which characterizes a Catholic Bishop or priest. But just on this account Cranmer disliked it and made one to his own liking, so constructed as to be very suitable for the ceremonious appointment of a Protestant pastor, but quite inadequate for the consecration or ordination of a Catholic Bishop or priest.

Thus, under the sanction of the Act of 1550 the Edwardine Ordinal was drawn up by "six prelates and six other men of the realm learned in God's law, by the King's majesty to be appointed and assigned."³³ In 1552 this rite underwent some further changes and was brought into the form in which it remained until the year 1662. It was in use, then, for more than one hundred years.

The compilers of the Ordinal did not wish to include any of the ancient rites which the Catholic Church considered valid for ordination. The reason for this is evident from the plan which they proposed to follow, that is, to exclude from the Anglican Liturgy all *sacerdotalism* and every vestige of the Catholic doctrine concerning the real presence and the Eucharistic sacrifice.³⁴

In the Ordinal of 1550 the essential form for the priestly ordination was the following:

Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of the holy sacraments.

³³ Smith, S., "Anglican Orders," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 492.

³⁴ Brandi, S., "The Pontifical Declaration of the Invalidity of Anglican Orders," *ER* 16 (1897) 31.

And while the Bible was being delivered these words were used:

Take thou authority to preach the word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments in this congregation, where thou shalt be so appointed.⁸⁸

The essential form for the Episcopate was:

Take the Holy Ghost and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of hands, for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and soberness.

And these words while the Bible was delivered:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Think upon these things contained in this book . . . be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not; hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind together the broken, bring again the outcast, seek the lost . . .

Seven Bishops and a number of clerics of lower rank were made according to this new Ordinal during the last two years of Edward VI. On the accession of Mary in 1553, it was discarded and the Pontifical resumed, but when Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 its use was restored and has continued down to the present day with the addition of the defining clauses since 1662.

The additions made in 1662 were in the case of the priesthood (after the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost"), "for the office and work of a priest in the Church now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." In the case of the episcopate (after the words "Take the Holy Ghost"), "for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands."

One must recall that the earlier form without the additions was used exclusively by the Anglicans from 1558 until 1662, a period of 104 years, and thus the Anglican clergy are a creation of the New Ordinal in its original form, and primarily the validity of

⁸⁸ This and the following forms are taken from S. Smith's article entitled "Anglican Orders," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, pp. 491 sqq.

their orders is dependent upon its sufficiency. If that is not sufficient for validity, the Apostolic succession must have elapsed long before the year 1662. At that time, even if the additions made would have been sufficient for a valid ordination and consecration, there would have been no Anglican alive who was really a Bishop, for the last true Bishop had died long before. As Pope Leo XIII stated in his Bull:

Even if the addition could give to the form its due signification, it was introduced too late, as a century had already elapsed since the adoption of the Edwardine Ordinal; for, the hierarchy having become extinct, there remained no power for ordaining.⁸⁶

Thus the Apostolic succession was definitely broken in the Anglican Church, and it was on this consideration of the Edwardine rite that the Holy See based its definitive decree of 1896. The controversy, as far as Catholics are concerned, came to an end with the publication of the Bull, *Ap̄stolicae Curae*, which declared Anglican orders invalid.

Although the principal reason for the declaration of the invalidity of Anglican Orders is concerned with the defective form, yet the lack of proper intention did have its part to play. As long as the lack of proper intention is not externally manifested, the Church presumes that the intention of the minister is correct. When, however, a defective intention is manifested externally, she must deal with it, and that is what happened in the case of Anglican Orders. The rite was altered in the time of Edward VI to give expression to a heterodox belief concerning the nature of Holy Orders. According to Genicot-Salmans⁸⁷ the rite of ordina-

⁸⁶ *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Vol. XXIX, p. 199; Wynne, J., *op. cit.*, p. 401. All subsequent quotations from the Encyclical on Anglican Orders will be taken from this translation.

⁸⁷ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Sect. 1, *Theologiae Moralis Institutiones*, Vol. II, n. 111, p. 102 (10th ed. 1922): Etenim tempore Eduardi VI, ritus ordinationis immutatus est eo manifesto consilio ut alius induceretur ab Ecclesia Catholica non receptus, utque id repelleretur quod facit Ecclesia et quod, ex institutione Christi, ad naturam, atinet sacramentum, vid. potestas consecrandi et sacrificii offerendi . . . Anglicani Ritualis redactores intendebant quidem constituere ministrum quem sacerdotem vel Episcopum nominare

tion was changed with the express purpose not to do what the Church does, and not to do what pertained to the nature of the sacrament from the institution of Christ, namely, the power of consecrating and offering the Sacrifice. But if the heretical minister of the sacrament, in order to maintain his error, purposely corrupts or rejects the Catholic rite, and in conferring the sacrament, uses a new form, which excludes the signification of the Catholic forms, can he be supposed to have the intention of doing what the Church does? The answer is well stated in the Bull of Leo XIII:

. . . if the rite be changed with the manifest intention of introducing another rite not approved by the Church, and of rejecting what the Church does, and what, by the institution of Christ, belongs to the nature of the sacrament, then it is clear that not only is the necessary intention wanting to perform the sacrament but that the intention is adverse to and destructive of the sacrament.⁸⁸

The ceremonial of ordination or of any of the other sacraments may vary, and even though its uniformity is prescribed by law, a slight change or omission does not invalidate the rite as long as it is an accidental element, but the essential element in the rite never varies and is always necessary for validity, for it is of divine institution, whereas the former is of ecclesiastical institution.

All the Catholic formulas follow a uniform type in which there is an express mention of the order or the power which is to be conferred. This makes it easy to understand what the defect of form is which renders the orders conferred according to the Ordinal of Edward VI invalid and worthless. In it the forms prescribed for the ordination of priests and for the consecration of Bishops are not in accord with the essential type, which has constantly and universally been followed in all the liturgies of the East and West. While this type always employs the deprecatory form, and is clearly determined, the Edwardine rite is exclusively

possent, nequaquam intenderunt verum facere sacerdotem. Notetur autem hic non agi de errore privato, sed de intentione publice manifestata mutandi ritus ut haeresim introducerent.

⁸⁸ ASS, Vol. XXIX, p. 201; Wynne, J., *op. cit.*, p. 404.

imperative and does not contain a determination of any sort whether of order, or of power, or the principal effect.⁴⁹

The capital imperfection of the form used in the Edwardine rite is the fact that it omits what it ought essentially to signify, that is, the *sacerdotium* properly so-called, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, when He said to the Apostles: *Do this in commemoration of me*. In fact the new Ordinal was substituted for the ancient Catholic Pontifical with the express, deliberate, and firm purpose of excluding from the Anglican Church every idea of the *sacerdotium*. It was for this reason that the compilers not only denied the existence of the sacrament of Orders, but purposely omitted, altered, and mutilated all the ancient formulas and ceremonies which asserted, supposed, or signified the *sacerdotium*, the real presence, and the Eucharistic Sacrifice; the words, therefore, *episcopate* and *priesthood*, which were used at times in the Anglican Ordinal, remain as words without the reality which Christ instituted. In the words of Leo XIII:

In vain those who, from the time of Charles I have attempted to hold some kind of sacrifice or of priesthood, have made some additions to the ordinal . . . Such efforts, We affirm, have been and are made in vain, and for this reason, that any words in the Anglican Ordinal, as it now is, which lend themselves to ambiguity, cannot be taken in the same sense as they possess in the Catholic rite. For once a new rite has been initiated, in which, as We have seen, the sacrament of Orders is adulterated or denied, and from which all idea of consecration and sacrifice has been rejected, the formula "*Receive the Holy Ghost*" no longer holds good; because the spirit has been infused into the soul with the grace of the sacrament, and the words "*for the office and the work of a priest or Bishop*" and the like no longer hold good, but remain as words without the reality which Christ instituted.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Brandi, S., *op. cit.*, p. 275.

⁴⁹ ASS, Vol. XXIX, pp. 200-201; Wynne, J., *op. cit.*, p. 403.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGY OF INTENTION

A. IN APOSTOLIC TIMES

In his two Epistles to the Corinthians St. Paul declared that the preachers of the Gospel are to be regarded as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God¹ and as fulfilling the functions of ambassadors of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation of men with God.² The Apostles claimed for themselves this dignity of being representatives of Jesus not only when they preached the Gospel but also when they celebrated the Christian rites, the sacraments.

In Apostolic times when the clergy celebrated the Eucharistic rite, they had the intention of repeating what the Savior had done and of fulfilling the command given at the Last Supper: *Do this for a commemoration of me.*³ It was in memory of Christ and in His name that they baptized, anointed the sick, and imposed hands upon the newly-baptized in order to confer upon them the Holy Spirit. When St. Peter cured the lame man, he claimed that he made use of the power which he had received from the Savior and that he was acting in the name of Jesus.⁴

The Apostles looked upon themselves and wished to be considered the representatives of Jesus and the executors of His will. From this it can be inferred that they had the intention of performing the actions which are necessary in a sacrament as something sacred, for they wanted to do substantially what Christ had done before them.

In the early history of the Church the doctrine of intention was tacitly implied in the teaching of the Fathers regarding the ministerial actions of the priests and bishops when conferring the sacraments. Their work was a continuation of the work begun

¹ I Cor. 4:1.

² II Cor. 5:18, 20.

³ I Cor. 11:24.

⁴ Acta 3:6.

by Christ; their intention was therefore to accomplish what Christ had ordained.

The intention of carrying out the will of Christ in the administration and in the reception of the sacrament of Baptism is clearly indicated in the writings of St. Justin.

In the name of God, the father and master of all things, and of Jesus Christ our Savior, and of the Holy Spirit, they are then washed in water. For Christ has said: "Unless you be born again, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."⁵

This is an indication that they acted in the name of Christ and intended what He intended by the ceremony of pouring the water and pronouncing the words of the baptismal formula. The writers of the following centuries expressed themselves in the same manner as St. Justin when they had occasion to speak of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.⁶

In apostolic times and in the first three centuries the doctrine of intention was in its very early stages of development. It was hidden in the concept that the minister of the sacraments is the representative of the Church, and since there is a moral identity between Christ and the Church,⁷ the conferring of a sacrament is looked upon as an act of Christ, working through His Church as represented in the minister.

Thus the minister of the sacraments is the representative of the Church as well as of Christ. Medieval theologians concluded from this that the minister must have the intention, the will to conform to the intention of the Church. The early Fathers did not think of deducing this conclusion but in practice they lived it. The dogma of the necessity of intention in the minister did therefore actually exist, although more as a practice than as a theory.⁸

⁵ I Apologia 61 (PG 6, 420).

⁶ Hilary, St., *De Trinitate*, Lib. II (PL 10, 50); cf. Optatus, St., *De Schismate Donatistarum*, Lib. VI (PL 11, 1047, 1050, 1058).

⁷ Cf. St. Augustine, *Sermo* 137, 1 (PL 38, 754) Si duo in carne una, cur non duo in voce una? Loquatur ergo Christus, quia in Christo loquitur Ecclesia, et in Ecclesia loquitur Christus.

⁸ Pourrat, P., *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 355.

Speculative development for the most part was a thing of the future, but its foundations were already laid.

B. ST. AUGUSTINE AND INTENTION

The first speculations on the intention of the minister are said to have come from the pen of St. Augustine near the end of his writings against the Donatists. He proposed three cases for solution: 1. Whether a baptism is valid if it is conferred and received deceitfully (*fallaciter*) in the true Church or what is thought to be the true Church:

But let us consider the case of someone also giving in deceit, when both the giver and the receiver are acting deceitfully in the unity of the Catholic Church itself, whether this should rather be acknowledged as baptism. . . .

To this case St. Augustine gave a solution in the affirmative from the common opinion of the time:

And yet, if the deceit be subsequently brought to light, no one seeks a repetition of the sacrament; but the fraud is either punished by excommunication or set aright by penitence. . . .¹⁰

2. Whether a baptism is valid if conferred in play when suddenly the recipient is converted and receives it with faith:

Whether this should rather be acknowledged as baptism, or that which is given in play, if someone should be found who received it faithfully from a sudden impulse of religion . . .¹¹

In this case St. Augustine said that in his own opinion the

⁹ *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, Lib. VII, Cap. 53 (CSEL 51, 373, Petschenig): . . . sed arbitremur aliquem etiam fallaciter dantem, cum et tradens et accipiens fallaciter agant in ipsa unitate Catholica, utrum hoc magis Baptisma sit acceptandum. . . .

¹⁰ *Ibid.* . . . et tamen si postea prodatur, nemo repetit, sed aut excommunicando punitur illa simulatio aut poenitendo sanatur.

¹¹ *Ibid.* . . . utrum hoc magis baptisma sit acceptandum an illud quod in mimo datur, si quis existat qui fideliter subito commotus accipiat. . . .

baptism was valid, but he cautiously submitted himself to any decision which might be made by the Church in the future:

Nevertheless if anyone were to press me . . . to declare what my opinion was, without reference to the previously expressed views of others, whose judgment I would rather follow, if I were under the influence of the same feelings as led me to assert what I have said before I should have no hesitation in saying that all men possess baptism who received it in any place, from any sort of men, provided it were consecrated in the words of the Gospel, and received without deceit on their part and with some degree of faith. . . .¹⁸

3. Whether a baptism is valid when both the minister and the recipient were acting in a playful manner.

For the solution of this case he would not give an opinion, but declared that he would call upon the divine judgment, through the medium of some revelation:

But when the whole thing was done as a farce, or a comedy, or a jest,—if I were asked whether the baptism which was thus conferred should be approved, I should declare my opinion that we ought to pray for the declaration of God's judgment, through the medium of some revelation. . . .¹⁹

The three cases proposed by St. Augustine have caused men interested in the problem to speculate on the exact meaning of the words he employed. The great difficulty is the failure to

¹⁸ *Ibid.* (CSEL 51, 373-374): . . . uerumtamen si quis forte me in eo concilio constitutum, ubi talium rerum quaestio uersaretur, non praecedentibus talibus quorum sententias sequi mallet, urgeret, ut dicerem quid ipse sentirem, si eo modo adfectus essem, quo eram ista dictarem, nequaquam dubitarem habere baptismum eos, qui ubicumque, et a quibuscumque illud uerbis euangelicis consecratum sine sua simulatione et cum aliqua fide accepissent. . . .

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (CSEL 51, 374): Ubi autem . . . totum ludicre et mimice et joculariter ageretur, utrum adprobandus esset baptismus qui sic daretur, diuinum iudicium per alicuius revelationis oraculum concordi oratione et impensis supplicii deuotione gemitibus implorandum esse censerem, ita sane ut post me dicturos sententias, ne quid jam exploratum et cognitum adferrent, humiliter expectarem. . . .

arrive at a decision as to what St. Augustine meant by a "fallacious" or "deceitful" administration or reception of baptism. If these terms can be interpreted in the sense of acting without any intention, it will have to be admitted that St. Augustine favored the Protestants. Evidently, this is not the case, since the Bishop of Hippo said specifically that his judgment was suspended in regard to the baptism performed in play. If his words can be interpreted as acting only with external intention, then the school of external intention will have a strong argument against the school of internal intention.

C. COMMENTATORS ON ST. AUGUSTINE

Looking at the views and the commentaries of theologians of later centuries, it is clear that St. Augustine did not come to a decisive and satisfactory conclusion. In some of his solutions St. Augustine was somewhat hesitant, and in the third one he was wholly undecided. As a result theologians gave interpretations which were in direct opposition.

According to the teaching of Cardinal Franzelin, St. Augustine had in mind by the idea of baptism given or received in deceit, not the lack of intention to be baptized or to baptize, but the total absence of faith in the subject and in the minister. It is his opinion that baptism is "fallaciously" administered when the subject, prompted by fear of punishment or by the allurements of temporal advantages, pretends to be converted to Christianity, and is baptized without faith, thus deceiving the Church. Whenever the minister of the sacrament is unaware of this deception, it exists only on the part of the subject. But when the minister also is aware of it and does not hesitate to administer the sacrament, he also deceives the Church.¹⁴ This interpretation seems to be acceptable, since at that period insincere conversions from selfish motives would have been relatively frequent, since Christianity

¹⁴ Franzelin, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 16, p. 214: Sine dubio fallaciter agit, qui animum non christianum gerens, ductus tamen timore vel spe temporale simulat se velle esse Christianum. . . . cf. Pesch, C., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 5, Art. 3, Prop. 24, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Vol. VI, n. 284, pp. 113-114.

with its official recognition from Constantine was supplanting more and more the pagan religions.

Cardinal De Lugo admitted that the problem of interpretation was a difficult one. He explained St. Augustine's hesitancy by asserting that his zeal in refuting the errors of the Donatists, who denied that the baptism given by heretics was valid, was so great that he had a tendency to go from one extreme to another. He was so intent in asserting the efficacy of the sacraments that he became doubtful whether a mimic baptism would be invalid. But De Lugo maintained that he could not gather from the words of St. Augustine that Baptism would be valid without the intention of the minister.¹⁸ In fact from the tenor of the whole chapter the words *fallaciter dantis vel suscipientis* of St. Augustine are not to be understood as referring to one administering or receiving Baptism without intention, but without faith or the required understanding about the sacrament, or with deceit, pretending that he believes otherwise than he really does.

One element of St. Augustine's teaching is certain, the fact that those who had "fallaciously" received Baptism were not to be baptized again when the true state of affairs came to light, but they were to be punished.¹⁹ De Lugo called it incredible that there was a practice in the Church by which those who were baptized without their intention, or without intention on the part of the minister, would not be correctly baptized but punished only.

According to De Lugo the key to the doctrine of St. Augustine is to be taken from the passage at the beginning of which he proposed the question concerning the validity of a baptism given by one who was not a Christian but who out of curiosity had learned the rite of Baptism. St. Augustine had asked whether such a person could validly baptize. To this question he added another doubt about those who simulate faith, which they do not have: Could they baptize or be baptized validly? De Lugo contended that since the principal question was one of faith, St.

¹⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 3, *Disputationes Scholasticæ et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 380: . . . non video quid cogat ad fatendum, quod Augustinus dixerit, validum esse baptismum absque ministri intentione collatum.

¹⁹ Cf. footnote n. 10.

Augustine must have been treating of faith and not the lack of intention in the remainder of the context. Otherwise it would have to be admitted that the Bishop of Hippo was guilty of great ignorance.¹⁷ This seems to be a simple solution for the difficulty, but it is not completely convincing. However, since it does come from such a great theologian, it does carry the weight of authority.

Tournely was of the opinion that when St. Augustine used the word "fallaciter" he did not understand scorn or internal mimicry or the lack of the proper intention, but a defect of faith, since in those days there was no discussion as yet about the kind of intention that is necessary for the sacraments. He comments that St. Augustine was battling against the Donatists who contended that baptism given without faith was null and void, and consequently they were rebaptizing those who were converted from heresy. In this passage St. Augustine wanted to show that such men, even though they did not have faith, baptized validly if they baptized with the words given in the Gospel for the confectio of this sacrament. Thus, the baptism given by them was not to be repeated, but rather those who were concerned were to be punished. Thus, Tournely, like De Lugo, interprets St. Augustine as speaking of a lack of faith and not the lack of intention.¹⁸

Billuart wrote extensively about the intention of the minister and he mentioned two objections proposed against St. Augustine:¹⁹

1. St. Augustine doubted whether baptism conferred jokingly or mockingly would be valid, saying that in such a case he would have to await the divine judgment through some oracle of revelation. Therefore, in ancient times the necessity of intention was not expressed. 2. The words of St. Augustine, *Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*,²⁰ showed that no intention was necessary.

¹⁷ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 3, *op. cit.*, Tom. III, p. 381: Cum ergo principalis quaestio oriatur ex defectu credulitatis, de hoc eodem defectu, et non de defectu intentionis accipiendus Augustinus in reliquo capituli contextu . . .

¹⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Q. 7, Art. 1, *Praelectiones Theologicae*, Tom. I, pp. 116-117.

¹⁹ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Diss. 5, Art. 7, *Summa Sancti Thomae*, Tom. VIII, p. 304.

²⁰ *In Joannis Evangelium*, 80, 3 (PL 35, 1840).

To the first objection Billuart replied that in early times there was no express doctrine of intention, but that the oracle of revelation came with the Councils of Florence and Trent. Had St. Augustine lived at the time of these Councils he would not have hesitated for a moment, such was his respect for the authority of the Church.

Billuart answered the second objection by pointing out that St. Augustine wished to show that water alone without the words would not be a sacrament. However, St. Augustine did not say that these words should not be united to the water through a human act performed with deliberation and intention.²¹

Hiquaeus explained this particular passage to the effect that St. Augustine simply suspended his judgment until something would be decided by the Church, and that this happened in the General Councils.²²

The general interpretation of this passage in the works of St. Augustine is that which has been presented above. The interpretation of Franzelin, De Lugo, Billuart and Tournely is the common interpretation of the school of internal intention, namely, that St. Augustine was speaking of faith rather than intention. That the passage is obscure is admitted, but in the words of Doronzo, this interpretation is the more common and more probable since it is more in agreement with the whole context of this work of St. Augustine.²³

On the other hand, the school of external intention is well represented by the opinion of Drouin who contended that when St. Augustine used the term "fallacious" administration, he referred to the minister who had the intention to simulate, i.e., one who conferred the sacrament in an apparently serious manner, but inwardly withheld his intention and in reality ridiculed what he did out-

²¹ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Diss. 5, Art. 7, *Summa Sancti Thomae*, Tom. VIII, p. 305. Cf. St. Bonaventure, *In IV*, Dist. 6, Art. 2, Q. 1 (*Opera Omnia* 4, 153) Ad illud ergo quod obiicitur primo: accedit verbum ad elementum etc.; dicendum quod non accedit unum ad alterum, nisi adsit intentio iungens.

²² Cf. Scotus, J., *Lib. IV Sententiarum*, Dist. 6, Q. 5 (*Opera Omnia* 16, 575).

²³ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 7, Art. 36, pp. 447-448.

wardly. He pronounces such a performance as a valid sacrament.⁸⁴ This was the pattern of interpretation of almost every member of the school of Catharinus.

It must be frankly admitted that the interpretations of the words of St. Augustine given by Franzelin and De Lugo give rise to several difficulties. It is particularly difficult to understand why the Bishop of Hippo, after having proved at great length without the slightest hesitation that the validity of Baptism does not depend on the faith of the minister or the subject, should have any doubt on this same point at the end of his treatise on Baptism against the Donatists.

Still more difficult to understand is the connection set up between the "fallacious" administration of Baptism which takes place in the Church and that which is mimicked on the stage. In St. Augustine's mind these two administrations constituted two cases of simulation of baptism.

As a result of this other authors, and especially theologians who adopted the doctrine of Catharinus, thought that this "fallacious" administration of Baptism was that which took place when the minister performed seriously all the sacred rites, and the subject received them in the same manner, while inwardly their intention was only to simulate.

It seems that this interpretation of Augustine is justified by the fact that Baptism "fallaciously" given or received was declared valid, while no solution was offered for that represented on the stage. The difference between the two was that in the first the ceremonies were performed normally in a religious assembly, and in the second the ceremonies were performed for the sole purpose of amusement. But in both cases the intention of really conferring or receiving a sacrament was lacking. Pourrat's conclusion was that for St. Augustine the internal intention of deceiving or pre-

⁸⁴ Drouin, R., *De Re Sacramentaria*, Q. 7, Cap. 3, Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus* 20, 1495: Minister fallacis nomine eum intelligit S. Augustinus qui habet animum simulatum, qui nimirum licet Sacramentum serio exterius conferat, suam tamen intus cohibet intentionem, et hac ipsum ridet quod facit; atqui Sacramentum, sic consecratum, integrum validumque pronuntiat.

tending would not apparently constitute an obstacle to the validity of the sacrament.²⁵

However, in trying to understand St. Augustine one must recognize the fact that he did not foresee the modern distinction between external and internal intention. He looked at the "fallacious" administration of Baptism in an altogether different light from that of Catharinus. If St. Augustine declared the baptism thus conferred valid, it was because it took place entirely within the Church, or in a Christian sect supposedly the true Church. Therefore, the conferring of Baptism was an act of the Church, although the minister or the recipient had in his heart the intention to deceive. If the fallacious Baptism was an act of the Church, it would be a valid sacrament according to the Augustinian principles on the sacraments. The Baptism initiated on the stage was of doubtful validity because it was conferred outside a religious assembly. This latter fact in itself would not nullify the sacrament, but it was the opinion of St. Augustine that outside a religious framework no one, not even the person baptized, would take the matter seriously. It was for this reason that he said that he would seek the divine judgment to help in the decision of such a case.²⁶

That the words of Augustine on the subject are not very clear is evident to all; perhaps the sober observation of Christian Pesch is the solution to the problem:

Nothing can be learned from those words (of St. Augustine) except that doctrine which the Church later solemnly defined; at that time it was not as yet in the universal and explicit profession of faith.²⁷

D. INTENTION IN THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

The great development of sacramental theology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was naturally to lead writers to treat of

²⁵ *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 366; cf. Tixeront, J., *History of Dogmas*, Vol. II, pp. 403-404.

²⁶ Pourrat, P., *op. cit.*, p. 360.

²⁷ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 5, Art. 3, Prop. 24, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Vol. VI, n. 284, p. 114: Nihil igitur ex his disci potest nisi aliquam doctrinam, quam Ecclesia postea solemniter definivit; tunc nondum fuisse in universali et explicita fidei professione.

the intention required in the minister. In the period between St. Augustine and the twelfth century there was great development in some phases of sacramental theology, but there was no reported progress in the particular question of intention. It had remained practically in the same state in which St. Augustine had left it, and this was a rather obscure state. During these centuries there were many problems facing the Church which demanded immediate attention, especially the matter of discipline, since incontinency and simony were widespread. Thus theological speculation was in the background.

But in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the advent of scholasticism, theologians took up again the problem which St. Augustine had been unable to solve: Is baptism valid, if administered for the sake of amusement and out of mockery?

There were two solutions to the problem and each had its defenders. According to the first opinion which was held by Roland (12th cent.) no intention whatsoever was needed in the minister. The only requirement was that the baptismal rite be accomplished according to the ritual prescriptions of the Church, that is, that the matter and the form be posited. A strange part of this theory was that Roland demanded that the recipient, if an adult, have the intention of receiving the sacrament.²⁰ Usually more is demanded in the minister than in the recipient.

Robert Pulleyn (†1147) was almost of the same frame of mind, as is clear from his writings on Baptism. He claimed that Baptism was valid regardless of the intention of the minister or of the recipient, even if they administered or received it in mockery,^{20a} thus going a step further than Roland who demanded that at least

²⁰ Roland, *Sententiae*, Gietl, p. 206 (cf. Pourrat, *op. cit.*, p. 372): Si quis baptizaretur adultus atque discretus, necessarium esset ut baptizandi habeat intentionem, et erit verum Baptisma et ratum, sive intentionem habeat qui baptizat, sive non, dummodo illud in forma Ecclesiae tradatur. Si vero puer est qui baptizatur, ejus intentio non exigitur, nec refert, utrum qui baptizat habeat intentionem dandi vel non, dummodo id fiat in forma Ecclesiae.

^{20a} *Sententiarum Libri Octo*, Lib. V, Cap. 16 (PL 186, 842) Sacramentum ergo baptismi, quod totum extrinsecus agitur, integram sui obtinens naturam, nullum omnino videtur suscipere detrimentum, quidquid irrisionis cuiuslibet erroris in mente versetur, aut baptizantis aut baptismi suscipientis. . . .

the adult recipient of the sacrament have the intention of receiving it.

Peter Lombard (+1160) spoke of the necessity of intention in the Fourth Book of *Sentences*. The question was raised about the value of a baptism that was performed in play in which the correct outward performance was present. He answered that in the opinion of the wise, such a performance was not a true baptism since the action was done without the intention. His principle is that in Baptism as well as in the other sacraments not only the form must be observed, but there must also be the intention of celebrating and confecting a sacrament.²⁹

It is difficult to judge whether this was the true mind of Peter Lombard, since he speaks of matrimony in such a manner that he can be understood as not demanding intention, at least an internal intention.

In Distinction XXVII of the Fourth Book of *Sentences* he said that the efficient cause of the sacrament of Matrimony is consent, not of any kind, but that which is expressed by the words. To demonstrate his teaching he gave two examples: If the parties consent mentally and do not express their consent in words or other signs, the sacrament is not effected. On the other hand, if they express with words what they do not will in their hearts, it is a true marriage, unless there is coercion or fraud.³⁰

Thus it seems that Peter Lombard contradicts himself. In the latter passage he seems to favor the theory of external intention, which consists in the positing of the matter and the form without the inner intention.

However, St. Thomas, in his commentary on this particular passage, makes specific mention that the internal consent is needed. The mere positing of the words of consent without the inner consent would render the sacrament worthless. According to his

²⁹ *Sententiae*, Lib. IV, Dist. 6 (PL 192, 854) Videtur tamen sapientibus non fuisse baptisma, ut cum aliqui in balneum vel in flumen merguntur in nomine Trinitatis, non est tamen baptismus, quia non intentione baptizandi illud geritur. Nam in hoc et in aliis sacramentis sicut forma est servanda, ita et intentio illud celebrandi est habenda.

³⁰ *Sententiae*, Lib. IV, Dist. 27 (PL 192, 910-911) Si autem verbis explicant quod tamen non volunt, si non sit coactio ibi vel dolus, obligatio illa verborum quibus consentiunt . . . Matrimonium facit.

commentary the mind of Peter Lombard was that if the internal consent was lacking and there were no indication of this, the marriage would be considered valid. When the words are uttered, it is presumed that the inner consent is present.⁸¹

To Hugh of St. Victor must be given the credit of being the first theologian of this period to give a clear-cut distinction for the need of intention. He related that someone had asked whether or not those who had been baptized in mimicry or jokingly received a true sacrament. His answer was that even if the baptismal rite were performed in circumstances that seemed to be playful, there was a real sacrament if such was the intention of the minister. He admitted that due reverence for a sacrament was lacking in a case of this kind and that the minister was sinning, but in spite of this a true sacrament was conferred, as that was the intention of the minister. However, when it was clear that there was no intention of baptizing, Hugh called it wholly ridiculous that the result would be a sacrament.⁸² In short, he taught that regardless of external appearances, if the minister had the intention to do what the Church does, the sacrament was conferred. If, from all appearances, the sacrament seemed to be validly conferred, it would be nullified by the internal intention to the contrary. Although Hugh did not mention the *internal intention* by name, it is clear that the idea of internal intention was in his mind.

With regard to the Eucharist he was equally clear. Some men had thought that it sufficed for the minister to pronounce the sacramental words over the bread and wine with any intention whatsoever in order to effect the Eucharistic consecration, as though no intention and no will to perform them according to the intention of the Church was necessary.⁸³

These assertions were fiercely attacked by Hugh. Returning to the sacrament of Baptism to demonstrate his teaching, he asserted that it was not sufficient for a valid baptism merely to perform

⁸¹ *Commentarius in Sententias, In IV, Dist. 27, Art. 2 (Opera Omnia 30, 772)* . . . ita nec matrimonium contrahit qui verba profert, sed consensus interlorem non habet. . . .

⁸² *De Sacramentis, Lib. II, Pars 6, Cap. 13 (PL 176, 459)* Ridiculum autem omnino est ut, ubi intentio agendi nulla constat, opus esse dicatur, propter speciem quamdam assimilatum operi. . . .

⁸³ *Ibid.*

the baptismal ceremony, but that there must also be the intention of really baptizing. Otherwise the administration of the sacrament would not be a rational act, for one cannot truly be said to do a thing, when he does not have the intention of doing it, even though he would imitate it externally. He asks: who would accuse a man of murder if he accidentally shot another? He summed up his teaching on the intention necessary for baptism with this principle: "Ubi ergo intentio baptizandi est . . . sacramentum est."⁸⁴

The author of the *Summa Sententiarum* proclaimed a doctrine that is closely related to that of Hugh of St. Victor, since he mentioned that two things were necessary for every sacrament: the performance of the sacramental rite, and the intention of administering the sacrament.⁸⁵ Thus, in his opinion they showed the greatest ignorance who believed that the Eucharistic words, pronounced without intention, effect a consecration. The sacrament of the Eucharist is validly celebrated only when the minister is a priest, pronounces the words of institution, and has the intention of consecrating while pronouncing them.⁸⁶ It will be shown later that this intention need not be actual, but that the virtual intention suffices.

He demonstrated by an example what has been said in the preceding paragraph, namely, that sometimes a priest pronounces the words of consecration over the Eucharistic elements in order to teach someone else how it is done. Under these circumstances such an act does not effect consecration and has no efficacy since it is not done for this purpose.⁸⁷

Many theologians, writing on intention, mention another absurdity which would result if the internal intention were not necessary. In communities where table reading is done by priests during the meals there would be a true consecration of the Eucharist if the reader were to read the account of the institution

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Summa Sententiarum*, Tract. 5, Cap. 9 (PL 176, 136): In omni enim sacramento ista duo necessaria sunt, ut forma sacramenti servetur et intentio illud celebrandi habeatur.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Tract. 6, Cap. 4 (PL 176, 141) Haec autem tria ad istud sacramentum (Eucharistiam) necessaria sunt. Ordo, actio, intentio. Ordo, ut sit sacerdos; actio, ut verba illa proferat; intentio, ut proferat ad istud.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

of this sacrament as related in the Gospels and in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. It is apparent that this is absurd, for in reading these accounts the reader does not intend to confect a sacrament, even though he pronounce the words correctly. This opinion is the opposite of that held by the followers of Catharinus. In theory at least according to their principles they called the serious performance of such an act a valid consecration.

Although Hugh of St. Victor and his school vigorously defended the views demanding internal intention in addition to the placing of the matter and the form, he did not succeed in eliminating that of Roland. There was this grave objection against it: if it is not sufficient for the minister to perform the external rite in keeping with the prescriptions of the Church, but if he must also have the mental intention of conferring the sacrament or at least of doing what the Church does, how can one be assured that the interior intention is in existence, and consequently that the sacraments are really confected? The difficulty was a real one.

It was particularly this objection which at the beginning of the thirteenth century led to a reaction against the school of St. Victor. It was echoed in the fifth book of *Sentences* of Peter Pulleyn who refuted the arguments proposed by Hugh, particularly that drawn from the example of the child's bath, which is accidentally accompanied by the baptismal formula. Pulleyn makes his opinion about intention very clear. He ends his dissertation with this principle worthy of Catharinus himself: Baptism is valid, when the rite is outwardly accomplished in its entirety, whatever be the intention of him who baptizes or of him who is baptized.⁸⁸

In regard to the intention of the minister, then, it is clear that there are two schools of thought, one demanding that the minister intend to confect a sacrament as he performs the sacramental actions, the other that the sacrament is confected by the very fact that the matter and the form are placed seriously, without regard for the minister's interior intention.

It was the argumentation and the solution of the school of St. Victor which appealed to the famous Scholastics of the thirteenth century. They held that if the minister wanted to confer the sacrament, he must really have the intention of conferring the

⁸⁸ Cf. footnote n. 28a.

sacrament; otherwise there would be an effect which was not intended, and thus the act would not be rational. The Scholastics brought out the point that the sacramental action can be employed for different purposes. The pouring of the water and the saying of the words may be used exclusively for washing or refreshing the subject. The intention of the minister will determine the purpose for which it is done. Thus, it will be shown that the intention is necessary for the sacramental purpose.⁴³

To these reasons is added another which defines still more precisely the object of the intention and which completes the development of the doctrine. The teaching of tradition that the minister is the rational representative of Christ and the Church will be emphasized again. According to this teaching the minister must intend to do what the Church does. William of Auxerre is reputed to have been the first to employ the phrase "*intentio faciendi quod facit Ecclesia*,"⁴⁴ and most later theologians adopted the same formula when speaking of the requisite intention for the valid confectio of the sacraments.

E. THE GREAT SCHOLASTICS

During the thirteenth century, one of the greatest in theological growth, the dogma of intention reached a more complete development in the writings of the great scholastics, St. Albert the Great (+1280), St. Bonaventure (+1274), St. Thomas (+1274).

St. Albert the Great was of the opinion that intention was a necessity in the minister of baptism, not however an explicit intention of consecrating anything, but only of doing what the Church does. He said that this intention is expressed through the words of the form of baptism, but there is no indication that he refers to an intention of performing merely the external actions. Rather the context seems to indicate that the inner

⁴³ St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 64, art. 8; St. Bonaventure, *Sententiarum Libri IV*, Dist. 6, Pars II, Art. 2, Q. 1, Conc. 4 (*Opera Omnia* 4, 153).

⁴⁴ *In IV Sent.*, De Baptismo (Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 376): Si aliquis uteretur forma debita verborum et haberet intentionem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, ut sumatur verbum confuse; i.e., intendit facere quod consuevit Ecclesia, baptismus esset.

intention is expressed by the words of the form. St. Albert made a keen distinction when he pointed out that even in play a baptism would be valid if the minister had the intention of doing what the Church does. In this case the whole action is not jocose, but a part of it is serious. If the whole action is jocose no sacrament is confectioned.⁴¹

St. Bonaventure taught the same doctrine about the recipient as St. Albert had taught about the minister. Regardless of the jocose appearance of the reception, the sacrament is truly received provided that the intention of doing what the Church does is present; but if the recipient intends only to play and to fool others, the sacrament is not received.⁴²

The necessity of intention in the minister is expressly taught by St. Bonaventure. He points out that a sacrament is not a sacrament by nature but by institution, but even though this is the case, the rite is not yet sufficiently limited to produce the sacramental effects, unless the minister has an intention suitable for these effects. For the confection of a sacrament the intention by which he intends by the sacramental act and words to give the sacramental effect or at least to do what the Church does is necessary. The matter and the form united for any other purpose would not result in a sacrament.⁴³

⁴¹ *In IV Sent.*, Dist. 6, Art. 11 (*Opera Omnia* 29, 140-141) Dicendum quod intentio ex parte dantis exigitur ad baptismum: sed non intentio consecrandi aliquid, sed tantum faciendi quod facit Ecclesia, et hoc exprimitur per verbum baptizandi cum dicitur: Ego te baptizo, etc. . . . unde si joculariter cum intentione faciendi quod facit Ecclesia super non baptizatum non reclamantem ante, vel tunc, proferatur, baptizatum est: et tunc non totum est mimicum: quia intentio in verbo primae personae expressa, mimica non fuit. Si autem mimicum est, et illae reclamat, tum nihil ille consequitur.

⁴² *In IV Sententiarum*, Dist. 6, Pars II, Art. 2, Q. 1 (*Opera Omnia* 4, 153) Si enim fictio illa non removeat intentionem hanc, videlicet, suscipiendi quod Ecclesia dat vel intendit dare, quantacumque sit fictio, non impedit susceptionem sacramenti. Si vero ita sit fictio quod non habeat intentionem recipiendi vel faciendi circa se quod Ecclesia facit vel intendit facere, sed solam intendit ludere vel alios illudere; non video quomodo iste suscipiat Sacramentum vel rem.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 153: Sed tamen institutio, etsi verba ordinavit ad unum, non tamen arctavit, quia ad alios usus possunt sumi et sumuntur; et ideo ad hoc, quod ordinentur, necessarium est, intervenire intentionem ministri, qua

In the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas devotes a special article to the necessity of intention. He definitely teaches that an intention is necessary, and in several passages in other places he gives indications that the intention must be internal and not merely external. The first indication is in the body of the eighth article of the sixty-fourth question of the third part of the *Summa*, where he points out that if a thing can be done for many purposes, it must be limited in order to have a definite signification at a given time. Those things which are done in Baptism can be done for purposes other than Baptism. In order that they may have this effect, they must be limited to it by the minister's intention. The minister must intend to baptize, which is an indication of the internal intention.

The same conclusion follows from the fact that man is an animate instrument, one which is not only moved but also moves itself. Thus, he must consent to be an instrumental cause of a sacrament. This consent takes the form of an internal subjection to the will of Christ.

In two passages⁴⁴ the Angelic Doctor definitely states that the mental intention is not necessary. There are various interpretations of these passages; but the majority of theologians concluded that when St. Thomas said that the mental intention was not necessary for validity, he was not speaking of absolute validity, but only of the moral certitude that when the external actions of the sacraments are posited the sacrament is valid. It is presumed that the external actions of the minister are a true indication of his internal intention. A detailed discussion of these points will be given in Chapters III and IV.

One of the most explicit indications of the need of internal intention found in the writings of the Angelic Doctor is his commentary on the twenty-seventh distinction of the Fourth Book of *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. In this passage Peter Lombard said

intendit illo actu et verbo talem effectum dare, vel saltem quod facit Ecclesia facere, vel saltem quod Christus instituit dispensare: alioquin verbum et elementum ut distincta, vel ad aliud juncta, non faciunt Sacramentum.

⁴⁴ In IV, Dist. 6, Q. 1. Art. 3, q. 3, sol. 1 ad 2; *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 64, art. 8, ad 2.

that marriage was valid if the parties pronounced the words of consent and did not will it in their hearts to give consent.⁴⁸

Commenting on this passage, St. Thomas concludes that intention is equally necessary for this sacrament as it is for any other. If anyone externally receives baptism without the intention, the sacrament is not valid. He points out that in the same way they do not contract matrimony who pronounce the words, but do not have the interior consent. However, since the internal intention is not apparent, such a marriage will be considered valid.⁴⁹ This seems to justify the interpretation that in other passages where he says that the internal intention is not necessary, he is referring to moral certitude.

Thus, the necessity of intention is firmly established by the majority of theologians in the middle ages. The next two chapters will be concerned with the interpretations of the words of the Council of Trent, and those of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. The medieval theologians had set the stage; the modern theologians would fight the battle.

⁴⁸ Cf. footnote n. 30.

⁴⁹ *In IV*, Dist. 27, Art. 2 (*Opera Omnia* 30, 722): Sicut in aliis sacramentis requiritur intentio, ita et in isto. Unde sicut aliquis exterius baptizatus non reciperet baptismi sacramentum si intentio deesset; ita nec matrimonium contrahit qui verba profert, sed consensum *interiorem* non habet: sed praesumendum et iudicandum est de his quae exterius apparent, cum de interiori non constat. . . .

CHAPTER III

MODERN THEOLOGIANS—EXTERNAL INTENTION

A. AMBROSIUS CATHARINUS

Although the doctrine of external intention had its beginning in the sacramental teaching of Roland¹ and Pulleyn² in the twelfth century, it reached its full development during the Council of Trent in the writings of Ambrosius Catharinus (+1552). He was the first to give a systematic exposition of the doctrine, and for this reason he is known as the father of the school of external intention or the school of Catharinus, although later authors wrote more complete and more detailed expositions of the doctrine.

The Council of Trent had defined that the minister of the sacraments must have the intention of doing what the Church does. Since this was a matter of faith, there is no question about the need for intention, but the new doctrine of Catharinus concerned itself with the object of the minister's intention. The common opinion was that the minister must include in his intention to do what the Church does a true intention of really confecting a sacrament, at least implicitly. The doctrine of external intention taught that the object of the intention extended only to the serious positing of the external rites of the sacraments. If this were accomplished by the minister, the sacrament would be truly valid even if the minister positively intended not to confect a sacrament by his external actions. It was an attempt to insure absolute validity in the confecting of the sacraments.

Known as Lancelot Politi, Catharinus was born in Sienna, Italy, in 1487. Upon becoming a member of the Order of Preachers he took the name Ambrosius Catharinus out of love and esteem for the two great saints who had borne those names. He was a man of great learning and was sent as a theologian to the Council of Trent in 1545. On being appointed Bishop of

¹ *Sententiae*, Giell, p. 206; cf. Pourrat, P., *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 372.

² *Sententiarum Libri Octo*, Lib. V, Cap. 16 (PL 186, 842).

Minori in 1547, he took his place among the Fathers of the Council in the seventh session in which the dogmas concerning the sacraments were defined. There is no reason to suppose that he did not take a personal and prominent part in the discussions preliminary to the definition of the dogma of the necessity of intention in the minister. This can be supposed since he was convinced that the interior intention of the minister of doing what the Church does is not necessary for the validity of the sacraments, but that it is sufficient to perform the merely external rites as long as they are done in a manner which appears to be serious. It must have been a very interesting discussion for him, for while still at the Council he wrote in 1547 a treatise entitled *De Necessaria Intentione in Perficiendis Sacramentis*, known also as *De Intentione Ministri*, in which he defended his views.^{2a} This work was published in Rome in 1552, and according to Pallavicini, the historian of the Council of Trent, the doctrine contained in the book is not contrary to the doctrine of intention as defined by the Council.³

Thus it happened that Catharinus proposed a theory which could be traced back several centuries. The problem had come to the minds of many theologians, and they had mentioned it in passing, but Catharinus set forth the doctrine in a manner so remarkably precise and in circumstances so solemn (in a General Council) that the result was a heated controversy.

It would be incorrect to say that the doctrine of Catharinus enjoyed a great popularity, although a number of prominent theologians in France and Italy, and a few in Belgium and Spain, made the doctrine their own, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among those who treated the subject at great length were Alphonsus Salmeron (+1585), a Spanish Jesuit; Francis Farvacques (+1680), a Belgian Augustinian; the French theologians, Vincent Contenson (+1674), Gaspere Juenin (+1696), James Serry (+1727) and Renatus Drouin (+1742).⁴

^{2a} Cf. "Politi," DThC 12, 2432-2433; Hurter, H., *Nomenclator Literarius*, Vol. IV, Col. 1172.

³ Pallavicini, S., *Historia Concilii Tridentini*, Lib. IX, Cap. 6, Tom. II, p. 28.

⁴ Other theologians who followed Catharinus were the following: French:

In the nineteenth century this new doctrine was on a constant decline and in the present century it has been almost completely discarded.

B. THE DOCTRINE OF EXTERNAL INTENTION

Catharinus was convinced that the intention of doing what the Church does is merely the serious external positing of the matter and the form of the sacrament.

. . . Non enim alia intentio ministri requiritur, nisi ut intendat exterius facere quod facit Ecclesia, quamvis ipse neque credat esse Ecclesiam, neque ullum baptismi spirituales effectum, sed satis est ut intendat facere quod Ecclesia jubet per ministros fieri. Namque quod illa per ministros facit, ipsa facere intelligitur. Quid ergo facit Ecclesia per ministros baptizando nisi quod legitima utitur materia, adhibens suam verborum formam? hoc igitur si facit minister profecto illud facere intendit, si sit mente sanus.⁸

It is the common teaching that the validity of the sacraments does not depend upon the faith of the minister and that it is not necessary that the minister will the effects of the sacraments. This is taken into consideration in the statement of Catharinus. But he makes it clear that the only rôle of the minister is to unite the matter and the form, and by this alone he necessarily has the intention of doing what the Church does. His opinion is brought out even more clearly in another passage from his *De Intentione Ministri*, where, according to Billuart,⁹ Catharinus proposes the question: If the minister performs externally everything that the Church demands, but inwardly intends to baptize mockingly, will

Arnaldus (+1694); Nat. Alexander (+1724); Scribonius (+1713); L. Hermenier (+1735). Italian: Parqualigo (+1664); Milante (+1749); Ansaldo (+1779). German: Stattler (+1797); Dobmayer (+1805); Waibel (+1852); and more recently Oswald, Haas, Glossner. (Cf. Pourrat, P., *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 387.)

⁸ Catharinus, A., *De Intentione Ministri*, col. 207; cf. Pourrat, P., *Theology of the Sacraments*, pp. 387-388; Rambaldi, G., *L'oggetto dell'intensione sacramentale*, p. 79, footnote n. 53.

⁹ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Diss. 5, Art. 7, Sect. 2, *Summa Sancti Thomae*, Tom. VIII, p. 306.

this be sufficient for a valid baptism? The answer is in the affirmative.

Catharinus throws more light on his teaching when he uses the example of a washing as an illustration of the doctrine of external intention. He said in effect that if someone really washes a child, it is impossible not to have the intention of really doing just that. In a similar manner if the minister of Baptism observes all those things which are prescribed by the Church for the conferring of Baptism, he cannot be doubtful about his intention and about the actual conferring of the sacrament.⁷ With Catharinus, then, intention and the positing of the matter and the form are inseparably united.

Alphonsus Salmeron in his first book of *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* distinguishes a twofold intention of the minister: the first is public and belongs to the Church itself by whose authority it is performed. This intention is sufficiently expressed in the forms of the sacraments themselves, e.g., *Ego te baptizo*, *Ego te absolvo*, etc., since Christ and the Church intend to baptize, absolve, etc., through these words. When they are uttered integrally, the intention is inseparable from them. Therefore, the great concern of the minister should be the exact rendering of the form.⁸

The second intention is private and peculiar to the minister himself by which he may believe nothing of those things which he does or do them with a secret scorn or with the *contrary intention of not conferring the sacrament*, even though he would administer the sacrament in the accustomed manner. It was Salmeron's conviction that since this intention is private it cannot invalidate the sacrament, although it would be illicit to use it.⁹

⁷ Catharinus, A., *De Intentione Ministri*, col. 208; Rambaldi, G., *op. cit.*, p. 80, footnote: . . . qui ergo ex industria lavat puerum profecto lavare intendit et impossibile est eum non habere illam intentionem lavandi si lavat. Sic in proposito: si baptismi minister ea in baptizando observat, quae observari praeceptum Ecclesia (hoc enim patere potest ad oculos) non potest ex parte ipsius baptizantis dubitari de intentione et consequenter de collatione sacramenti.

⁸ Salmeron, A., *Commentarius in Epistolas S. Pauli*, Lib. I, Pars III, Disp. 2, *Alfonsi Salmeronis Opera* Tom. XIII, p. 186.

⁹ *Loc. cit.*: Altera vero intentio privata est, et particularis ipsi ministro,

Most of the members of the school of Catharinus did not make such an explicit distinction of a twofold intention in the confection of the sacraments, but rested content to assert that as long as the matter and the form of the sacrament were posited in a manner which had the appearance of sincerity, the sacrament would be valid. Farvacques summed up this teaching with the statement that the intention of the Church which is expressed by the words of the form was the only thing required in the minister. The validity of the sacrament is never affected by the occult and unobservable intention or the sterile restriction of the mind: *I do not wish to do that which the Church does.*¹⁰ It was this conclusion which was later condemned by Alexander VIII.¹¹ Contenson asserted that the most learned theologians held that no occult withholding of intention on the part of the minister could invalidate the sacrament provided the minister acted in a serious manner.¹² In reply to the question as to what the Church does when she confects the sacraments, Juenin made reply that she does nothing more than the external ceremony prescribed by Christ, the Institutor of the sacraments, and that this is done by the correct application of the form to the matter.¹³ Commenting on the writings of Catharinus, Serry taught that a sacrament was valid if the minister intended to celebrate that external rite which

qui aut nihil credit eorum quae facit, aut derisorie facit, aut contrariam habet intentionem non conferendi sacramenta, aut eius effectus, etiamsi Sacramentum in forma Ecclesiae consueta administret. Haec intentio priuata etsi necessaria sit, ne minister peccet, ut conformetur intentioni Ecclesiae: tamen tam fortis, aut efficax non est; ut vitare Sacramentum possit. . . .

¹⁰ Farvacques, F., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Cap. 4, Q. 3, Sect. 8, Casus 3, Corollarium, *Opuscula Theologica*, Tom. I, p. 175: Ex praecedentium Casuum decisionibus collige in ministro Sacramenti desiderari intentionem Ecclesiae, quae exprimitur per verba formae, nequaquam tamen obesse Sacramenti valori occultam illam et inobservabilem intentionem, seu sterilem mentis restrictionem: *nolo facere quod facit Ecclesia.*

¹¹ DBU 131B.

¹² *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. XI, Pars I, Diss. 2, Appendix, Tom. II, p. 36.

¹³ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Cap. 2, Art. 2, *Commentarius Historicus et Dogmaticus de Sacramentis*, Pars I, p. 21: . . . Ecclesiam nihil operari quam externam ceremoniam a Christo Sacramentorum institutore praescriptam: ea autem ceremonia in debita formae supra materiam applicatione posita est.

the Church celebrates, and that the validity was not affected even if the minister had a contrary intention and secretly did not wish the action to be sacramental, as long as he performed the rites freely, seriously, and with no *external appearance of joking*.¹⁴ Drouin was of the same opinion, and he based his teaching on a quotation from St. Paul: *I have planted, Apollo watered: but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God hath given the increase.*¹⁵ His conclusion was that the ministers have no rôle in the confectio of the sacraments except for the serious external execution of what God has commanded, namely, the serious application of the form to the matter. It makes little difference if the minister has a contrary will, so long as he externally fulfills what has been commanded.¹⁶

C. EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A rather strange theory in the school of Catharinus was the importance attached to the element of external circumstances, such as a sacred place, fitting time, sacred vestments, administration of the rite "ex officio," from which it is apparent that the minister is acting as a public person.

One of the most explicit statements of the value of external circumstances was made in reply to the accusation that the doctrine of external intention was the same as that of the heretics. The reply was that the heretics openly showed that they were acting in a joking manner, but that those who profess the sufficiency of the external intention at least conduct themselves as ministers of the Church:

... The minister of the sacraments conducts himself as a minister of the Church and acts in her name and by

¹⁴ *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciæ*, p. 27: ... valere sacramentum, si minister dumtaxat intendat celebrare ritum illum externum, quem Ecclesia celebrat; illumque reipsa libere, serio omnique semoto joco exterius administret. . . .

¹⁵ I Cor. 3:6-7.

¹⁶ Drouin, R., *De Re Sacramentaria*, Q. 7, Cap. 3, Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, Vol. XX, col. 1485: . . . Ergo quantumvis secum ipso pugnans minister contrariam intus gerat voluntatem, dummodo exterius id quod est imperatum adimpleat. . . .

her authority when he seriously performs the external rite of which the sacrament consists, or when in a public gathering, or when requested even privately, he unites the matter and the form.^{16a}

Juenin maintained that the external rites which of themselves are indifferent to something sacred or profane receive their sacramental determination by the circumstances of place in which they are celebrated, by the petition of those for whom they are applied, and from other extrinsic circumstances.¹⁷

It must be noted that those who taught the theory of external intention recognized the fact that the internal intention alone was sufficient for validity. It was only when this internal intention was lacking or when a contrary intention existed in the mind of the minister that the external circumstances were necessary to change an indifferent act into something sacramental.

Juenin demonstrated the value of external circumstances by an example: If the minister who did not intend to do what the Church does would perform the ceremonies of Baptism *at home* and without a request from someone, the baptism would not be valid.¹⁸ According to his teaching the baptism would have been valid if performed in a public gathering, or if someone had requested it, even though the true intention to baptize would have been lacking. Serry and Drouin made references to external circumstances¹⁹ but with less emphasis on their importance.

D. INTERPRETATION OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The school of Catharinus made use of the decrees of the Council of Trent for one of its principal arguments for the

^{16a} Juenin, G., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Cap. 2, Art. 2, *Commentarius Historicus et Dogmaticus de Sacramentis*, Pars I, p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23: . . . Ritus extrinsecus ex se ipso ad rem sacram vel prophanam indifferentem determinatur ad esse sacramentale ex loco in quo celebratur, ex eorum petitione quibus applicatur, aut ex aliis circumstantiis extrinsecis.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁹ Serry, J., *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciae*, Cap. 5, p. 27; Drouin, R., *De Re Sacramentaria*, Q. 7, Cap. 3, Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, Vol. XX, col. 1504.

sufficiency of external intention. The Council had made the following decrees:

If anyone says that in the ministers, when they effect and confer the sacraments, there is not required at least the intention of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema.²⁰

The penitent, therefore, ought not so to flatter himself on his own faith as to think that even though he have no contrition and there be wanting on the part of the priest the intention to act earnestly and absolve effectively, he is nevertheless really and in the sight of God absolved by reason of faith alone. For faith without penance effects no remission of sins, and he would be most negligent of his salvation who, knowing that a priest absolved him jokingly, would not diligently seek another who would act earnestly.²¹

If anyone says that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act but a mere service of pronouncing and declaring to him who confesses that the sins are forgiven, provided only he believes himself to be absolved, even though the priest absolves not in earnest but only in jest . . . let him be anathema.²²

These decrees of the Council were interpreted as meaning that the intention of doing what the Church does is the intention of acting seriously, and that this is lacking only when the priest is known to be acting in a jocose manner. In the opinion of the members of the school of external intention the Council taught that the only requirement in the minister was that he appear to be acting in a serious manner. The intention of acting in a jocose manner affects the validity of the sacrament only when this is apparent to the recipients:

Therefore, through the intention of doing what the Church does the Holy Synod understands the mind of acting seriously, which is lacking when the priest is known to be acting in a joking manner. Thus for a valid sacrament the Holy Synod taught that it was sufficient if the minister outwardly appeared to be acting seriously;

²⁰ Session VII, can. 11 (Mansi 33, 53; DBU 854).

²¹ Session XIV, can. 6 (Mansi 33, 95; DBU 902).

²² Session XIV, can. 9 (Mansi 33, 101; DBU 919).

and that the intention of acting jocosely affects the validity of the sacrament only when the joking and playful manner of the action of the minister is apparent to the recipients.²³

In regard to the jocosely absolution given by the priest, they maintained that these words of the Council can be understood only in reference to lack of serious intent which was externally manifested. Otherwise the penitent could never be aware of the jocosely performance.²⁴ It did not occur to them that the sacrament might also be rendered invalid if the jocosely intention of the priest would not be noticed, since it might easily happen that a pious penitent would not take note of such behavior on the part of the priest.

From the statements of various members of the school of Catharinus it can be gathered that the Council teaches that a contrary internal intention does not harm the validity of the sacraments in the least.²⁵ According to them the Council was concerned only with the Protestants who had declared that the penitent was truly absolved even if the priest absolved jokingly.

The doctrine of external intention is demonstrated by several examples: the judge who would pass a sentence while joking and drinking would not be taken seriously, since he shows by his actions that he is not acting in a serious manner. But if he would observe all the procedures of law and seriously and freely pass a sentence with a grave voice and countenance, the judgment would be valid, even if the judge mentally did not intend to absolve the guilty party or impose a fine.²⁶ Thus, in the same way the sacraments which are apparently conferred in a serious manner are really valid.

²³ Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. XI, Pars 1, Diss. 2, Appendix, Tom. II, p. 42: Ergo per intentionem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia intelligit S. Synodus animum serio agendi, qui deest cum sacerdos joco absolvens cognoscitur. Ergo ad validi sacramenti integritatem satis esse S. Synodus arbitrata est, si ministrum serio operari extrinsecus appareat; tuncque dumtaxat jocandi animum sacramenti integritati officere, cum jocularis et ludicrus ministri agentis modus est recipientibus conspicuus.

²⁴ Juenin, G., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Cap. 2, Art. 2, *Commentarius Historicus et Dogmaticus de Sacramentis*, Pars I, p. 24.

²⁵ *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciae*, p. 33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

It is true that the sentence of such a judge would be considered valid, since it is presumed that his judgment corresponded with his apparently serious actions. But *in se* the judgment is not valid in the internal forum. In the event that the true intention of the judge came to light, the state might declare that the judgment stands. The state has the power to do this for the common good.

But in the case of the sacraments we have no assurance from Christ that He will render those sacraments valid which appear to be such by the outward appearance of sincerity in the minister who lacks a true internal intention.

Another example common among the members of this school is that in which the minister is compared with a man who sets fire to cotton which will burn in spite of his intention to the contrary. Once the fire is applied, it does not depend upon the minister any longer. The same is true of the doctor who gives medicine to the patient with the hope and the intention that it will not cure him. His contrary intention does not keep the medicine from producing a salutary result. The conclusion is obvious: the power of the sacred medicines (the sacraments) is not suspended by the evil intention of the minister.⁸⁷

These two examples prove nothing for the case of external intention, since the ministers in both cases could have performed the actions with the same results, even though they might have been asleep or drunk. No intention at all is needed for such physical effects, but these same men who use these examples would not assert that no intention is required for the valid confection of the sacraments.

E. INTERPRETATION OF ST. AUGUSTINE

The position of St. Augustine on the doctrine of intention is gathered from several passages in his work against the Donatists. The school of Catharinus pointed particularly to two passages as proofs that the internal intention is not required:

Just as already, from the established decrees of our predecessors, I have no hesitation in saying that all those

⁸⁷ Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. XI, Pars 1, Diss. 2, Tom. II, p. 36.

have baptism, who, though they receive it deceitfully, yet receive it in the Church or where the Church is thought to be by those in whose society it is received, of whom it was said, *They went out from us.*²⁸

And yet, if the deceit be subsequently brought to light, no one seeks a repetition of the sacrament; but the fraud is either punished by excommunication or set aright by penitence.²⁹

This latter passage concerns the case in which both the minister and the recipient are acting in deceit. Although the word "deceit" (*simulatio*) is understood to refer to a simulation of faith and the correct dispositions of the minister or the recipient by the members of the school of internal intention, the school of Catharinus declares that this passage refers to a minister or a recipient who acted in a serious manner but internally withholds his intention of giving or receiving the sacrament, which is a good description of the external intention. They contend that the minister who seriously confers a sacrament and internally withholds his intention while he refuses to act in the name of the Church, acts deceitfully (*fallaciter*), since by his serious external action he leads the bystanders to think that he is internally conducting himself as a minister of the Church, thus deceiving them. Yet they say that the minister who acts thus effects a true sacrament.³⁰

This was the interpretation given to the words of Augustine by all the members of the school of Catharinus: ³¹ provided that the ministers appear to be acting seriously, nothing can affect the

²⁸ *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, Lib. VII, Cap. 53 (PL 43, 243) . . . Sicut iam praeteritis majorum statutis, non dubito illos habere Baptismum, qui quamvis fallaciter id accipient, in Ecclesia tamen accipiunt, vel ubi putatur esse Ecclesia ab eis quorum societate id accipitur, de quibus dictum est, "Ex nobis exierunt." . . .

²⁹ *Ibid.* (PL 43, 242) . . . Et tamen si postea prodatur, nemo repetit, sed aut excommunicando punitur illa simulatio, aut poenitendo sanatur.

³⁰ Serry, J., *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciae*, p. 25: . . . atqui ex Augustino minister qui fallaciter agit, verum ac ratum Sacramentum efficit.

³¹ Farvaques, F., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Cap. 6, Q. 2, Arg. 2, *Opuscula Theologica*, Tom. I, p. 132; Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. XI, Pars I, Diss. 2, Sect. 4, Tom. II, p. 39; Serry, J., *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciae*, p. 35.

validity of the sacrament, not even the internal intention of not confecting a sacrament.

It has already been pointed out in a previous chapter that these passages were interpreted by the school of internal intention as referring to deceit in regard to correct dispositions, and that St. Augustine was not thinking of intention at all as he wrote them.^{81a}

F. INTERPRETATION OF ST. THOMAS' TEACHING ON INTENTION

It is unfortunate that St. Thomas did not express himself more clearly on the subject of intention, for both the theologians who teach the necessity of internal intention and those of the opposite opinion use the same texts in attempting to prove their doctrine. The two principal texts of St. Thomas used by the school of Catharinus are the following:

. . . in baptism and the other sacraments which have in the form the exercised act, the mental intention is not required, but the expression of the intention through the words instituted by the Church is sufficient: and therefore, if the form is observed, and nothing is said externally which would express the contrary intention, he (the catechumen in question) is baptized. . . .^{81b}
 . . . Consequently, others with better reason hold that the minister of a sacrament acts in the person of the whole Church, whose minister he is; while in the words uttered by him, the intention of the Church is expressed; and that this suffices for the validity of the sacrament, except the contrary be expressed on the part either of the minister or of the recipient of the sacrament. . . .^{81c}

The latter quotation was the principal one used in the contention that the rôle of the minister was merely the external application of the matter and the form to a fit subject. This passage was in reply to the objection that if the mental intention were required, the subject would always be in doubt about having received the sacraments validly. Followers of Catharinus declared that the recipient can be certain that he has received the sacraments only

^{81a} Cf. Chapter II, footnote n. 17.

^{81b} *In IV*, Dist. 6, Q. 1, Art. 3, q. 3, sol. 1 ad 2 (*Opera omnia*, Vol. X, p. 37).

^{81c} *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 64, art. 8, ad 2.

if the bare external ceremonies duly applied constitute a valid sacrament. It is at this point that the two schools differ in their interpretation. The school of internal intention declared that in this passage the Angelic Doctor referred only to moral certitude. But evidently the school of Catharinus understood this passage as referring to absolute certitude. Contenson was of the opinion that in order to put aside all anxieties of the mind, St. Thomas was not content to say that human and moral certitude was sufficient as long as nothing to the contrary appeared. The Angelic Doctor expressly said that they were more correct who taught that it was sufficient merely to perform the rite seriously and pronounce the words with which the intention of the Church is expressed. Contenson concluded that St. Thomas considered the sacraments invalid only when the minister did not act seriously but jokingly.⁸⁴

Juenin demonstrated at great length that the idea of moral certitude was not the meaning of the words of the Angelic Doctor, and he drew this conclusion from the use of the terms in the passage. In the first part of the reply to the objection St. Thomas mentions that some authors required the mental intention for the validity of the sacrament. In this passage the Angelic Doctor speaks of an absolutely valid sacrament. In the words which immediately followed this, where he speaks of the opposite opinion, he speaks again of a sacrament according to substance, and not as something that would serve only as a moral certitude for the recipients.⁸⁵ This was the argument used by Juenin. Serry says that to use the words *in the words uttered by him, the intention of the church is expressed; and that this suffices for the validity of the sacrament* as referring to the security of the recipient rather than to the validity of the sacrament is diametrically opposed to the sense of the context.⁸⁶

To summarize the teaching of St. Thomas according to the inter-

⁸⁴ Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. XI, Pars I, Diss. 2, Tom. II, p. 42.

⁸⁵ Juenin, G., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Cap. 2, Art. 3, Sect. 3, *Commentarius Historicus et Dogmaticus de Sacramentis*, Pars I, p. 27.

⁸⁶ Serry, J., *Ambronii Catharini Vindiciae*, p. 45: *Vah ludicrum interpretamentum, contextui e diametro repugnans!*

pretation of the school of Catharinus: As long as the matter and the form are seriously posited, nothing can affect the validity of the sacraments, not even the jocose intention, or the intention of not doing what the Church does, provided this intention is not externally manifested.⁸⁷

In regard to this particular interpretation by the followers of Catharinus, it can be noted that the texts in themselves do seem to indicate the sufficiency of external intention. But, as will be shown in the next chapter, the mind of St. Thomas on the matter of intention can be gathered also from many other sources which are clearer than the two above. These have been carefully avoided by the school of external intention.

G. OBJECTIONS TO THE NECESSITY OF INTERNAL INTENTION

One of the common arguments used by the school of Catharinus concerns the case of the baptisms conferred by the boy Athanasius, as related in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Rufinus.⁸⁸ According to this account St. Athanasius as a boy was playing on the seashore with several companions when in the course of their games he baptized some of his playmates. After a thorough examination, Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, declared the baptisms valid. Proponents of external intention use this as an example in support of their contention that the internal intention is not necessary, saying that Alexander did not inquire at all into the question of the presence of an internal intention but was careful only to investigate whether Athanasius had externally and seriously performed the rites of Baptism.⁸⁹

In regard to this story it must be noted that play is one thing and simulation is quite another, for even in play there can be sufficient intention for performing a valid act. At times children are serious even in their games, and in this particular instance

⁸⁷ Serry, J., *op. cit.*, p. 46: *Intentio ergo qua perficitur Sacramentum, illa est quae in seria sacri ritus administratione importatur, eique nusquam officit maligna Ministri voluntas sacra ritui contraria, si occulta mente tegatur, nec manifestetur exterius.*

⁸⁸ Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib. I, Cap. 14 (PL 21, 487).

⁸⁹ Drouin, R., *De Re Sacramentaria*, Q. 7, Cap. 3, Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, Vol. XX, col. 1490.

Athanasius might have intended not only to imitate but truly to do what he had seen the priests do. An indication of this is the fact that he did not baptize those who had already been baptized.⁴⁰

The conclusion drawn from the story in support of the doctrine of external intention is a deduction which rests on a mere supposition. The facts related do not justify the conclusion that Athanasius used only the external intention. In the same way there is no absolute proof that he had the internal intention when he performed the external ceremony. In fact the authenticity of the story is questioned.⁴¹

The objections of this school against the necessity of an internal intention are numerous and it would be tedious to enumerate all of them. However, a few of the principal ones are in order and will serve to bring out more clearly the teaching on external intention:

1. It is objected against the opinion of the necessity of internal intention that the Ancient Fathers never inquired into the matter of internal intention when investigating the sacraments of doubtful validity. They did make investigations as to whether Baptism was conferred with the distinct invocation of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, whether the matter was applied to the subject, whether the subject externally contradicted the sacrament, and whether the minister externally performed the sacred rite in a playful manner or seriously. But in regard to whether the minister internally withheld his intention, or whether or not he wished to conduct himself as a minister of the Church, no inquiry at all was made.⁴²

To this objection it can be replied that in the investigations concerning the validity of the sacraments the internal intention is presumed to be present as long as all the external rites have been performed in the usual manner, since the external performance is presumed to be an indication of the internal intention. Such

⁴⁰ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 3, n. 37, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 378.

⁴¹ Cf. Billuart, C., *Tractatus De Sacramentis in Communi*, Diss. 5, Art. 8, *Summa Sancti Thomae*, Tom. VIII, p. 303.

⁴² Juezin, G., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Cap. 2, Art. 3, *Commentarius Historicus et Dogmaticus de Sacramentis*, Pars I, pp. 28-29.

sacraments are considered valid, not because internal intention is not necessary, but because it is presumed to be present.

2. A contract, matrimony, a vow, an oath and other things of this kind are valid even if the internal intention is lacking. Therefore, the same is true of every sacrament.

In reply to this objection a distinction must be made: it is true that such things have validity in the external forum, but this is not the case in the internal forum. It is correct that as long as these things are done in a serious manner, they have validity before the Church and society. Until it is proved that the internal intention was lacking, they will be considered valid and will carry with them their corresponding obligations which follow on validity. But in the case of the sacraments validity in the external forum will not supply for validity in the internal forum and in the sight of God. This latter kind of validity must be present before the sacraments are productive of the effects of character and special sacramental grace or of grace alone, as the case may be.

3. It is objected that for the notion of a minister it is sufficient to have a public or ministerial intention, by which an act is placed according to the law. But the external intention of the sacrament is of such a kind. Ergo, it suffices.

This may be answered in the following way: According to the law of Christ a minister of the sacraments is not ordered to place an external ceremony only, but to confect a sacrament.

4. A legate, a messenger, or public official performs a valid act as long as he externally wishes to do what is asked of him, and he is not required to intend what his superior intends. The minister of a sacrament is a legate and public official of Christ and the Church. Therefore, only external intention is necessary in the confecting of the sacraments.

The reply: This common objection can be answered thus: a person who is sent on a mission can be looked upon under several aspects: 1. As a *simple instrument*, that is, one who delivers a letter or money in response to a command of his superior, and no intention is required for this. 2. He may be looked upon as a *minister without power*, that is, one who simply delivers a message. In this capacity he must have the intention to deliver the message,

and this is accomplished when the words have been uttered by him, regardless of his inner intention. 3. He may be looked upon as a *minister with power*, e.g., lawmakers, and judges who pass laws and sentences. For this class of persons an internal intention of using their power is needed.⁴³

The minister of the sacraments is not a simple instrument or a minister without power, but he is truly a minister with power, acting for Christ, and for this reason he must have the intention of doing that for which he is sent. Christ sends His ministers not to perform bare ceremonies, but to confect sacraments. He has given them power, but this power is not used unless the minister intends to use it.

Although the state may supply validity when a judge passes sentence in a serious manner without the internal intention of making use of his power, the act of the judge is *per se* invalid. For the sake of the common good such acts are considered valid both in the external and the internal fora. A sacrament which is administered without internal intention is considered valid in the external forum unless the defect of internal intention is discovered. However, it is not considered valid in the internal forum because the Church, since she is not the institutor of the sacraments, cannot supply the defect of the intention, and Christ has never indicated that He would supply it.⁴⁴

SUMMARY

In the school of Catharinus it seemed to make little difference whether or not the external performance was really serious as long as it appeared to be such. This doctrine is well summarized by an example from the writings of Natalis Alexander (+1724): A priest who does not wish to baptize performs the external actions proper to Baptism in a serious manner. Since he gives no indications of his true intention, the will of baptizing is predominant over the will not to baptize, which is called a *velleity*. But the case is different if the priest *says* that he does not wish to baptize, and then proceeds to say the words and pour the water.

⁴³ Doronzo, E., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 7, Art. 37, p. 459.

⁴⁴ Doronzo, E., *op. cit.*, Cap. 7, Art. 37, p. 460.

Alexander declared that in this case the exterior declaration of his intention would signify that he was not acting seriously, thus rendering the sacrament invalid.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Lib. II *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Art. 3, Prop. 3, Regula 1, *Theologia Dogmatica et Moralis*, Vol. I, p. 177.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN THEOLOGIANS—INTERNAL INTENTION

It has been shown in the previous chapter that external intention consists in the will of the minister by which he seriously performs the external rites of the sacraments, but without the inner intention of confecting a sacrament. Those who teach this doctrine hold that such an intention is sufficient for the validity of the sacraments, and that nothing can prevent the actions used in the confecting of a sacrament from being a sacrament as long as they are seriously posited. Not even a contrary will affects the validity of the sacrament.

Shortly after the Council of Trent there was a strong reaction against this teaching. Although the doctrine of external intention had many followers for the two centuries immediately following the Council, the doctrine of internal intention has always been the common opinion. This opinion gained adherents steadily even during these two centuries, and during the nineteenth century there were very few theologians who taught the doctrine of external intention. Today it is practically the unanimous teaching of theologians.

Throughout the centuries it has been championed by noted theologians, as Suarez, De Lugo, the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Hiquaeus, Franzelin, and in the present century by Billot, Hugon, and Doronzo. Almost all the great moral theologians teach that it is a necessity.

A. THE DOCTRINE OF INTERNAL INTENTION

Since the external intention limits itself to the serious external performance of the sacramental rites in its explanation of the intention to do what the Church does, and the doctrine of internal intention contends that this is not sufficient, the true meaning of the internal intention must be given. Evidently, it demands an additional element. If the intention to do what the Church does

is not the will to perform only the external elements of the sacraments, it must necessarily be some other element hidden from sight.

In the opinion of De Lugo the intention of doing what the Church does consists in the will to speak and to act as a minister of Christ in the positing of the matter and the form, and for this reason it is necessary that the minister perform the sacramental actions in the name of Christ and not in his own. It is evidently an act of submission to Christ on the part of the minister, a willingness to submit to Christ's will and to act as His instrument.¹

As a minimum for validity Billuart demanded that the minister perform the external rites as something sacred and religious.² The Salmanticenses were of the same mind, since they declared that for the validity of a sacrament the minister must not only intend the external rite materially taken, but also that he posit it as something sacred, at least *in confuso*. In the sacrament of Penance it is not sufficient to have merely the intention of doing the external work, that is, pronouncing the words of absolution, but also the intention of confecting a sacrament.³ For Franzelin in addition to the serious positing of the matter and the form there is required the intention of the minister to use his ministerial power and to act as a minister, which consists in acting in the name of the principal author rather than in that of the minister.⁴ Billot called that the internal intention by which the minister not only wishes to put aside every sign of simulation from the external rite, but also resolves within himself: I wish to do what the Church does.⁵ According to Hugon the Church performs a rite formally sacred. Since the minister must have the intention of doing what the Church does, he must have the intention of performing a rite formally sacred. For this reason, the minister who would resolve while performing the external ceremonies not to do what

¹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 35, *Disputationes Scholasticæ et Morales*, Tom. III, pp. 377-378.

² *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Diss. 5, Art. 3, *Summa Sancti Thomæ*, Tom. VIII, p. 307.

³ *Salmanticenses, De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 7, Dub. 2, *Cursor Theologicus*, Tom. XVII, p. 513.

⁴ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 16, p. 201.

⁵ *De Ecclesie Sacramentis*, Thesis 17, Tom. I, p. 181.

the Church does, would lack the internal intention and would not intend a rite formally sacred; consequently, he would not confect a valid sacrament.⁶ This is substantially the same requirement which Ferland mentions. Speaking of the virtual intention, he asserts that even though the virtual intention is sufficient for validity, the minister must will to perform something sacred and religious. He calls this the internal intention.⁷ Doronzo teaches that the internal intention has for its object something deeper than the bare external ceremony, and he designates this object as that which the Church intends, namely, the notion of a sacrament, or other things indivisibly connected with it.⁸

This, then, is the common teaching of the members of the school of internal intention, that the minister must in some way at least implicitly intend to confect a sacrament. It is evident that this is impossible when the minister, although apparently seriously uniting the matter and the form, internally intends not to do what the Church does or its equivalent, not to confect a sacrament.

One of the most explicit expositions of the phrase *to do what the Church does* is found in the writings of De Lugo. It was apparent to him that it is not necessary to intend the end which the Church intends in the confection of the sacraments. The end of the sacraments is sanctifying grace, and the sacrament can be validly conferred even if the minister does not wish to confer grace through it,⁹ for when the minister wishes to confer the sacrament, or to do what the Church does, he by that very fact implicitly wishes to confer grace, since to will the cause is implicitly to will the effect. De Lugo explains what it means to do what the Church does with these words:

. . . the minister, when he wishes to do what the Church does, does not wish only the external action and the words, nor only the external manner of speaking, and of acting seriously to all appearances . . . but something

⁶ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Art. 3, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, Vol. IV, p. 149.

⁷ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 3, Art. 1, *Commentarius in Summam D. Thomae*, p. 481.

⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Art. 37, p. 451.

⁹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 30, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 377.

else, namely, to speak and to act, not in his own name, but in that of Christ, and as the minister of Christ.¹⁰

What it is on the part of the object willed to speak and to act in the name of Christ he shows by an example from human affairs. When a person wants to buy a book, not in his own name, but, for example, in the name of Peter, for whom he is the purchaser, he does not will only the external action of buying, but he also wills to do it as the procurator of Peter and in his name. He explains the idea of doing something in the name of someone else in the following manner, using himself as an example:

. . . it must be said that my buying in the name of Peter is to will through a *velleity*, or will which is inefficacious . . . that through my action no right would come to me but to Peter, just as if it would have been the action of Peter.¹¹

A sacrament is not necessarily produced every time the sign instituted by Christ is united with the words of institution,¹² but only when they are united ministerially, which includes two elements: first, that the action be done by one who has the power of the ministry for Christ, and second, that he really make use of this power in performing the action, since it does not follow that one who has the power of the ministry always acts as a minister of Christ as often as he unites the matter and the form. In the words of Cardinal Franzelin:

. . . All the sacraments are perfected through some human action. This human action is sacramental and efficacious only in so far as it is performed by a minister

¹⁰ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 35, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 377: . . . ministrum, dum vult facere quod facit Ecclesia, non velle solum actionem externam et verba, neque etiam solum modum externum loquendi, et agendi serio in externa specie . . . sed aliquid aliud; scilicet, loqui et operari, non nomine proprio, sed Christi, et ut ministrum Christi.

¹¹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 35, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, pp. 377-378.

¹² *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 16, p. 199: . . . neque enim necesse est, ut praeditus potestate ministerii semper agat tamquam minister pro Christo, quoties illas res et illa verba coniungit.

who is acting as a legate of Christ and God, by the authority and in the name of Christ and God . . . Hence they are the ministers of the sacraments who have the ministerial power for remitting sins and conferring grace, for effecting transubstantiation through these sacramental actions insofar as they use their ministerial power and act as ministers, i.e., not in their own name, but in that of the principal author.¹⁸

The reason which Cardinal Franzelin assigns for the necessity of performing the sacramental actions in the name of Christ is the fact that a sacrament according to the present institution is nothing else but an action so placed by the minister that it is morally an action of Christ Himself, the principal agent. Consequently, the action is not sacramental unless the minister at least implicitly wishes to act in the name of Christ. But he who wishes to place an act merely materially in his own name and expressly does not wish at least *in confuso* that the action be of that kind which the Church or Christians usually perform, does not implicitly act as a minister of Christ or in His name. Thus, the intention of the external action alone does not suffice to make the action sacramental.

In the school of internal intention it is pointed out that the sacramental signs are not theoretical signs but practical ones. According to Protestant theology the sacraments are merely signs which show forth the promises made by God and which stir up the faith of the recipient. Thus, it makes little difference whether the minister really intends to confect a sacrament or not, since this is principally the work of the recipient. On the other hand, practical signs effect what they signify, and in order to do this the minister must have a true intention of confecting the sacrament. This true intention must not only concern the positing of the external rites, but there must be at least an implicit intention of confecting a sacrament. Franzelin emphasizes this point:

. . . in order that the action be sacramental and done from the supernatural power of the minister, at least the implicit will of using this power and of placing the action ministerially is necessary; but it will not be a sacramental

¹⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 16, p. 201.

action if the minister should wish to place by his natural faculty an action merely materially, not wishing that his action be sacramental.¹⁴

The merely external intention does not safeguard the true notion of the minister. The minister of the sacraments is a voluntary instrument, and for this reason he must intend to confect the sacrament and not only the bare ceremony. In the words of Doronzo: if the external intention alone sufficed for validity, man would be the minister of a ceremony and only an instrument or condition of the sacrament.¹⁵

The need for internal intention is also clear from the fact that the sacramental actions are not natural signs of the sacraments, although in themselves they are suitable for sacramental signification. In order that they have this practical signification it is necessary that they be determined for this purpose by divine institution. The fact that these particular signs were determined by Christ to have a sacramental signification enabled the matter and the form to be used in such a way by the minister that they might become efficacious signs of grace. But this fact did not make it impossible for the same matter and form to be used in an altogether different signification. According to St. Bonaventure the divine institution ordained the matter and the form to such a sacramental signification, but it did not limit them to this signification alone and render them incapable of being used for another. Thus, in order that the matter and the form be a sacramental sign at the time used, the will of the minister of performing them merely materially is not sufficient, regardless of how seriously they seem to be performed. It is necessary that they be ordered to the sacramental sign by the intention of the minister.¹⁶ This intention could be no other than the internal intention of doing what the Church does.

Members of the school of internal intention readily admit that

¹⁴ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 17, p. 218.

¹⁵ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 7, Art. 37, p. 455: . . . si daretur validitas sacramenti cum sola externa intentione, homo esset minister caeremoniae et tantum instrumentum aut conditio sacramenti.

¹⁶ *In IV Sententiarum*, Dist. 6, Pars 2, Art. 2, q. 1 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. IV, p. 153).

the Council of Trent in its definition concerning the need for intention in the minister was concerned principally with the teaching of the Protestant reformers. The Fathers at the Council did not intend to censure the theory of Catharinus, although his teaching is very closely related to that of the Protestants.¹⁷ Cardinal Bellarmine said that the only difference between the doctrine of the heretics and that of Catharinus was the fact that at the end of his work Catharinus submitted himself to the Holy See and the Council, whereas the heretics ridiculed both.¹⁸

B. ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE

It is clear from the institution of the sacraments that the intention of the minister is necessary in the confection of the sacraments. This is best demonstrated by the sacrament of Penance which was instituted by Christ with these words: *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*¹⁹ In the words themselves there is contained the idea that the minister must be a judge of the penitent and pass sentence, which is impossible without the intention of the judge. The same can be shown by analogy for all the sacraments. By the fact that man is made the minister of the sacrament it is presupposed that in their administration intention is necessary, since God makes use of men according to their nature. A true intention is necessary for rational activity.

De Lugo contends that the same argument can be used against the opinion of Catharinus, and he demonstrates this by an example. In order to forgive a debt validly, it is not enough to utter the words in a serious external manner, if the internal will is lacking, just as consent fictitiously given does not constitute a true marriage, and prayers recited with the lips without the internal will of praying are not true prayers.²⁰ He concludes that if the

¹⁷ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 14, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 372: . . . Ab hac sententia haereticorum absunt quidem, sed non multum Catharinus in opusculo *de intentione ministri*. . . .

¹⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Lib. I, Cap. 18 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. III, p. 75).

¹⁹ John 20:23.

²⁰ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 17, *Disputationes Scholas-*

necessity of intention is evident from Scripture, it must be the necessity of that intention not only of uttering the words with a simulation of the will, but it must be without any internal deception. In short, it must be a true internal intention.

The necessity of internal intention is shown also by a comparison of the confectio of the sacraments with human affairs. In human affairs intention is required for the validity of an act. This intention must be not merely external but internal. In every contract it is necessary that the will concern itself with the object of the contract and consent to it and not merely pretend to consent to it. The fact that in the external forum a contract is considered valid provided the external consent is present makes little difference, since it is considered valid on the supposition that the internal consent was present at the time it was made. If it becomes clear later that the internal consent was lacking, the act would be considered null even in the external forum.²¹

This is also the case when Matrimony is celebrated fictitiously. If the internal intention is lacking, the contract is invalid regardless of how sincerely the parties exchange their vows. The intention is to *simulate* in a serious manner. A similar case is that of the judge who would observe all the formalities in pronouncing a sentence, but inwardly would positively intend not to impose a penalty. In the external forum such acts would be considered valid, but when the true state of affairs came to light, the contracts and the sentences would be declared invalid on account of the lack of intention.²²

The laws of a state may declare certain acts valid even if the internal intention is lacking and in this way supply what is lacking

ticae et Morales, Tom. III, p. 373: . . . neque consensus ficte praestitus facit verum matrimonium. . . .

²¹ Billot, J., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Thesis 16, *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Pars I, p. 183: . . . nec refert quod in foro humano habeatur ut validus contractus ex hoc solo quod constat de consensu externo. Habetur enim ut validus, quia semper praesupponitur adfuisse simul consensus internus.

²² De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 18, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 374: . . . unde quoties postea constat de fictione interna, matrimonium, vel professio, vel quidquid aliud est, declaratur nullius valoris. . . .

in the apparently serious external performance. This is done sometimes for the sake of the common good; but there is no assurance from God that He will supply the defect of internal intention in the minister of the sacraments.

The need for internal intention is well demonstrated in the conditional conferring of the sacraments. It is the common teaching of theologians that the sacraments can be and should be conferred conditionally at times, e.g., when the priest is doubtful whether or not he has correctly absolved and when there is doubt about the ability of the recipient to receive a certain sacrament. When the sacrament is thus conditionally conferred this fact need not be externally expressed but may be only the internal intention of the minister. Accordingly, a sacrament conferred conditionally has all the appearances of a valid sacrament, but it is not if the condition is not verified. According to those who teach external intention the apparent validity is a real validity. In their theory not even the contrary intention would affect the validity in the least, which is at variance with the common teaching.

An example of the conditional intention can be demonstrated best in the sacrament of Matrimony when it is received with a future condition, since, after the ceremony is completed, it has all the appearances of a true sacrament. However, the internal consent of the parties has a future condition upon which the sacrament depends. There is no sacrament until the future condition is fulfilled, in spite of the serious external performance, thus showing that the internal intention is necessary.²⁹ This teaching would be false if the internal contrary intention would not prevent the sacrament from being confected.

C. THE COUNCILS OF FLORENCE AND TRENT

Even though these Councils were not directly concerned with the controversy of internal and external intention, it was a logical consequence both from the matter defined and the manner of the definition that the external intention is not sufficient. The fact that the Councils mention intention at all is an indication that a true internal intention was meant since external intention is already

²⁹ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 27, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 376.

sufficiently indicated by the mention of the matter and the form. This is an inference that the intention referred to was an internal intention.

The Councils mention a definite kind of intention, namely, that of doing what the Church does. That which the Church principally intends to do is the sacrament and not merely the external ceremony. It is for this reason that the intention of the bare external rite is not sufficient, but the idea of a sacrament or its equivalent must necessarily be intended.²⁴ It is clear from the mind of the Councils and from the elements upon which the dogma against the heretics is based that the opinion of Catharinus is false, closely related to the condemned error and to be rightly rejected by theologians.²⁵

The Council of Trent expressly mentioned that the absolution of a priest is invalid if he lacks the intent of acting seriously and truly absolving.²⁶ It is certain that the priest who for the sake of deception pretends that he has the intent of absolving, does not have the intention of acting seriously and really absolving. He does have the intention of showing himself as serious and simulating that he acts seriously and absolves, but he does not wish to act seriously and really to absolve, but only to fool others.²⁷ Hugon admits that an individual could act seriously externally without internal intention, but the mind of acting seriously and especially the mind of truly absolving is not conceivable without the internal intention.²⁸ Although it is said that this definition was aimed against the reformers only, it was in reality also implicitly against the doctrine of external intention. Doronzo sums up the situation aptly with a question: How can one be said to have the mind or intention of truly absolving who interiorly does not intend to absolve?

²⁴ Doronzo, E., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 7, Art. 37, p. 456.

²⁵ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 15, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 373.

²⁶ Sess. XIV, Cap. 6 (Mansi 33, 95; DBU 902).

²⁷ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 19, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 374.

²⁸ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Art. 3, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, Vol. IV, p. 148.

D. CONDEMNATION OF THE PROPOSITION OF FARVACQUES

One of the strong arguments used by the school of internal intention was the condemnation of a proposition of Farvacques:

That Baptism is valid which is conferred by the minister who observes the whole external rite and the form of baptizing, but inwardly resolves to himself in his heart: I do not intend what the Church does.⁸⁹

In the opinion of most theologians, this proposition is a good description of the doctrine of Catharinus. Some had contended that the proposition could refer only to the Protestants, but it is difficult to disregard the words of Benedict XIV who, while admitting that the teaching of Catharinus had not been condemned formally, said that the doctrine of Catharinus had suffered a severe blow by the condemnation of this proposition.⁹⁰

It is the opinion of Doronzo that in the condemned proposition there is a condemnation of external intention.⁹¹ It is objected that the proposition concerned only the Protestant reformers who maintained that even the jocose intention of the minister is sufficient. But the condemnation evidently concerns a minister who would perform the sacramental rite seriously as to external appearances while at the same time not intending to do what the Church does. That Alexander VIII had this in mind is apparent from the contrast made between that which the minister does externally and that which he resolves internally. If this were not the case, it would have been useless to make the contrast at all.⁹² In addition to this explanation one must recall that the jocose performance of the sacrament had been condemned already at the Council of Trent.

Besides the authors mentioned already there were many others who held the opinion that the internal intention is a necessity in

⁸⁹ DBU 1318.

⁹⁰ Benedict XIV, *De Synodo Dioecesana*, Lib. VII, Cap. 4, n. 8 (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. XI, p. 196).

⁹¹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 7, Art. 37, p. 457: . . . In damnatione propositionis . . . continetur quoad rem damnatio ipsius doctrinae de sufficientia intentionis externa.

⁹² Billot, J., *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Thesis 18, *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Pars I, pp. 182-183.

the minister in the confectio of the sacraments. The presentation of the detailed teaching of the authors mentioned above is in reality the presentation of the case for internal intention since the Council of Trent. This doctrine has been the almost unanimous teaching of theologians during the last century and a half and the common teaching since the Council made the definitions on intention. Other great men of the same school were Wiggers,⁸³ Billuart,⁸⁴ Genicot-Salsmans,⁸⁵ Cappello,⁸⁶ Dens,⁸⁷ Neyraguet,⁸⁸ Gonet,⁸⁹ St. Alphonsus,⁹⁰ Veermersch,⁹¹ Tanquerey,⁹² Herve,⁹³ Noldin-Schmitt,⁹⁴ Merkelbach,⁹⁵ Davis⁹⁶ and many others.

E. INTENTION IN THE WRITINGS OF ST. THOMAS

It is regrettable that St. Thomas did not leave a clearer exposition on the subject of the minister's intention. He definitely required that the minister have an intention when he confects the sacraments, but precisely what kind of intention he was speaking of has been a matter of controversy especially since the Council of Trent when there was a definite split in opinion as to the object of the intention. The school of Catharinus, as has been seen, declared that the Angelic Doctor did not demand an

⁸³ *De Sacramentis*, Q. 64, Art. 8, n. 54 (*Opera*, Tom. VI, p. 62).

⁸⁴ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Diss. 5, Art. 7, Sect. 2, *Summa Sancti Thomae*, Tom. VIII, p. 306.

⁸⁵ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Sect. 1, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, Vol. II, Tract. 12, n. 111, p. 102.

⁸⁶ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 1, Art. 2, n. 50, *De Sacramentis*, Vol. I, p. 36.

⁸⁷ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, n. 87, p. 89.

⁸⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Art. 1, *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, pp. 422-423.

⁸⁹ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 6, Art. 2, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. VI, p. 139.

⁹⁰ *Theologia Moralis*, Lib. VI, n. 23, Vol. II, pp. 69-70.

⁹¹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, n. 165, *Theologia Moralis*, Tom. III, p. 143.

⁹² *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol. III, n. 418, pp. 293 sqq.

⁹³ *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol. III, n. 475, pp. 486 sqq.

⁹⁴ *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Tom. III, n. 23, pp. 19-21.

⁹⁵ *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Tom. III, n. 82, p. 76.

⁹⁶ *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, Vol. III, p. 16.

internal intention in the minister, whereas the school of internal intention is of the opposite opinion.

The school of external intention has an advantage in the fact that St. Thomas said definitely that the internal intention is not needed in those sacraments in which the forms express the exercised act.⁴⁷ However, in other passages the need for an internal intention is definitely indicated, and it would be strange that St. Thomas would demand an internal intention for some of the sacraments and not for others. Proponents of internal intention point to these facts and in the light of them they interpret the disputed passages in favor of their opinion.

Although the two principal passages which have opposite interpretations have already been mentioned in a previous chapter, it will be useful to cite the texts again for the sake of clarity. The first is from the *Commentary on the Sentences*:

. . . in Baptism and the other sacraments which have in the form the exercised act, the mental intention is not required, but the expression of the intention through the words instituted by the Church is sufficient: and therefore, if the form is observed, and nothing is said externally which would express the contrary, he (the catechumen in question) is baptized.⁴⁸

The second passage is from the *Summa Theologica*:

. . . Consequently others with better reason hold that the minister of the sacraments acts in the person of the whole Church, whose minister he is; while in the words uttered by him, the intention of the Church is expressed; and that this suffices for the validity of the sacrament, except the contrary be expressed on the part either of the minister, or of the recipient of the sacrament.⁴⁹

As pointed out in the last chapter, these two passages were taken for a certain proof that the internal intention is not necessary in the minister. Now the opposite interpretation will be given.

⁴⁷ *In IV*, Dist. 8, Q. 1, Art. 3, q. 3, Sol. 1 ad 2 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. X, p. 137).

⁴⁸ Ut n. 47.

⁴⁹ Pars III, q. 64, art. 8, ad 2.

In regard to the first passage Cardinal Franzelin had no doubts about the true meaning of the words of St. Thomas which state that the mental intention is not required in those sacraments which have in their forms the exercised act. By this statement Franzelin understood that when the words of the form expressed the action of the minister himself, e.g., *Ego te baptizo*, etc., there is not required *another mental intention* which is not expressed in words. That intention alone which is expressed in the words of the form suffices as long as it is really present. Since this intention is rendered sensible through the words expressed in the form, it is no longer *purely mental*.⁶⁰ In this way it can be understood how St. Thomas could say that the mental intention is not necessary, for when the words are uttered, it is understood that the minister would intend what the words signify.

That St. Thomas really required internal intention is clear from the fact that in the other sacraments in which the forms do not express the exercised act, he does not say that the mental intention is not necessary. This statement is made only about those sacraments which have in their forms the acts to be exercised, and it is highly improbable that the Angelic Doctor would have set up different requirements for the different sacraments in a matter so basic as intention.

The second passage, i.e., that from the *Summa*, is looked upon by the school of Catharinus as a definite and decisive proof that the external intention alone is sufficient for the validity of the sacraments. Again the opposite school of thought, among whose members there are many Thomists, explains that such was not the true sense of the words of St. Thomas.

It must be noted that in the body of article eight of the 64th question the Angelic Doctor shows the necessity of an intention which could hardly be understood except of an internal intention. He makes use of the practical example of things being done for various purposes. Thus he points out that when a thing can be used or done for many purposes, it must be limited to one, if it is to have that particular signification and effect. Those things which are done in the sacraments can be done for many purposes,

⁶⁰ Franzelin, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 17, p. 220.

e.g., the washing with water can be used for the cleansing of the body, for a part of a game, or for the sacrament of Baptism. If those things which are done in the baptismal rites are to have the baptismal effect, the actions should be determined or limited for this effect by the intention of the minister which is expressed by the words which are employed in the baptismal formula.⁸¹

A point of importance in this passage is the fact that St. Thomas makes a distinction between the *intention* and the *expressing* of the intention. The intention is the mental intention; the expressing of the intention is the external intention. Before the intention is expressed, it must really exist, and it can exist nowhere except in the mind of the minister. Thus, in this passage the mental or internal intention is mentioned.

In the same article St. Thomas answers the objection that since man is a minister of the principal agent, his intention is not necessary, but only that of the principal agent. The Angelic Doctor makes a distinction between an inanimate and an animate instrument, saying that it is true that intention is not necessary in an inanimate instrument since it is moved entirely by the principal agent. But the animate instrument is not only moved but also moves itself insofar as it moves its members to action. St. Thomas concludes that in such an instrument there is required an intention by which it subjects itself to the principal agent, namely, that it intend to do what the Church does in the case of the sacraments. In this passage again it is clear that the intention is internal and more specifically one by which the instrument subjects himself to the will of Christ.

There is one phrase in particular in the reply to the second objection which is commented upon by the school of internal intention:

. . . in the words uttered by him, the intention of the Church is expressed, and that this suffices for the validity of the sacrament, except the contrary be expressed on the part either of the minister or of the recipient of the sacrament. . . .

Cajetan expressed his interpretation of this passage by saying

⁸¹ Q. 64, art. 8 c.

that the words of St. Thomas are not to be taken in the sense they seem to have, namely, that no internal intention is required. Rather the reply is in answer to the difficulty mentioned in the objection, i.e., if the mental intention is demanded, no one could be certain that he was truly baptized. It was for the purpose of giving us this certitude of having received the sacraments that St. Thomas wrote that the intention of the Church, as expressed through the words of the minister, was sufficient, unless the contrary were expressed by the minister or the recipient. The sense of these words is that when the minister pronounces the form, a person can be *morally certain* that he is receiving the sacrament. The Angelic Doctor did not intend that the words expressed by the minister without any internal intention were sufficient for the validity of the sacraments, but that they were sufficient for human certitude.⁸³ Hiquaeus,⁸⁴ the Salmanticenses,⁸⁴ and De Augustinis⁸⁵ also interpreted this passage as referring to moral certitude. The Salmanticenses make a statement that summarizes this interpretation:

. . . supposing the necessity of internal intention in the minister, he (St. Thomas) still taught that the recipient of the sacraments can rest assured, and put aside all doubts about the intention of the minister, since the minister, unless he expresses the contrary, is presumed to act according to the intention of the Church, which

⁸³ Cajetan, *Angelici Doctoris S. Thomae Aquinatis Summa Theologica Cum Commentariis Thomae de Vio Cajetani*, Q. 64, Art. 8, Tom. VIII (Volumen Secundum tertiae Partis) p. 207: . . . haec omnia dicuntur hic pro solutione difficultatis motae in arg. scilicet, si mentalis intentio exigeretur, nullus esset certus, se esse vere baptismum: ad hanc enim certitudinem nostram de susceptis sacramentis intelligendum est, sufficere intentionem Ecclesiae per verbis ministri expressam, nisi per ministrum, aut suscipientem contrarium exprimatur: ita quod non intendit Auctor, quod haec sufficiant ad perfectionem sacramenti simpliciter, sed ad perfectionem ejus, secundum humanam certitudinem. . . .

⁸⁴ Cf. Scotus, J., *Lib. IV Sententiarum*, Dist. 6, Q. 5; (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. XVI, p. 571).

⁸⁴ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 7, Dub. 2, Sect. 2, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. XVII, p. 510.

⁸⁵ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Pars II, Art. 8, *De Re Sacramentaria*, Lib. I, p. 239.

intention he expresses and represents by the words of the form . . . hence he does not base the absolute assurance of validity solely in the serious external exhibition of the sacrament, but assurance sufficient for removing scruples and doubts.⁶⁶

In his commentary on this particular passage of the *Summa* Suarez states at first that St. Thomas was speaking of the essential and substantial perfection, that is, validity, but he admits that the passage is obscure. After a rather lengthy examination of the passage he concludes that the interpretation that St. Thomas favored the doctrine of external intention is contrary to the true doctrine, and he finally adopts the interpretation of Cajetan, namely, that St. Thomas was speaking of moral certitude.⁶⁷

De Lugo was not satisfied with the explanation of Cajetan and others to the effect that the Angelic Doctor was speaking of moral certitude. He was convinced from the words of the Angel of the Schools that he was speaking of the validity of the sacrament. His explanation was that St. Thomas was not speaking of a true defect of internal intention. Neither did he say that the sacrament was valid when there was truly no internal intention, but he spoke only of the necessity of an expressed and explicit internal intention. If this would be required, it would seem to render the validity of the sacrament doubtful, at least among those who would not know whether the minister had such a special intention. Thus, St. Thomas did not speak of a case in which all internal intention was lacking, but only of the instance when the special intention of performing a sacrament was lacking.⁶⁸

Billot declares that it was not the purpose of the Angelic Doctor to exclude opinions which as yet did not exist in his time. According to Billot by the term *mental intention* St. Thomas was answering those who contended that the requisite intention of the minister presupposed in him the proper conviction about the power

⁶⁶ Ut n. 54.

⁶⁷ Suarez, J., *Commentarius et Disputationes in Tertiam Partem D. Thomae*, Disp. 12, Sect. 2, Q. 64, Art. 8 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. XX, p. 236).

⁶⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 5, n. 68, *Disputationes Scholasticæ et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 386: . . . ergo S. Th. non agit de casu, in quo deest omnis intentio interna, sed solum quando deest specialis intentio faciendi sacramentum.

and the efficacy of a sacrament as it is in itself absolutely sacred. Thus they were concluding that a Jew or a pagan could never have the intention sufficient for validly baptizing. With St. Thomas, then, the mental intention is the personal conviction of the minister by which he intended to do something which he himself thought was sacred and which he thought would confer grace.⁴⁰

Another indication of the mind of St. Thomas on the object of the intention is found in Article ten of the 64th question where it is asked whether a right intention is required for the validity of the sacrament. The Angelic Doctor replies that the intention can be corrupted in two ways, first, in regard to the validity of the sacrament itself, and secondly, in regard to what follows the sacrament. The second case concerns the minister who would baptize a woman with the evil intention of seducing her. This would be no hindrance to the validity of the sacrament. But in the first case the intention by which the minister does not intend to confect a sacrament, but to act in a jocose manner, invalidates the sacrament, especially, says St. Thomas, when that intention is externally manifested:

Respondeo dicendum quod intentio ministri perverti . . . puta, cum aliquis non intendit sacramentum conferre, sed derisorie aliquid agere; et talis perversitas tollit veritatem sacramenti, praecepue quando suam intentionem exterius manifestat.⁴¹

From this passage it is clear that the intention of conferring a sacrament is necessary, and that a sham performance of the external actions invalidates the sacrament. But the next clause *especially when he exteriorly manifests his intention* is of great concern, for it was this clause which the school of Catharinus used in its contention that as long as the sacrament appeared to be performed seriously, the confecting of the sacrament was infallible. They say that the case in view is clearly a mimic representation.⁴²

⁴⁰ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Thesis 18, *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Tom. I, p. 186.

⁴¹ III, q. 64, art. 10 c.

⁴² Lacey, F., "Intention," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 381.

The school of internal intention contends that this is not the case, but that the sacrament is equally invalid whether the mimic representation is hidden or apparent. The particle *especially* openly shows that even if the mimicry is not manifested externally the sacrament is invalid nevertheless.⁶³ In this passage St. Thomas means that when the mimicry is externally manifested, the sacrament is not only null, but it is also considered such by the Church. If the defect of mental intention would not invalidate the sacrament, the external manifestation of this fact would not destroy the validity, since the manifestation does not add a special defect, but supposes and manifests the one already in existence.⁶⁴

Another cogent proof that St. Thomas demands an internal intention is found in the Supplement⁶⁵ where he writes of the sacrament of Matrimony. Speaking of the necessity of internal consent, he says that the consent expressed externally with words without an interior consent renders the sacrament invalid. He makes a comparison to illustrate the point: if a person would submit to the rite of Baptism without intending to receive the sacrament, he would not be baptized. In the same way, the expressing of the words without an internal consent would not constitute a valid marriage. In the example of Baptism the lack of internal intention in the recipient renders the sacrament null. More is always demanded in the minister of the sacrament, thus showing that the lack of internal intention in the minister would surely invalidate the sacrament.

The final indication of St. Thomas' teaching on intention is found in his opuscle *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis* which was taken over almost verbatim in the Council of Florence and incorporated

⁶³ De Lugo, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 4, n. 64, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 385. Cf. Sylvius, *Commentarii in Tertiam Partem S. Thomae Aquinatis*, Q. 64, Art. 8, Tom. IV, p. 173.

⁶⁴ Suarez, J., *Commentarius et Disputationes in Tertiam Partem D. Thomae*, Disp. 12, Sect. 2, Q. 64, Art. 8 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. XX, p. 234): . . . si defectus praedictae intentionis mentalis non esset contra substantiam sacramenti, manifestatio ejus exterior non posset derogare veritati sacramenti. Quia illa manifestatio non addit specialem defectum, sed supponit et prodit illum.

⁶⁵ Q. 45, art. 4 c.

in the *Decree for the Armenians*. In this work the Angelic Doctor teaches that three things are required in every sacrament: the matter, the form, and the person of the minister conferring the sacrament with the intention of doing what the Church does. If any one is lacking, the sacrament is not valid.⁶⁵

This special mention of the intention of the minister indicates that it is something separable from the positing of the matter and the form. The apparent interpretation of this passage is that if the minister deliberately and seriously posits the matter and the form without intending to confect a sacrament, there would be no valid sacrament, although this would not be apparent.

In view of the passages mentioned it can be reasonably concluded that the Angelic Doctor taught the necessity of an internal intention. In the words of De Lugo "it is incredible that St. Thomas would have thought that a sacrament could be validly conferred without the internal intention of the minister."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Opusculum IV, Tract. II (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. XXVII, p. 178).

⁶⁶ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 4, n. 64, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Tom. III, p. 385.

CHAPTER V

SUMMATION AND CONCLUSION

The whole discussion of the problem of the minister's intention up to this point has been an objective one based on the official teaching of the Church. It has been pointed out that the minister must have the intention of doing what the Church does for the valid confection of the sacraments, this being a matter of faith defined by the Council of Trent. But in regard to the thesis that the internal intention is an absolute necessity there has been no explicit definition by the Church.¹ The doctrines of the schools of external and internal intention have been given in detail and from the presentation of the respective arguments by each of the schools it seems that the school of internal intention has by far the better case.

A. INTERNAL INTENTION THE COMMON TEACHING

It is the common opinion today as it was in the thirteenth century² that for the validity of a sacrament a true internal intention is required. In fact it may more correctly be called the unanimous opinion among theologians. As for the sacrament of Penance there is little room for doubt, for the Council of Trent supposes in the priest the mind of acting seriously and truly absolving.³ One can act seriously externally without the internal intention, but the mind of truly absolving cannot exist without an internal intention. After mentioning the fact that the Council of Trent had not condemned the doctrine of Catharinus, Billot added that in spite of this the contrary opinion is the most common doctrine and the one to be held.⁴

¹ Pourrat, P., *Theology of the Sacraments*, p. 349; cf. Nampon, A., *Catholic Doctrine as Defined by the Council of Trent*, Vol. II, p. 324.

² Otten, B., *A Manual of the History of Dogmas*, Vol. II, p. 291.

³ Session XIV, can. 6 (Mansi 33, 95; DBU 902).

⁴ Billot, J., *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Tom. I, p. 181: Nihilominus in contrarium est communissima theologorum doctrina, cui omnino standum

One of the strongest supporters of the doctrine of internal intention was St. Alphonsus who mentioned expressly that for a valid sacrament there is required in the minister neither faith nor probity, but at least a virtual intention of performing not only the external act, but also the sacrament, or at least that which the Church does or what Christ has instituted. Later in the same work in reply to the question as to whether the internal intention is required, he replied that the intention of performing the external action alone is not sufficient, but that there is required the intention of doing what the Church does, and that this is of faith.⁸ Such a sequence of reasoning is equivalent to the statement by St. Alphonsus that it is a matter of faith that the minister must have the internal intention, although he does not expressly make this statement.

There are others who teach substantially the same thing as St. Alphonsus does. Tournely calls the internal intention of the minister necessary for the substantial validity of the sacrament.⁹ Davis asserts that the Church actually does perform a sacred rite, and the intention of doing this is absolutely necessary. "There must, therefore, be an internal intention of doing this, and the external gesture . . . if we may call it so . . . will not suffice."¹ Hugon teaches that unless the minister has the internal intention, he does not even implicitly wish to use the power divinely commissioned to him, and consequently that he does not place a ministerial action but a merely natural one.²

est. Docet requiri intentionem *internam*, quae scilicet non tota versetur circa apparentiam exteriorem sed sit intentio qua minister non solum vult cohibere omnem ostensionem simulationis ab actione quae foris apparet, sed etiam vere apud se intus resolvit: volo facere id quod Ecclesia facit.

⁸ St. Alphonsus, *Theologia Moralis*, Lib. VI, n. 20, Vol. II, p. 68: . . . Dicendum I. non sufficere solam intentionem faciendi actionem externam, sed requiri intentionem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia. Hoc est de fide contra Lutherum, qui dicebat sufficere solam intentionem ponendi ritum exteriorem, etal ioco peractum . . . Note the sharp contrast between the two kinds of intention.

⁹ Tournely, H., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Q. 7, Art. 1, *Praelectiones Theologicae*, Vol. I, p. 111.

¹ Davis, H., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, Vol. III, p. 17.

² *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Q. 5, Art. 3, *Tractatus Dogmatici*, Vol. IV, p. 149.

Franzelin is representative of those who deny the sufficiency of the external intention, for after admitting that some intention is necessary, he expressly mentions that this intention is not only the will of materially placing the external action, but that such a will is evidently not enough for the valid confection of the sacraments.⁹ Sylvius in his commentary of St. Thomas makes this statement:

The intention of the work which is done, insofar as it is a natural act, is not sufficient . . . it is not enough to have the intention of doing only the external and natural action, but there is required the intention of doing what the Church does, namely, a sacred action instituted by Christ.¹⁰

This same doctrine of internal intention is taught by Ballerini,¹¹ Dens,¹² Sasse,¹³ Tepe,¹⁴ Vermeersch,¹⁵ Konings,¹⁶ Sabetti-Barrett,¹⁷ and numerous other theologians. The present status of the thesis asserting that the internal intention is necessary for the valid confection of the sacraments is its classification as a theological opinion,¹⁸ due to the fact that it is set forth in such a way that the theologian allows for the possibility of the opposite thesis being true, although it might be classified more accurately as a common opinion. In fact Tanqueray,¹⁹ Gonet,²⁰ Gazzaniga,²¹ Van

⁹ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 17, p. 218.

¹⁰ *Commentarius in Tertiam Partem Thomae Aquinatis*, Q. 64, Art. 8, Secunda Conclusio, Vol. IV, p. 173.

¹¹ Tract. 10, *De Sacramentis*, Sect. I, *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Dubium 1, *Opus Theologicum Morale*, Vol. IV, p. 475.

¹² *De Sacramentis in Genere*, n. 41, *De Sacramentis*, p. 89.

¹³ *Tractatus de Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 6, Thesis 25, Prob. 1, *Institutiones Theologicae de Sacramentis Ecclesiae*, Vol. I, p. 149.

¹⁴ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 4, Prop. 11, n. 92, *Institutiones Theologicae*, Tract. 10, Vol. IV, p. 75.

¹⁵ *Theologia Moralis*, Tom. III, n. 165, p. 143.

¹⁶ *Tractatus de Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 3, Art. 1, Sect. II, *Theologia Moralis*, Vol. II, n. 1217, p. 7.

¹⁷ *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, n. 636, p. 554.

¹⁸ Cf. Fenton, J., *The Concept of Sacred Theology*, p. 71; Le Blanc, J., "Children's Limbo, Theory or Doctrine?" *AER*, 117 (Sept. 1947) 165.

¹⁹ *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Tom. III, n. 418, ed. Desclée, p. 294.

²⁰ *De Sacramentis in Communi*, Disp. 6, Art. 3, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. VI, p. 139.

Noort²³ assign it that theological note and Herve,²⁴ St. Alphonsus,²⁴ Neyraguet,²⁵ and Cappello²⁶ hold that it is common and certain. These opinions are in agreement with the majority of contemporary theologians.

B. BASIS FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF INTERNAL INTENTION— THE HUMAN ACT

In the institution of the sacraments Christ constituted them in such a way that they proceed not only from the power of God, but also from the power given to man as a minister. This power is expressed by actions proper to him. It is in this sense that the minister is said to forgive sins, to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The power which the minister has in the confection of the sacraments is a power given to man as man, and consequently in the exercise of that power he makes use of human acts which are under the command of the will.²⁷ The will of confecting a sacrament must enter into the minister's intention in some manner. The will of merely performing the material rites is not sufficient according to the common teaching.²⁸

All theologians agree that the confection of the sacraments is a human act insofar as man has a rôle in their confection, and this human act is necessarily one which must be performed by a min-

²³ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Diss. 2, Cap. 8, *Praelectiones Theologicae*, Tom. VIII, n. 265 sqq., p. 132.

²⁴ *Tractatus de Sacramentis I*, Sect. 1, Cap. 3, Art. 2, n. 115, p. 91.

²⁵ *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol. III, n. 477, p. 487.

²⁶ *Theologia Moralis*, Lib. VI, n. 23, ed. Marietti, Tom. II, p. 70.

²⁷ *Tractatus de Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Art. 1, *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, pp. 422-443.

²⁸ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 1, Art. 2, n. 50, *De Sacramentis*, Vol. I, p. 36.

²⁹ Cf. Scotus, *Lib. IV Sententiarum*, Dist. 6, Q. 5 (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. XVI, pp. 563-564). In this passage he emphasizes the element of the human act in the confection of the Sacraments.

³⁰ Cf. Sasse, I., *Tractatus de Sacramentis in Genere*, Sect. 6, Thesis 25, Prob. 1, *Institutiones Theologicae de Sacramentis Ecclesiae*, Vol. I, p. 149: *Tam vero qui habet solam intentionem externam sensu advenaarium, is non vult agere ex potestate ministeriali nec nomine Christi, sed solum vult ponere actionem mere materialiter facultate sua naturali. Ergo haec intentio mere externa non sufficit.*

ister who has the full use of reason and applies it to the work at hand. Everyone agrees also that at times men do things for which they cannot be held responsible, the reason being that these actions are done without the internal intention of the individual. Such acts are called acts of man, or in the technical expression, "actus hominis," whereas those done with full deliberation are called human acts, "actus humani." Men are not held accountable for the former.

Keeping this distinction in mind, it can be said that the use of the merely external intention does not constitute a human act in regard to the confection of the sacraments. This can be illustrated by an example of the hunter who goes into the forest for the purpose of killing a wild animal, but indeliberately kills a man whom in the distance he mistakes for a wild animal. This total act can be divided. The firing of the gun is a human act, one for which he is responsible since he does it deliberately. The killing of the man is the other part of the total act. Ordinarily, the killing of a man is murder, but under the circumstances the hunter is not guilty of murder for the reason that he did not intend it. This latter part of the act is not a human act.

This same thing can be applied to man's rôle in the confection of the sacraments. As he fulfills the requirement of positing the matter and the form he either intends to confect or not to confect a sacrament, or at least to do what the Church does. There is not any question about his intention of performing the external actions. He deliberately posits them and is responsible for them if he is a free agent, and this constitutes a human act. But in regard to the confection of a sacrament, there is a true sacrament if he intends this to be the result of his actions. If he does not intend this effect, which can be present in the general intention of doing what the Church does, his operations stop short of it. The will of man cannot be forced. The mere fact that the minister does not will to confer a sacrament, or at least to do what the Church does, makes it impossible for him to produce such a result as long as that will is present and has predominance over all other intentions.

If it were true that the sacrament is confectioned merely by the serious positing of the matter and the form, it would be correct

to assert that no contrary intention could render the actions non-sacramental. In this event the minister's rôle in the sacrament would be similar to that of the sailor who throws his belongings overboard in order to keep the ship from sinking. There is a conflict in his will. By one will he does not want to throw his property overboard, and by the other he performs the actions which effectively remove his property from the ship. By the mere fact that he deliberately throws his property into the sea, he completes an action. His actions have a determined result. The positing of the matter and the form in the sacramental rites does not have the sacramental result unless it is done for this purpose. The additional element which they need is limitation or determination by which they are done for one purpose rather than for another. The positing of the matter and the form is a human act if the minister is awake, but this same human act can be done for different purposes, as St. Thomas mentions,²⁹ and, consequently, there is no sacrament unless the actions are determined by the intention of confecting a sacrament, at least implicitly. Other intentions may be present concomitantly as long as they do not contradict the first one. The problem seems to be reducible to the principle of contradiction: when the matter and the form are placed, the minister intends at least in general to do what the Church does, or he lacks this intention. If he has the intention, the result is a sacrament; if he does not, no sacrament is confected.

C. EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If the true intention of confecting a sacrament is lacking, the element of the serious external performance seems to contribute very little or nothing to the contention that those actions thus posited constitute a true sacrament. In fact it is a misnomer to call an action "serious" if the internal serious intent is lacking. Such so-called "serious" performances are not serious at all. That they are apparently serious is true, but that they are really serious is false.

In the school of Catharinus it seemed to make little difference

²⁹ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 64, art. 8.

whether or not the external performance was really serious. The great concern was that it appeared to be such.

One of the greatest arguments for the necessity of internal intention can be drawn from the comparison between a jocose performance and an apparently serious performance of the sacramental actions. The Protestants, logically following their sacramental teachings, maintained that a jocose placing of the matter and the form does not prevent the sacrament from being valid, due to the fact that the minister's rôle is merely to show forth the signs which would stir up the faith of the recipients. This doctrine was condemned by the Council of Trent.

The jocose performance of the sacramental actions does not render the sacrament null because it is apparent to men that these actions are not done seriously, but because the necessary will of confecting a sacrament is lacking. If the necessary will for confecting a sacrament is present, the sacrament is valid in spite of the appearance of a jocose performance.⁸⁰ When the sacrament is declared null, it is presumed that the will of confecting a sacrament was lacking, and one of the indications of this is the jocose performance. The will or the intention necessary for validity can equally be lacking whether the intention of performing the whole rite as a sham is hidden or apparent. Thus, although the declaration of the Council of Trent is applicable particularly to the apparent jocose performance, it seems to apply also to the jocose performance which is hidden.⁸¹

Some of the exponents of the sufficiency of the external intention maintained that the lack of internal intention could be supplied by external circumstances, such as a sacred place, sacred vestments, the request of some one for a sacrament, and the minister's acting "ex officio."

Admittedly, these external circumstances are an indication that the minister has the proper intention, but the indication can be

⁸⁰ Franzelin, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 17, p. 229: . . . locus non ideo reddit sacramentum irritum, quia apparet et manifestus hominibus, sed unice quatenus deest voluntas necessaria ad conficiendum sacramentum. . . .

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 229: . . . Ergo definitio declarans irritum sacramentum ratione loci, non de manifesto solum sed etiam de occulto ioco aequè valet.

false. The mere fact that a minister performs the rites of Baptism in a Church wearing sacred vestments does not prevent him from having an intention destructive of the sacrament. The reason for the insufficiency of these external circumstances to effect validity is the fact that intention by its nature is something internal, and although it can be indicated by external things, it cannot be replaced by them. Consequently, if in such circumstances the minister performs the sacramental rites with the positive intention of not confecting a sacrament, the sacrament would be invalid.

D. ARGUMENT FROM THE COUNCILS

It was very significant that the Council of Florence demanded three things for a sacrament: the matter, the form, and the intention of the minister.⁸² The Council of Trent demanded in the ministers the intention of doing what the Church does while they confect the sacraments.⁸³ It is certain that when the Fathers at these Councils mentioned the two requirements of matter and form, they had no other thought but that they should be posited seriously. But over and above these two requisites they also demanded the intention of the minister as something that could possibly be separated from the other two. St. Alphonsus argues that by this fact the Councils demand internal intention, since if they did not, it would have been superfluous to mention intention at all, and the Fathers of the Councils are not accustomed to use superfluous words.⁸⁴ The same argument is frequently used among the members of the school of internal intention.

The Council of Trent states that one of the causes for an invalid absolution is the fact that the priest does not have the intention of acting seriously and truly absolving.⁸⁵ The meaning of these words is that in the minister the will alone of placing an action which is apparently serious is not sufficient, if the intention of truly absolving is lacking, or if there is a contrary intention. If the intention of truly absolving is lacking, the action is not a

⁸² Mansi 31a, 1054; DBU 695.

⁸³ Session VII, can. 11 (Mansi 33, 53; DBU 854).

⁸⁴ *Theologia Moralis*, Lib. VI, n. 23, ed. Marietti, Vol. II, p. 70.

⁸⁵ Session XIV, cap. 6 (Mansi 33, 95; DBU 902).

serious action, but only the simulation of a serious action. It is absurd to understand by the words *the mind of truly absolving* the will only of pronouncing the words in an apparently serious manner but with the internal intention of not truly absolving, but of deceiving and deluding.⁶⁶

E. CONDEMNATION OF THE PROPOSITION OF FARVACQUES

A strong argument against the opinion of external intention was the condemnation of the proposition of Farvacques in which he stated that a baptism was valid if the minister observed the outward form of baptizing but inwardly resolved not to do what the Church does.⁶⁷ This decree would seem to have settled the problem of external and internal intention, but the condemnation was not directed specifically at the doctrine of Catharinus.⁶⁸ Serry was of the opinion that the condemnation concerned the jocose performance of the sacrament of Baptism, and thus referred to the Protestants.⁶⁹ But at the time the condemnation was made (1690) no Catholic was defending the doctrine of Luther and the Protestants, as it had been condemned by the Council of Trent.⁶⁹ The interpretation of Serry was taken lightly by most theologians. They contended that from the wording of the proposition the sense of a jocose performance could not be deduced. That sense is evidently excluded, for it speaks of a minister who observes all the requirements of the external rite but with the inner resolve not to do what the Church does, which indicates that to all outward appearances the sacrament is valid. This would not be the case if the minister showed that he was not acting seriously while he performed the rites.

One of the most outspoken statements against the doctrine of external intention was made by St. Alphonsus when he commented on the condemned proposition with these words: "Note the word 'inwardly' (*intus vero*): therefore the Pope condemns the opinion

⁶⁶ Franzelin, J., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Thesis 17, pp. 228-229.

⁶⁷ Cf. Chapter I, footnote n. 12.

⁶⁸ Benedict XIV, *De Synodo Dioecesana*, Lib. VII, Cap. 4, n. 8 (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. VI, p. 196).

⁶⁹ *Ambrosii Catharini Vindiciae*, Cap. 12, pp. 92 sqq.

⁶⁹ Slater, T., *A Manual of Moral Theology*, pp. 29-30.

which does not require the internal intention of doing what the Church does."⁴³

In his commentary on the proposition, Viva does not make any distinction as to the manner in which the external intention is used, be it open or occult. He simply states:

This is the error which was proscribed by Alexander VIII in this proposition, namely, that the intention alone of using the external rite prescribed by the Church and instituted by Christ, is sufficient, even if not only the intention of doing what the Church does is lacking, but also if the opposite intention is present.⁴⁴

This was the common interpretation of the proposition. In view of the condemnation and the progress of opinion since Catharinus' time and the development of the teaching of the Church, the opinion of Catharinus is not now held by any divine and must be virtually condemned.⁴⁵

F. EXTERNAL INTENTION AND SIMULATION

That external intention is not sufficient for the validity of a sacrament is clear from the example of simulation in which there is a fictitious placing of the sign, the sacramental action, without the intention of really confecting the sacrament. In the strict sense simulation consists in the fictitious placing of the matter and the form which are used in the sacraments. This of course is always done in an apparently serious manner according to the ordinary way of confecting the sacraments, and for the sole purpose of deception. Simulation may well have all the requirements which the school of Catharinus demands for external intention, since the matter and the form are placed in an apparently serious manner. This shows the sharp contrast which exists between the

⁴³ *Theologia Moralís*, Lib. VI, n. 23, Vol. II, p. 70.

⁴⁴ *Damnatarum Thesium Theologica Trutina*, Tom. I, Pars I, p. 492: Hic itaque est error, qui in hac propositione ab Alexandro VIII, proscribitur, quod scilicet sufficiat sola intentio adhibendi ritum externum ab Ecclesia præscriptum, et a Christo institutum, etiamsi non solum desit intentio faciendi, quod facit Ecclesia formaliter, sed etiam adsit intentio opposita.

⁴⁵ Slater, T., *A Manual of Moral Theology*, p. 30; Davis, H., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, Vol. III, p. 18.

two schools of thought, for in the definition which Vermeersch gives for simulation, he says that a sacrament is not confectioned by its use.⁴⁴ The reason why such a performance does not result in a sacrament is the fact that there is no internal intention. The external intention is certainly present. Haine declares that he who simulates the actions which the Church does, and performs them only externally, cannot be said to have the intention of doing what the Church does, but only of simulating what she does; since the Councils demand that the minister have the intention of doing and not simulating what the Church does, simulation is wholly insufficient.⁴⁵

G. EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL INTENTION

One of the better examples which will demonstrate the need of internal intention is that of conditional absolution, in which the confessor pronounces the words of absolution in the usual manner with the exception of the condition which he places before the words. If the condition is not fulfilled, there is no absolution although the words are uttered sincerely. The reason for this is not the lack of matter and form since they are correctly performed. A similar case is conditional baptism from which it is apparent that the internal intention seems to be necessary for the validity of the sacrament.⁴⁶

The rubrics of the Roman Missal give the following as an example of a defective intention: "Si quis non intendit conficere, sed delusorie agere."⁴⁷ Vermeersch writes that the priest who has bread before him, but *merely recites* the fact and the words used by Christ, does not confection the sacrament, because he has no intention of the sacrament.⁴⁸ No one would consider that consecration a true one in which the priest pronounces the words of consecration over the bread and wine in practice for his first

⁴⁴ *Theologia Moralís*, Tom. III, n. 175, p. 152: Simulatio sacramentorum est facta positio signi, i.e., actionis sacramentalis, quin revera sacramentum conficiatur.

⁴⁵ Haine, A., *Principia Theologiae Sacramentalis*, Cap. 5, Dub. 7, p. 383.

⁴⁶ Tournely, H., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Q. 7, Art. 1, Conc., *Praelectiones Theologicae*, Tom. I, pp. 113-114.

⁴⁷ Caput 7.

⁴⁸ *Theologia Moralís*, Tom. III, p. 145.

Mass.⁴⁹ If the priest has before him eleven hosts and intends to consecrate only ten, he does not consecrate any if he does not determine which ten he will consecrate.⁵⁰

Lehmkuhl gives an interesting case of conscience on the point. A certain priest had lost his faith and had joined a forbidden society, after which time he began to perform his priestly duties in an external manner only. He religiously observed the correct and exact performance of the matter and the form in the sacraments he administered, but inwardly he intended not to do what the Church does and what Christ instituted.

The solution of the case declares that the sacraments conferred by the priest were null and to be repeated absolutely.⁵¹ In all these cases there is no question about the correct matter and form, but only about the lack of the inner intention necessary for valid consecration. The external intention was present in each case, since the matter and the form were administered in a serious manner.

H. CENSURE OF CATHARINUS BY THEOLOGIANS

Since the Church had made no explicit condemnation of the doctrine of Catharinus, it was to be expected that no theologian would be so bold as to condemn it, though many came forth with strong statements against it. Cardinal Pallavicini thought that the doctrine was false but states specifically that it was not condemned by the Tridentine canons.⁵² Vasquez, after mentioning the teaching of the Protestants and the two opinions of internal and external intention, declares that the true and Catholic opinion expressly defined in the Councils, in his opinion, is that the internal

⁴⁹ Genicot, E., *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Cap. 2, Sect. 1, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, Vol. II, Tract. 12, p. 102: Defectu intentionis minime consecrat sacerdos qui ad rubricas addiscendas, verba consecrationis super panem recitat.

⁵⁰ Benedict XIV, *De Sacrosancto Missae Sacrificio*, Lib. III, Cap. 18, nn. 7-8 (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. VIII, pp. 212-213).

⁵¹ *Casus Conscientiae*, Vol. II, p. 14, Casus 7.

⁵² *Historiae Concilii Tridentini*, Lib. IX, Cap. 6, n. 2, Tom. II, p. 28: Equidem existimo Catharini sententiam falsam esse, sed non ideo per Tridentinos canones diserte damnatam; quapropter fas illi fuit affirmare, eam Concilio non contradicere. Cf. Lacey, F., "Intention," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 381.

intention of the minister is necessary for the validity of the sacraments, and that the opinion that the external intention is not sufficient is not only a true statement, but also that it has been defined in the Councils.⁸³ St. Robert Bellarmine says there was no difference between the opinion of Chemnitz and the other heretics, and that of Catharinus, except for the fact that at the end of his work Catharinus subjected himself to the Apostolic See and the Council whereas the heretics ridiculed both.⁸⁴ In the opinion of De Lugo the doctrine of Catharinus was closely related to that of the Protestants.⁸⁵ Benedict XIV mentions that theologians of better judgment free Catharinus from the censure of heresy, but that his doctrine received a severe blow by the condemnation of the opinion of Farvacques.⁸⁶

I. PROPOSITION CONDEMNED BY INNOCENT XI

A papal pronouncement which has a direct bearing on the problem of intention was the condemnation of the following proposition by Pope Innocent XI on March 2, 1679:

In conferring the sacraments it is not illicit to follow a probable opinion concerning the validity of a sacrament, the more safe one having been put aside, unless law, convention, or the danger of incurring a grave damage forbid it. Hence a probable opinion should not be used only in the conferring of baptism, priestly or episcopal orders.⁸⁷

This proposition concerns the minister's intention, since the doctrine of the sufficiency of external intention is a probable opinion. Thus in practice the use of external intention alone is

⁸³ Vasquez, G., *Sup. III Partem D. Thomae*, Q. 64, Art. 5, Cap. 3, n. 29, Disp. 8, Cap. 3, Tom. II, p. 260.

⁸⁴ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Lib. I, Cap. 28 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. III, p. 75) Quae opinio (Catharini) non video quid differat a sententia Kennitii et aliorum Haeticorum, nisi quod Catharinus in fine opusculi subjicit se apostolicae sedi, et concilio; illi autem rident utrumque.

⁸⁵ *De Sacramentis in Genere*, Disp. 8, Sect. 2, n. 15, *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales*, Vol. III, p. 373.

⁸⁶ *De Synodo Dioecessana*, Lib. VII, Cap. 4, n. 8 (*Opera Omnia*, Tom. XI, p. 196).

⁸⁷ DBU 1151.

never permitted since the internal intention is more safe and always available to the minister.

J. CONCLUSIONS

The study of the Dogmatic Theology on the intention of the minister in the confectio of the sacraments warrants the following conclusions:

1. The opinion of Catharinus and the school of external intention is not explicitly condemned, but in view of the common teaching of the great majority of theologians, the decrees of the Councils, and the condemnation of the proposition of Farvacques, it stands virtually condemned.

2. The internal intention is required for the validity of the sacraments. This, however, is not a matter of faith.

3. In practice the doctrine of external intention may never be used.

4. Provided the minister seriously performs all the sacramental rites, there is no need for being doubtful about the validity of the sacraments, for it is presumed that the minister has the requisite intention, unless he externally manifests the contrary. In the words of Pope Leo XIII:

The Church does not judge about the mind and intention in so far as it is something by its nature internal, but in so far as it is manifested externally, she is bound to judge concerning it.⁸⁸

5. The common opinion is that the external intention is insufficient for a valid sacrament, and thus, whenever it is certain that a minister, in conferring any of the sacraments which cannot be repeated, uses only the external intention and does not inwardly wish to do what the Church does, the sacrament should be repeated conditionally if the case is urgent. If it is not urgent, recourse should be had to the Holy See for a decision.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Bull *Apostolicae Curiae*, 13 sept. 1896 (CSCPF, Vol. II, n. 1954, p. 345); cf. Wynne, *Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, pp. 403-403 (ASS 29, 201).

⁸⁹ Benedict XIV, *De Synodo Dioec.*, Lib. VII, Cap. 4, n. 9 (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. XI, p. 196); St. Alphonsus, *Theologia Moralit*, Lib. VI, n. 23, Tom. II, p. 71.

In this exposition of the teaching of the Church and the common opinion of theologians throughout the centuries it is not intended to make the ministers and the recipients of the sacraments doubtful or scrupulous about the sacraments which they administer and receive. It is rather a matter of presenting in so far as possible the official teaching on a matter of great importance. It is hoped that the matter of external intention is more in the class of theory than practice. In fact, J. O'Kane calls the question of external and internal intention very speculative, saying that in practice the internal intention is hardly ever wanting.⁶⁰ It must also be recalled that the sacraments can be rendered null not only by the lack of intention, but also by the lack of correct matter and form, which could happen without the least suspicion on the part of the faithful. However, the latter could happen by accident, whereas the former could happen only through the deliberate will of the minister.

As to the objection that no one could be certain of having received the sacraments if internal intention is required, it seems futile. We are living among rational creatures and in the moral order of things we must depend upon one another for the sincerity of these actions as well as other actions of our daily life, and have the assurance that Christ protects His Church and enables her to safeguard and perpetuate the sacraments. Christ promised that He would be with His Church until the end of the world. Although men cannot be metaphysically certain of having received the sacraments, all may, according to common sense, depend upon the fidelity of Christ's ministers in the administration of the sacraments, and according to faith rely upon the indefectibility of the Church and her ministers as a body.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Notes on the Rubrics of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 2, n. 139, p. 47.

⁶¹ Devine, A., *The Sacraments Explained*, p. 177.

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