
Post-Ordination Priestly Crisis Today in the Light of *Vita Consecrata 16*: A Moral Theological Study

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Abstract!

This article examines the importance of the evangelical counsels in proclaiming the Gospel, especially by priests, and generally, not only as they apply to those preparing for the priesthood, but to Christ's faithful. The Evangelical Counsels include: Chastity, Obedience and Poverty. This study seeks solution to post-ordination priestly crisis in the conscientious appreciation of the evangelical counsels. This article argues that if the evangelical counsels are lived conscientiously by priests, post-ordination priestly crisis would be drastically reduced. The evangelical counsels are essential characteristics of the call to spreading the gospel of salvation announced by Jesus Christ. The call fundamentally is made to all Christians – however, especially to young people (seminarians), who intimately desire to follow Jesus Christ. The evangelical counsels though not commandments, are strictly recommended. The Holy Father Francis is of the view that there is every day martyrdom: the martyrdom of honesty, the martyrdom of patience in raising children; the martyrdom of fidelity to love, when it is easier to take another, more hidden path. In the face of materialistic and selfish life style, which summarize the challenges of post-ordination priestly crisis, the need to reexamine the obligations of the call to follow Jesus Christ in the counsels is very ad rem.

Introduction

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This article studies the Evangelical Counsels as conditions for following Jesus Christ, the master and author of priestly vocation. The Evangelical Counsels include: Chastity (can 599), Poverty (can 600) and Obedience (can 601). This study seeks solution to post-ordination priestly crisis through the conscientious appreciation of the evangelical counsels. This articles argues that if the evangelical counsels are lived conscientiously by priests, post-ordination-priestly crisis would be drastically reduced or totally eliminated. The evangelical counsels as treated in several canons of the Code of Canon Law (cans 599-601) and also in the Catechism of the Catholic Church,² and the Papal Teaching,³ are fundamental to discipleship. Generally, the evangelical counsels are essential characteristics of the call to spread the gospel of salvation in a unique life-style. In principle, the call fundamentally is made to all Christians – however, especially young seminarians and young people, who intimately desire to follow Jesus Christ. In a particular and more specific manner, the call to chastity, poverty and obedience as characteristics of discipleship is demanded of all the ministers of the gospel and generally all the baptized. The young man of the Gospel of Mark was desirous of becoming a disciple, however, it could be said he lacked a quality – poverty (Mark 10). Although, the evangelical counsels are not commandments they are strictly recommended by the Church. They can be called martyrdom of a sort. “Martyrdom of blood is not the only way to witness to Jesus Christ. . . . There is every day martyrdom: the martyrdom of honesty, the martyrdom of patience in raising children; the martyrdom of fidelity to love, when it is easier to take another, more hidden path”.⁴Therefore, in the face of materialistic and selfish life style, which summarize the challenges of post-ordination priestly crisis, the need to reexamine the tenets of the call to follow Jesus Christ in chastity, poverty and obedience is very *ad rem*. This article examines the place of the evangelical counsels as they enhance the proclamation of the Gospel especially by the priests and generally as they apply to young seminarians preparing for the priesthood.

Concretely, there is no modern priesthood as if the priesthood of Jesus is over and another is in place. Though one could legitimately

² The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC nos. 914-931, also 873).

³ Cf. Saint John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (25.03. 1996), 20: AAS 88 (1996) 393; cf. *ibid*, 26: AAS 88 (1996) 399-400

⁴ Pope Francis, Address, June 18, 2016.

talk of priesthood in the Old Testament, or the New Testament. However, the stress of this article is on the priesthood of the Jesus Christ from where the Catholic Church derives her priesthood. This article is neither a study of the Old Testament nor New Testament priesthood as such. Rather the article is an effort to make conscious how the Church wishes the priests of the Catholic Church to see themselves. The paper is an effort to grapple with some of the issues raised by the modern society in connection with the priesthood. There is only one priesthood that of Jesus Christ the Lord. A second look at the topic of this paper, one would feel a recast of the topic is called for, however, the topic remains since the need here is not a full blown discussion on the priesthood but only on certain issues that confront the priesthood of our time. On the one hand, it is helpful to know some of the problems facing the priesthood today, before we propose any solution. Ordinarily, no one can begin to solve an unknown problem. Therefore, let us see what constitutes what we may call post-ordination crisis in the modern society.

Post-Ordination Crisis

This paper does not pretend to treat the complex issue of personality crisis⁵ in the priesthood. Nevertheless, the issue of personality crisis⁶ in the priesthood to some degree can be traced to the issue of

⁵ When a culture comes in contact with another culture quite different from the one if the incoming culture does not favour the base culture, there is bound to be clash of values. In this situation the members of that culture may find themselves divided and if this is strong a split personality may result. Francis citing Mexican Bishops' Conference, *Que en Cristo Nuestra Paz México tengavidadigna*(15 February 2009), 67.42 (cf. *AmorisLatitia*, 51. **holds that**“family relationships can also explain the tendency to a violent personality. This is often the case with families where communication is lacking, defensive attitudes predominate, the members are not supportive of one another, family activities that encourage participation are absent, the parental relationship is frequently conflictual and violent, and relationships between parents and children are marked by hostility. Violence within the family is a breeding-ground of resentment and hatred in the most basic human relationships”. Replace family with diocese or parish the result is the same.

⁶ Cf. Pope Francis, *AmorisLatitiae*, 36. “On the other hand, “equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds and ends up considering each member of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the idea that one’s personality is shaped by his or her desires, which are considered absolute” “The tensions created by an overly individualistic culture, caught up with possessions and pleasures, leads to intolerance and hostility in families”. Here I would

materialism. Therefore, without undue delay, we suppose a major post ordination crisis can be summarized with the issue of materialism. One author describes materialism among many other challenges that confront the priests as the belief that money, possession and physical comforts are more important than spiritual values.⁷ Drawing from *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*,⁸ he enumerates other challenges, which for the purpose of this article we call crisis. These include the crisis of celibacy, crisis of total dedication to priestly ministry, the crisis of power and culture, the crisis of contemporary culture, and the risk of thinking of one's weakness.⁹ The future priests must know there are fundamental values apart from material possession and what the world offers. The issue of identity crisis equally fits into materialism as mentioned already. The other issue of priests wanting to be recognized in the many forms and shapes we find in our society cannot be overlooked. Some priests have taken titles,

also include today's fast pace of life, stress and the organization of society and labour, since all these are cultural factors which militate against permanent decisions. We also encounter widespread uncertainty and ambiguity. For example, we rightly value a personalism that opts for authenticity as opposed to mere conformity. While this can favour spontaneity and a better use of people's talents, if misdirected it can foster attitudes of constant suspicion, fear of commitment, self-centredness and arrogance. Freedom of choice makes it possible to plan our lives and to make the most of ourselves. Yet if this freedom lacks noble goals or personal discipline, it degenerates into an inability to give oneself generously to others. Indeed, in many countries where the number of marriages is decreasing, more and more people are choosing to live alone or simply to spend time together without cohabiting. We can also point to a praiseworthy concern for justice; but if misunderstood, this can turn citizens into clients interested solely in the provision of services.

⁷Maru Emmanuel, *Living and leaving a Legacy*, Port Harcourt, 2018, 162.

⁸ Congregation for the Clergy, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis: The Gift of the Priestly Vocation* (L, Ossevatore Romano, 2016 No. 84, cited in Maru, 2018, page!

⁹Maru Emmanuel, 2018, 159-160.

one hears, powerful priest, father- *ebube-ike*, *-otoikpa*, *-ebeano*, and so on. You can supply the many others you know. Some priests are also very rich, they make money by all means opposed to the sanctity of the priesthood. Some, to say the least are greedy like their counterparts in the society. All this can be linked to greed, which is a cancer. St Paul describes it as one of those things that should not be mentioned among presbyters (cf. 1 Tim 3:3; Eph 4:9; Jude 1:11). You know the danger of money and luxury; they attract unwanted visitors especially of the opposite sex. Where wealth and luxury abound one would be tempted¹⁰ to show one is a philanthropist – a social worker. However, a priest is none of these. Some priests even go into competition with the lay people in many other issues. However, there is a genuine post-ordination crisis - the care of the elderly and sick priests.¹¹ In the world of new media, priests are not lacking. An author describes the priests of the modern age as *e-priests*. This is how he puts it: “The *e-priest* is not one who uses technology for the sake of technology. He is not the priest who buys the latest mobile telephone in the market or expends enormous amount of money to equip himself with the latest electronic instruments just to show-off. The digital instruments are not to be used as status symbols, to be exhibited as evidence of one’s wealth or connection with the rich and powerful. He is rather one who knows that the instruments are there for the service of mankind”.¹² He then cites the Letter of Saint Peter which reads “Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

He continues “the *e-priest* is conscious that the new information and communication technologies offer an easy access to practically every sort of information, and one can immerse in the murky waters of cyberspace in “seeming anonymity”. But as the Big Brother reality show makes clear, there is no anonymity in the digital world. To echo the words of our Lord, in the digital world there is nothing

¹⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, New York, 2007, 160. “The way the petition (in our Lord’s Prayer) is phrased is shocking to many people: God does not lead us into temptation.” (See James 1:13; Matt 4:1)

¹¹ Cf. Anozie O., “Care of the Elderly in the Igbo-African Communalism in the Light of the *Letter to the Elderly* 11: An Ethical Theological Study” in: *Contemporary Issues for Authentic Existence*, Enugu Nigeria, 2018, 202-217.

¹² Walter Ihejirika, “Pope Francis’ Dynamic Vision of the Catholic Priesthood”, in: *Evangelical Witness*, APT Pub. Owerri, 2018, 375-392.

hidden that will not be revealed, and there is nothing said in the dark that will not be made clear in the daylight. In sum, the *e-priest* makes the best of the digital revolution and uses them to cooperate with God to make the world a better place.”¹³

Though the new media can be helpful it has also ruined many. For the fact that priests can become versatile with the internet and all that go with it should not stereotype the priest. To call priests of the modern society *e-priests* or any such names seems to separate a few from others. A priest is primarily a bearer of the good news. This article advises that a healthy use of the social media is helpful, however, like any other normal issue in the hands of humans can turn into a demon if not properly used. Having listed some of the post ordination crisis, embedded in materialism, it is now appropriate to look at what this paper proposes to be the solution to the post-ordination crisis. This will be done by a study of the Evangelical Counsels.

The Evangelical Counsels

The document *Vita Consecrata* was given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 25 March, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, in the year 1996, the eighteenth Pontificate of Pope John Paul II. The document has 112 numbers, with each number having its own subtitle. This document is specifically on the evangelical counsels. The no. 16 has as its subtitle: *This is my beloved Son: listen to him!* This subtitle is an appeal to the counsel of obedience, while number 104 has its subtitle as *unbounded generosity*. This number asks useful questions attended to in the body of the document. This number points to the puzzle many people today would have, since they still ask: “What is the point of the consecrated life? Why embrace this kind of life, when there are so many urgent needs in the areas of charity and of evangelization itself, to which one can respond even without assuming the particular commitments of the consecrated life? Is the consecrated life not a kind of “waste” of human energies which might be used more efficiently for a greater good, for the benefit of humanity and the Church? These questions are asked more frequently in our day, as a consequence of a utilitarian and technocratic culture which is inclined to assess the

¹³ Walter Ihejirika, 2018, 375-392.

importance of things and even of people in relation to their immediate "usefulness" (cf. VC 104). These questions properly studied bother on materialism, which the adequate understanding of the evangelical counsels will attend.

Generally, there are three evangelical counsels – chastity, poverty and obedience. “The evangelical counsels more than being a simple renunciation, refer to a specific acceptance of the mystery of Christ, lived within the Church” (*Vita Consecrata* 16). This means that the teaching of the Church on the issue is very fundamental (cf. CCC 914-931). In the light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council one recognizes “that the profession of the evangelical counsels *indisputably belongs to the life and holiness of the Church*. This means that the consecrated life, present in the Church from the beginning, can never fail to be one of her essential and characteristic elements, for it expresses her very nature” (*Vita Consecrata* 29). The document goes on to indicate that “in the unity of the Christian life, the various vocations are like so many rays of the one light of Christ, whose radiance *brightens the countenance of the Church*” (VC 16). The document draws attention to the whole of Christ’s Faithful, when it says that “The *laity*, by virtue of the secular character of their vocation, reflect the mystery of the Incarnate Word particularly insofar as he is the Alpha and the Omega of the world, the foundation and measure of the value of all created things.” It then adds that “*Sacred ministers*, for their part, are living images of Christ the Head and Shepherd who guides his people during this time of “already and not yet”, as they await his coming in glory” (VC 16). To situate the counsels more exactly the document continues that “It is the duty of the *consecrated life* to show that the Incarnate Son of God is *the eschatological goal towards which all things tend*, the splendor before which every other light pales, and the infinite beauty which alone can fully satisfy the human heart” (VC 16).

Furthermore, the document admonishes that “in the consecrated life, then, it is not only a matter of following Christ with one's whole heart, of loving him “more than father or mother, more than son or daughter” (cf. *Mt* 10:37) — for this is required of every disciple, which includes in a special way the youth, but the consecrated life calls “for living and expressing the counsels *by conforming one's whole existence to Christ* in an all-encompassing commitment which foreshadows the eschatological perfection, to the extent that

this is possible in time and in accordance with the different charisms” (VC16).

The section concludes by stating that

By professing the evangelical counsels, consecrated persons not only make Christ the whole meaning of their lives but strive to reproduce in themselves, as far as possible, "that form of life which he, as the Son of God, accepted in entering this world. "By embracing *chastity*, they make their own the pure love of Christ and proclaim to the world that he is the Only-Begotten Son who is one with the Father (cf. *Jn10:30, 14:11*). By imitating Christ's *poverty*, they profess that he is the Son who receives everything from the Father, and gives everything back to the Father in love (cf. *Jn17:7, 10*). By accepting, through the sacrifice of their own freedom, the mystery of Christ's filial *obedience*, they profess that he is infinitely beloved and loving, as the One who delights only in the will of the Father (cf. *Jn4:34*), to whom he is perfectly united and on whom he depends for everything. By this profound "configuration" to the mystery of Christ, the consecrated life brings about in a special way that *confessio Trinitatis* which is the mark of all Christian life; it acknowledges with wonder the sublime beauty of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and bears joyful witness to his loving concern for every human being (VC 16).

The moral implication of the foregoing is that not only the consecrated persons are called to follow the evangelical counsels but all the faithful and by implication the priests, who also make promise during their ordination to follow Christ more faithfully. It is rather unreasonable to argue that the clergy do not make vows. It is important to note that “public-promise” take the nature of vows when made in full consciousness of the implications as implied in the teaching of the Church. Priests and future priests must acquire the counsels as virtues.

The Evangelical Counsels as Virtues

Virtue is a firm habit to consistently and constantly do what is right. In a broad and general sense, the counsels must not be understood as opinions or options, which one is free to follow or not. Even though this may be implied in the meaning of the word counsel, however, in theology the counsels are understood as the Gospel demands that configure one to the life of Christ.¹⁴ The evangelical counsels properly understood will dispose priests and those still in training for the priesthood in the right perspective to appreciate their vocation as a call that demands free response. The moral implication is that one who answers this call has a duty in conscience¹⁵ to constantly and firmly put into practice the dictates of the counsels. It will also help ameliorate the bad behaviors and evils that challenge the priesthood in the modern period. The surest way to combat evil is to learn the virtues¹⁶ - to live virtuously. Raymond Brown argues that “Since the holiness of God Himself is connected with His being apart, a major aspect of the holiness of the priest consisted of his separation from the secular or profane.”¹⁷ The priests and by implication the lay faithful are called to imitate¹⁸

Evangelical Chastity

“Priests, including diocesan priests, also called secular priests, live the Evangelical Counsels of Chastity (Purity), Poverty and Obedience (Politeness) (cf. *CIC*, can. 573-576). The religious take the vow to live the three Evangelical Counsels in order to follow

¹⁴ Cf. LG 39-45 & *Vita Consecrata* 16ff “The Evangelical Counsels” (www.claretianformation.com, accessed 15.03.2018)

¹⁵ *Gaudium Spes*, 16 “... The voice of conscience when necessary speaks to one’s heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.”

¹⁶ “A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions” (CCC 1833).

¹⁷ Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop Biblical Reflections*, Paulist Press: New York, 1970, 8.

¹⁸ Emmanuel Maru, *Living and Leaving a Legacy*, Port Harcourt: Nigeria, 2018, 6. “Through the sacrament priests by the anointing of the Holy Spirit are signed with a special character and so are configured to Christ the priest in such a way that they are able to act in the person of Christ the Head.”

Christ more closely, but every priest promises to be chaste, poor and obedient. Indeed, “Christ proposes the Evangelical Counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church – CCC, n.915*)¹⁹

The Theological Meaning of Chastity

The basic meaning of celibacy for the kingdom is found in Christ, and through Him, in the Holy Trinity itself. Celibacy expresses the complete, loving gift of oneself to God. It manifests the primacy of God above all and over all things, even the strongest bonds in this world, also those of the family. Celibacy highlights the theological virtue of charity. “The consecrated life must present to today's world examples of chastity lived by men and women who show balance, self-mastery, an enterprising spirit, and psychological and affective maturity. ... Consecrated chastity thus appears as a joyful and liberating experience. Enlightened by faith in the Risen Lord and by the prospect of the new heavens and the new earth (cf. *Rev 21:1*), it offers a priceless incentive in the task of educating to that chastity which corresponds to other states of life as well” (VC 88).²⁰

Chastity in Priestly Ministry

Chastity is one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1832)²¹. It is important to note with Karl H. Peschke, that “Chastity is the moral force which keeps order in the sphere of human sexuality”.²² Priestly celibacy – chastity consciously acquired inclines one to do readily and steadily what is morally good. It is not just abstaining from unlawful sexual activities, it concerns fundamentally purity of thought (Matt 5:28). Hence, chastity for priests/religious involves both abstaining from unlawful sexual activities and purity of thought. “Chastity ‘for the sake of the kingdom of heaven’ (Mt. 19:22) which religious profess, must be

¹⁹Udaigwe, Brain, *The Profile of a Priest*, Togo, 2017

²⁰ This number has the subtitle: “challenges to the consecrated life”. The major challenge to consecrated life is the desire of materialism. This can be overcome through actual and effective life of total submersion in the life of Christ.

²¹*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994

²²Peschke, Karl H. *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*. Vol. 2. *Bangalore: Theological*, 2001.

esteemed as an exceptional gift of grace. It uniquely frees the heart of man (cf. 1 Cor. 7: 32-35), so that he becomes more fervent in love for God and for all men.”²³. For married couples, chastity refers to conjugal chastity, which married couples practice also for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. For the unmarried state it refers to the consecrated life, which fundamentally includes the priestly celibacy. Through custody of the senses, mortification and engaging the mind with active ministry priests enhance the life of chastity. Celibacy for the Kingdom implies “a sign of pastoral charity and an incentive to it”²⁴. It must be said that the priestly celibacy practiced in chastity implies fundamental moral significance in that it teaches the young seminarians the correct way to express one’s sexuality. Young (Seminarians) must see human sexuality as a gift from God, which demand discretion. In effect priestly celibacy promotes totally an undivided attention for the service rendered to God and humanity. The best time to imbibe the virtue of chastity is during the early formative years for the youth. Paradoxically, through self-renunciation, the celibate grows to human and Christian maturity and responsibility. The celibate exposes the distorted ideas of many forms of current freedom. He also helps ransom the society, as it were, from the effects of unbridled selfishness.²⁵“Priests give, moreover, a living sign of the world to come, by a faith and charity already made present, in which the children of the resurrection neither marry nor take wives.”²⁶ Fundamentally, *Canon 277 §1* holds that, “Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. This implies they are bound to celibacy, which is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart and are able to dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and humanity.”

²³ Vatican II Council, Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, 12

²⁴ Vatican II Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priest, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 16.

²⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Address John to Religious Men and women of England and Wales*, 1982, 7

²⁶ Cf. Luke 20:35; Pius, *Catholici Sacerdotii*, 1936, 24-28

Chastity does not function alone, it requires the assistance of the evangelical poverty, which is the other side of the coin.

Evangelical Poverty

“The virtue of poverty (evangelical) according to the Gospel requires all disciples of Christ to treat God and God’s kingdom as the only true wealth of the human heart (Mt.20:28). This involves the readiness to rely completely on God, with everything, even one’s own life (Matt. 6:19-21, 24-34, 10:37-39; 16:24-26; 19:29). Through poverty voluntarily embraced in imitation of Christ - being poor in spirit and in fact, singly and corporately”²⁷, priests/religious show that there are more fundamental values in life. “Evangelical poverty is a clear and concrete way of manifesting that “God is the only true wealth for the human person. Lived according to the example of Christ who being rich became poor (2Cor. 8:9), it is the expression of the total giving of self that happens reciprocally among the three divine persons.” Priests who practice evangelical poverty do so in order to be like Christ, who was totally free, available.”²⁸ Poverty is treated in the *Code of Canon Law* can. 600 as one of the evangelical counsels, which is necessary for discipleship.

Poverty in Priestly Ministry

Evangelical poverty has an apostolic meaning because, in a society marked by materialism and greed for possessions that blind people to the needs and sufferings of those who are the weakest and most vulnerable, it is a remedy to cordial coexistence between peoples. Evangelization will thus become credible, if priests readily share with those in need. Evangelical poverty ensures that luxuries and a life of luxury can be secondary or avoided. It helps to prevent an excessive accumulation of goods. Evangelical poverty helps priests

²⁷Vatican II Council, Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*,, 13.

²⁸ Vatican II Council, Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*,, 13

to maintain a simple and humble lifestyle, which enables easy identification and readiness to share with the poor in imitation of Christ. Evangelical poverty minimizes the danger of being entrapped in a spirit of ownership and embezzlement of public funds. Poverty is supported by evangelical obedience, which is the salt of the foregoing.

Evangelical Obedience

To follow Jesus Christ demands that all His disciples obey God and God's representatives in the church. Likewise, it demands that each one submit to the other (Eph 5:21) and serve one another (Mt. 20:26, 23: 11) and help bear the burdens of one another (Rom 12:15, 1Cor.12:25, Eph 4: 25). The Lord and Master Jesus Christ commands his followers to wash each other's feet (Jn. 13:2-15) and to give their lives for their brothers and Sisters, as he did (Jn. 15:12-14). I have given you an example that you would follow: wash one another's feet. Obedience, practiced in imitation of Christ, whose food was to do the will of the Father (John 4:34), manifests a dependence characteristic of a son, not a slave." Obedience has an apostolic meaning because mission involves sending and compels obedience to the father's will. Obedience manifests itself as a charism of service, testifying that there is no contradiction between obedience and freedom. It is a free choice to do the right things. It is good to note that "kingdom of priests" is to be understood of Christians much in the same way as it was understood of Israel in Exod. 19:6 because this is a people bound to God by a special covenant relationship, it is to be a specially Holy people, nay, holy as priests.²⁹

Reflection - The Priest in the modern society

We must re-emphasize that the priest's life is more important than the work he does, because he is not a simple social worker operating, for instance, for an NGO. As Benedict XVI advises that "Without the logic of holiness, the ministry is merely a social function. The quality of your life depends on the quality of your personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ, who is the source

²⁹ J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy* (Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* XII; Leiden: Brill, 1966).cited in Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop Biblical Reflections*, Paulist Press: New York, 1970.

and centre of our being."³⁰ In addition to the evangelical counsels, Udaigwe lists many characteristics every priest should possess. He groups them into three categories – the first he calls „The Triplex Munus”, which are: Purifier (Sanctifier), Prophet, and Pastor. The second group are the evangelical counsels, which are: Purity (Chastity), Poverty and Obedience (Politeness). The others he classifies as “General Characteristics” and these include: Pious, Penitent, Patient, Paternal, Partaking, Positive, Peaceful, Pleasant, Passionate, Persevering, Perspicacious, Prudent, Pragmatic, Praiseworthy, Proper, Principled, Punctual and Playful.³¹ These qualities certainly agree with what we refer to as good habits, which are summarized under the virtues. What this means is that a priest should not be wanting in these virtues (Good Habits). This article is convinced that if priests cultivate the virtues as taught by the Catholic Teaching prioritized in the evangelical counsels, the post-ordination crisis would be minimized.

Conclusion

This article concludes by suggesting that despite the crisis (challenges) of the post-priestly-ordination; 1) The priests should allow the values of the Catholic Faith to be the foundation and animator of their lives. 2) Though there may be crisis, priests (seminarians) should cultivate the virtues of honesty and charity these would enable them overcome the post-ordination crisis. 3) Priests (and also those in formation) should learn authentic Catholic values, such as purity of life, total obedience, honesty, humility, openness, forthrightness, accountability. 4) Priests should not neglect deep and sincere devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and our Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary. This study believes that these recommendation would guide priests (seminarians) to authentic priestly life. Finally, this study also believes that the evangelical counsels should be seen not as options but as moral obligations to be followed without reservation. With Fulton Sheen we conclude that priests should imitate Christ in his example of sacrifice, who offered himself as victim to make His

³⁰Address to Priest, Seminarians, Men and Women Religious and Lay Faithful, St Gall Seminary, Ouidah, Republic of Benin, 19 November 2011, cf. also *OptatamTotius*, n. 8 cited in Udaigwe Brain, 2017.

³¹Udaigwe Brain, *The Profile of a Priest according to my 25 Ps.* Togo, 2017, 21ff.

incarnation continually timely through the bread of life.³² Priests and candidates to the priesthood should learn and integrate the life of total dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, who calls. In this way, the over dependence on what the world can offer would be drastically reduced.

³² Fulton J. Sheen, *Life of Christ*, Bangalore 1977, 134.