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## RELIGIOUS PROFESSION AS SACRAMENTALS IMPRESSING CHARACTER

### Introduction

Religious profession belongs to an interesting list of rites that were for one reason or another ultimately excluded from the list of Seven Sacraments. Although it is not a Sacrament *per se*, it is very sacramental and emulates almost all of the Seven Sacraments in its purpose and effects. This paper will explore and present Religious profession as a Sacramental with a permanent character. This will be done in three sections.

The first section will trace the historical development of religious profession from the simple adoption of a habit to the multistage process of novitiate, simple profession, and solemn profession. The particular connection between baptism and profession will be discussed in this section. The second section will trace the theological development of Sacramentality into the narrow list of Seven Sacraments. During which both Tertullian's use of *sacramentum* and Augustine's concept of character maybe applied to Religious Profession. In this section, it will also be made clear as to why Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas finally omit profession from their list of Seven Sacraments.

The third section will explore the Church's concept of Sacramentals, particularly those that permanently bless and consecrate persons for specific roles and ministries in the church. This will be done by examining the institution of an acolyte and the blessing of an Abbot and applying these insights to religious profession. The blessing of an altar and the consecration of a church also have a permanent lasting effect and can provide insights into how this is achieved by the prayer of the church. In 1970, the Church promulgated a new *ordo* of religious profession, reflecting a more mature

understanding of religious profession and thus this paper will explore it as well. This *ordo* introduces a new prayer over the newly professed religious that can be said to be both a consecratory preface and an epiclesis. Finally, the paper will conclude how the profession of solemn vows may be seen as a sacramental with a permeant character.

This paper does not pretend to be all-encompassing nor to say anything new. Many things will fall outside its scope. The paper will generally focus on Solemn Profession in the more venerable orders of the Church. Simple vows or temporal vows, although discussed, are not the subject of this paper and will only be briefly referred to. Finally, this paper will omit any discussion of the profession of solemn vows in another institution after one has already professed them in his own. The religious vows of women have their own particularities and will not be specifically discussed in this paper.

## 1. The Religious and His profession

The Second Vatican Council nebulously teaches that the religious state is drawn from both the clergy and the laity and belongs to the heart of the Church<sup>1</sup>. The Church sees the religious as living the fuller life of the beatitudes under the formal precept of a vow, rather than an invitation, in a formally recognised public state in the Church. A religious answers a call from God, to a fuller imitation of Christ<sup>2</sup>. This life is usually fulfilled within the context of a religious family, with its own particular charism and within the codification of a religious rule and constitutions. Entrance into this state of life is done gradually, through various rites and rituals. At the heart of these rituals lies the profession of vows and the consecratory prayer. These rituals look remarkably like the rites of ordination and have similarities to the Sacrament of marriage. The question can be asked, why aren't these rites a Sacrament? Many people with a rudimentary understanding of the faith conflate the profession of vows with the Sacrament of Holy Orders;

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, Const. de Ecclesia *Lumen Gentium*, 21 Novembris 1964, AAS 57 (1965), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. THE PROVINCIAL CURIA OF THE AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE OF THE ORDER OF ST. PAUL THE FIRST HERMIT, *The Rule, the Constitution and the General Directory of the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit*, Penrose Park 2019, Article 7.

some go so far as to consider the Solemn Profession of a religious nun as a Holy Order. This section of the paper will discuss; rather briefly the history of religious life in the church, the formalisation of this into profession of religious vows, and the consecration of the religious by the church. Next, the section will address the distinction in the current practice of the Church between public vows and private vows, temporal vs perpetual profession, solemn and simple vows. This section will then end by addressing why Religious profession is not one of the Seven Sacraments.

Profession may be considered either as a declaration openly made, or as a state of life publicly embraced. The origins of religious profession date from the time when Christians were recognized in the Church as followers after perfection in the practice of religious life. We meet them in the third century, under the name of ascetics, called in Greek asketai, and in Latin confessores. Eusebius (Church History III.37) numbers among the ascetics the most illustrious pontiffs of the first ages, St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp, and others. After these, in the fourth century, come the hermits and monks, followed in the eleventh century by the canons regular, in the thirteenth century by the mendicant orders, in the sixteenth by the clerks regular, and lastly by the members of religious congregations<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.1. Origins

There are many theories as to when and where religious life originated in the church. Some see the college of Apostles and the primitive church-community as the first religious community. This argument is frequently made by canons regular<sup>4</sup>. A more popular view is that religious life appeared during at the end of the age of martyrs. Disappointed that they could no longer prove their love and devotion to Christ by being eaten by lions in the arena, the zealous Christians left for the deserts of Egypt to be consumed by the harshness of the desert and the life of *solus cum Deo*

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<sup>3</sup> A. VERMEERSCH, *Religious Profession*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Kevin Knight, New York 1911.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. ALLARIA, *Canons and Canonesses Regular*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Kevin Knight, New York 1908.

*solo*<sup>5</sup>. Still others see the origins of religious in the rejection of a now state-sponsored Christianity, diluted by lukewarm Christians and opportunists, in a world where the emperor himself is a Christian. Disgusted by the sad state of affairs, the disgruntled proto-religious forsook society and ran the ascetical race in their own cities of angels<sup>6</sup>. Naturally, all these proto-religious saw Christ himself as the first religious, the one totally consecrated to God, who lived the beatitudes. Mention must also briefly be made of consecrated virgins and widows, who sought to marry their one true love, Christ himself. Clearly the origins of religious life cannot be reduced to single source, rather more likely it is a combination of all these causes. It can certainly be said that Egypt did provide a fertile ground for the growth of these religious.

St. Paul of Thebes, better known as St. Paul the First Hermit, is obviously presented by St. Jerome as the first hermit<sup>7</sup>. St. Anthony of the Desert, to whom we owe knowledge of St. Paul, won for himself the pious title of “the first monk”<sup>8</sup>. St. Pachomius is known as the first organiser of monks into a community, although this community resembled more an army camp rather than our contemporary monastery<sup>9</sup>. At this stage, one becomes a monk, which is the catch all term for religious, by merely leaving society and adopting a religious habit<sup>10</sup>. There is no explicit rite used to receive the habit nor is there any form of liturgical rite for adopting the monastic state of life. St. Paul flees into the desert and as St. Jerome tells us makes himself a tunic from palm leaves<sup>11</sup>. The *Vita* of Anthony of the Desert tells us that he was clothed, as opposed to unclothed<sup>12</sup>. In the monasteries of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. S. J. ROŻEJ, *Poprzez stulecia śladami św. Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika*, WSD Zakonu Paulinów, Kraków 1990, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. R. L. FOX, *Pagans and Christians: In the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine*, London 2006, 569.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. JEROME, *The Life of Paulus the First Hermit*, translated by M.A. Freemantle, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Jerome: The Principal Works of St. Jerome*, edited by Philip Schaff, Michigan 1892.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. C. BUTLER, *St. Anthony*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, edited by Kevin Knight, New York 1907.

<sup>9</sup> T. CURNOW, *Pantokrator: An Introduction to Orthodoxy*, Cambridge 2009, 41.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. SAJ, *Prawno-teologiczne aspekty konsekracji zakonnej*, in „Prawo Kanoniczne (Kwartalnik prawno-historyczny)” 49 (2006), no. 3-4, 3-19.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. JEROME, *The Life of Paulus the First Hermit*, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. ATHANASIOS, *Vita S. Antonii*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church - St. Athanasius Select Works and Letters*, edited by Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, Michigan 1892, 188-221.

St. Pachomius, the old clothes of the candidate were discarded when he joined the monastery, and a habit was donned after the initial trial period. If the monk left the monastery, his old clothes were restored to him. This primitive habit consisted of a sleeveless linen tunic, girdled at the waist with a belt and a hooded cloak<sup>13</sup>. Already we see the birth of a type of ritual of admittance to the religious life. The stage of development may be seen with the Rule of St. Basil.

## 1.2. The Masters

St. Basil decides in his rule in a favour of monks having a habit. It is to be in dark tone and colour to distinguish it from the dress of ordinary persons, particularly of women. Basil's habit is very much in the vein of St. Pachomius'. The role of testifying to a "profession of a Godlike" life is ascribed to the fact of wearing a habit. This of course is balanced by the now famous quote of the cowl not making the monk<sup>14</sup>. At this stage we see a focus on distinguishing monks from hermits and ascetics, particularly through monks living out their vocation in a community. For example, in the rule of St Basil, there is a requirement of all being present when a postulant is received, because the superior's authority itself is not enough to receive a new member<sup>15</sup>. After this initial reception, there is a period of more formal probation. However, this is still religious life in its experiment stages; therefore, there are no hard and fast rules<sup>16</sup>. After passing various tests this candidate is admitted more fully into the community and this is marked by formal profession, in the presence of the brethren, against a background of joyous thanksgiving and fervent prayer<sup>17</sup>. Basil makes mention of "chiefs of the church" being present at this profession, Morrison suggests that this indicates the formal presence of the clergy. This profession involves a questioning of the candidate and Morrison suggests the actual profession is made by responding positively to the superior quoting Matthew

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<sup>13</sup> W. H. MACKEAN, *Christian Monasticism in Egypt*, New York 1930, 61, 63, 64.

<sup>14</sup> E. F. MORISON, *St. Basil and His Rule: A Study in Early Monasticism*, London 1912, 130.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid*, 88.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

16:24<sup>18</sup>. Morrison posits that this is the stage that the idea of profession being permanent or irrevocable is introduced. Naturally, this is seen as a consequence of the monk, once professed being given over to God, of being set part and sanctified in a particular sense. The consequences of this are brought out by St. Basil saying that to sin against this consecration is to sin against God and commit sacrilege<sup>19</sup>. Although St. Benedict speaks highly of the Rule of St. Basil<sup>20</sup>, he himself advances the concept of religious profession in terms of particular vows.

In the forty-third chapter of his rule, St. Benedict gives a detailed account of how to receive a brother into the community. After a stage of probation and trial, the one to be admitted makes a promise in the oratory of the monastery. This is done in the presence of the community and is received by the superior. St. Benedict introduces the element of physically writing out the text of the profession and this is signed by the brother. This document is then placed on the altar. St. Benedict defines three promises, which we would now refer to as vows. These are Stability, Conversion of Manners, and Obedience. A form of poverty is also mentioned, on account of St. Benedict requiring the newly professed to divest himself of his worldly possession. Once again, we find the casting away of secular dress and the adoption of a habit. Curiously, St. Benedict implies the permanence of this profession in the opening part of the chapter in the word “that from that day forward it is no longer permitted to him to wrest his neck from under the yoke of the rule.” Then he goes on to mention that “if on the devil’s persuasion he would ever consent to leave.... He be stripped of his monastic habit and cast out”<sup>21</sup>. It seems contradictory, but the final words of the chapter state clearly that the abbot and monastery, implying that although he may have disregarded his profession, the monastery and God have not, keep the document of profession<sup>22</sup>. This greatly suggests a permanence of these vows. It is good to highlight that at this stage there is a form of profession and there are vows, perhaps surprisingly not the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience that we are used to.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 91: “Then Jesus told his disciples: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> BENEDICT, *The Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, translated by Rev. Boniface (1844-1923), Grand Rapids 1949, chapter LXXIII.

<sup>21</sup> *Rule of St. Benedict*, chapter LXXIII.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, chapter LXXIII.

The first time the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are mentioned is in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and in the profession formula of the Canons of St. Victor<sup>23</sup>. This is part of the great development in religious life, with the regularisation of Canons<sup>24</sup>. In this period, we see the rise of the Norbertines and the Canons of the Lateran. The 13th century sees the crystallisation of the three vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience as the basis of religious profession<sup>25</sup>. Although it is interesting to note that even with the decisive contribution of the Dominicans to the evolution of religious life, St. Dominic only desired his order to profess explicitly the vow of obedience<sup>26</sup>. The change from the Benedictine vows of stability, obedience and conversion of manners to the mendicant vows of poverty, chastity and obedience is significant, granting a greater flexibility and dynamism to religious life, but it is still a firm continuation of monasticism complete with its enclosure and choir obligation. The Order of St. Paul the First Hermit here is of note, because it is an explicitly monastic order, yet it adopts the configuration of a mendicant order<sup>27</sup>.

### 1.3. Simple Vows

A definite change occurs with the advent of the Jesuits. St. Ignatius envisaged his society taking less serious vows. He desired them to profess vows simply, and that this profession be renewed annually until the religious professes vows definitively and solemnly<sup>28</sup>. Later in the apostolic constitution, *Ad Universalis Ecclesiae* Pius IX extends the concept of annual renewal to all religious orders in the church<sup>29</sup>. Certainly, until this moment, religious profession only occurred once, and this was done definitively.

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<sup>23</sup> T. MERTON, P. F. O'CONNELL, *The Life of the Vows: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*, Colledgeville 2012, 161.

<sup>24</sup> S. WEINFURTER, *Neuere Forschung zu den Regularkanonikern im deutschen Reich des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts*, „Historische Zeitschrift“ 224 (1977), no. 2, 379-397.

<sup>25</sup> E. GAMBARI, *Życie zakonne po Soborze Watykańskim II [Vita religiosa secondo il Concilio e il nuovo Diritto Canonico]*, translated by Jan Efreim Bielecki, Kraków 1998, 69.

<sup>26</sup> C.J. MEWS, *Poverty and Devotion in Mendicant Cultures 1200-1450*, London 2016, 14.

<sup>27</sup> J.S. PŁATEK, *Początki Zakonu Św. Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika*, Częstochowa, 1989, 5.

<sup>28</sup> A. VERMEERSCH, *Religious Profession*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Kevin Knight, New York 1911.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. P. M. J. ROCK, *Ad Universalis Ecclesiae*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Kevin Knight, New York 1907.

Following this, the dichotomy between simple and solemn profession is introduced into the life of the church. This moment also sees a distinction in religious life not between monks and friars, but between Orders and Societies.

As history progresses more and more forms of religious life are founded, but these forms begin to depart further and further from the now ancient profession of monks. Since new religious institutes are founded for particular ministries and apostolates in the church such as teaching and nursing, their constitutions are flexibly tailored according to the apostolate. St. Vincent de Paul, in founding the Congregation of the Mission formulated the vows of the congregation in such a way as to blur their status: were they religious or secular priests<sup>30</sup>? Certainly, in these centuries we see an emphasis on the religious life as being a means of living the priesthood, or executing a certain mission in the church, rather than being an end in itself. What was exceptional in the military orders of the medieval ages, becomes the norm in clerks regular of the Redemptorists, Passionists and Salesians. Interestingly this also marks the end of a clear distinctive habit and the embrace of a more secular cassock by the religious congregations. The 1800s sees the desire for clarity between religious orders and religious congregations. This is achieved in the clear distinction between solemn vows and simple vows.

As we have seen, until the founding of the Jesuits, the understanding of vows was always "Solemn." Vows were made once, after a yearlong period of preparation, as originally defined by St. Benedict,<sup>31</sup> later mandated by the Canons of the Council of Trent,<sup>32</sup> and these vows were seen as definitive. The introduction of renewable simple vows by the Jesuits and, since the 19th century, the requirement for all orders to spend at least three years in these vows before solemn profession had an interesting impact on the Sacramental understanding of Religious profession. It is assumed that the distinction between the two types of vows is that a vow is solemn if it is legitimately received and confirmed publicly by the Church. This is usually done by a superior in an act of public worship. Simple vows on the other

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<sup>30</sup> C. GALLAGHER, *The Church and Institutes of Consecrated Life*, „Way Supplement”, no. 50 (1984), 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Rule of St. Benedict*, Chapter LXXIII.

<sup>32</sup> COUNCIL OF TRENT *the Twenty-Fifth Session, The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, translated by J. Waterworth, edited by J. Waterworth, London: Dolman, London 1848, *Chapter XV*, 250.

hand are usually made in a less public manner, usually not in a church, and not during sacred liturgy. Essentially solemn vows were recognised by the Church, whilst simple vows were not<sup>33</sup>. This is later confirmed by the 1917 Code of Canon Law in Canon 1308 §2<sup>34</sup>.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law offers the following judicial insights into profession. Canon 553 associates the reception of the habit with the beginning of novitiate, not with profession<sup>35</sup>. Canon 574 implies that vows are simply professed for at least three years before solemn vows, rather than being renewed yearly<sup>36</sup>. Woywod, commenting on the same Canon, says that until the 1917 code, “clerical” novices took simple perpetual vows after novitiate, the vows being simple because 21 was the required age for any profession to be regarded as solemn<sup>37</sup>. Canon 579 tells us that any wedding vows taken after solemn vows are invalid as opposed to being illicit<sup>38</sup>. Interestingly Canon 636 allows solemn vows to be annulled by taking simple vows in another institute<sup>39</sup>. One can see that although the church has collapsed a great distinction between simple and solemn vows, she still ascribes a certain elevation to solemn vows over simple vows.

It is easy to see how the profession of Benedictine monks or Dominican Friars can be taken to be a sacrament. It is done once, it is definitive, and it is solemnly received by the church in a formal matter. On the other hand, the introduction of a congregation with simple vows, that even if they are definite, still have a clear element of temporality about

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<sup>33</sup> A. VEILLEUX, *Evoluzione della vita religiosa nel suo contesto storico-spirituale*, translated by James Jarzembowski, in *Per una presenza viva dei religiosi nella Chiesa e nel mondo*, edited by Agostino Favale et alia, Roma 1970.

<sup>34</sup> *Codex iuris canonici*. Pii Pontificis Maximi Iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus, in *AAS*, 9 (1917/II), pp. 1-521, Canon 1308 §2: *Sollemne, si ab Ecclesia uti tale fuerit agnitum; secus, simplex*.

From here on the 1917 Code will be referred to as CIC17 and Canon will be referred to as Can.

<sup>35</sup> *Novitiatu incipit susceptione habitus*. CIC17 Can. 553

<sup>36</sup> *Votorum simplicium professionem ad triennium valituram, vel ad longius tempus*. CIC17 Can. 574

<sup>37</sup> S. WOYWOD, *The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law*, New York 1918, 112.

<sup>38</sup> *Simplex professio, temporaria sit vel perpetua, actus votis contrarios reddit illicitos, sed non invalidos, nisi aliud expresse cautum fuerit; professiones autem sollemnes, sint irritabiles, etiam invalidos*. CIC17 Can. 579.

<sup>39</sup> *Sollemnitas votorum in eo qui legitime secundum superiores canones vota simplicia in Congregatione religiosa nuncupat, eo ipso exstinguitur, nisi aliud in apostolico indulto expresse caveatur*. CIC17 Can. 636.

them; and the later use of simple vows as a preparation for solemn vows, certainly makes it difficult to see profession as a Sacrament. Certainly, this line of thought may have provided justification for the practical abolition between simple and solemn vows in the current code of canon law.

The 1984 code tells us that profession is the assumption of the three evangelical counsels by public vow, and that the individuals are consecrated to God, by the ministry of the Church<sup>40</sup>. Profession also has the effect of incorporating the professor into a religious institute<sup>41</sup>. This code divides profession into temporary and perpetual<sup>42</sup>.

#### 1.4. Profession, Baptism, Sacrament

As seen from this brief sweep of the history, Religious profession may be seen as being close to the seven sacraments and not a proper sacrament in itself. The concepts of *res et sacramentum* can be applied to profession in the following manner. The *sacramentum tantum* is the profession of vows and the reception of them by the Church. As was demonstrated by our historical sweep, the reception of the habit became a secondary element to the profession of vows and thus became the defining element of admission to the noviciate. The *res et sacramentum* is the incorporation of the religious into a religious institute and the transition into the religious state. Thus, the impression of the religious character on the professed is a consequence of the *res et sacramentum*. The *res tantum* is the grace gained and merited by the religious through his profession. The religious through mortal sin can lose the grace of *res*, but the incorporation and the religious state itself remain. Speaking of Religious Profession in the broad sense of a Sacrament is certainly possible. However, why cannot Solemn Profession be added to the list of the Seven Sacraments as an eighth?

The Tridentine definition of the sacraments is that a sacrament is defined as a visible sign conveying an invisible grace that was instituted by Christ. It is evident that Christ did not specifically or explicitly institute

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<sup>40</sup> *Codex Iuris Canonici*, auctoritate IOANNIS PAULI PP. II promulgatus, in *AAS* 75 (1983/II) III-XXX; pp. 1-317 Can. 573 §1, §2, from here on the 1983 Code will be referred to as CIC.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. CIC Can. 654

<sup>42</sup> Cf. CIC. Can.s 655 and 657

religious life as he did holy orders and matrimony<sup>43</sup>. Religious profession does not fit Aquinas' schema of the Seven Sacraments being the seven stages and needs of a man's life<sup>44</sup>. Man required birth (baptism), continuation (marriage), leadership (holy orders) and subsistence (eucharist), but does he require the explicit profession of the evangelical counsels? They are counsels, not commandments, and therefore the answer is no. Chauvet suggests that if we were to make profession into a Sacrament in the same sense as one of the Seven, then we would create two classes of Christians, ordinary commandment Christians and the Super Christians of the religious life<sup>45</sup>. St. John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Redemptionis Donum* links the profession of vows to a fuller expression of baptismal consecration<sup>46</sup>. This connection between religious profession and baptism is not new.

Abbot Columba Marmion builds upon the work of Don Germain Morin in his book, *Christ the Ideal of the monk*, when he compares the rite of monastic profession to Christian baptism. He underlines that both rites incorporate a person into a community, and both are necessary for salvation – analogically. Living according to the spirit of St. Benedict, or monasticism in general, is not enough, likewise, trying to imitate Christ is not enough for a Christian, and both must be incorporated into the reality they wish to live<sup>47</sup>. Interestingly Mornin suggests that both incorporations require some preparation to be effective; if one repents too quickly of evil, for example, that same person may repent too quickly of good<sup>48</sup>.

Both rituals require a period of preparation. Profession requires novitiate whilst Baptism requires a catechumenate. Both rituals have a questioning of the candidate. Nocent states that historically a baptismal

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. M CHAMPAGNE, *Religious Life and Its Sacramental Characteristics: An Historical Study and Theological Analysis*, Rome 1995, 70.

<sup>44</sup> T. AQUINAS, *The Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Second and Revised Edition ed, London 1920 [S.Th.] III, q. 16, a. 1.

<sup>45</sup> L. CHAUVET, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, Collegeville 2001, 30.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis donum* to men and women religious on their consecration in the light of the mystery of the redemption, March 25, 1984, in *AAS* 76 (1984), 513–546.

<sup>47</sup> C. MARMION, *Christ, the Ideal of the Monk: Spiritual Conferences on the Monastic and Religious Life*, Brewster 2014, 106.

<sup>48</sup> G. MORIN, *The Ideal of the Monastic Life Found in the Apostolic Age*, New York 1914, 49

scrutiny was quite frequently incorporated into the ritual of profession<sup>49</sup>. Although at different times, both the newly professed and the baptised receive new garments as a manifestation of their new states. Morin points out that the more sombre black habit of a Benedictine highlights the sombre commitment the new monk makes to his regeneration in the rule<sup>50</sup>. This analogy is obviously more felicitous when a religious is clothed in a white habit. It also appears obvious that the new name received in religious life is parallel to the one received at baptism. Finally, Marmion mentions the theological tradition the profession of solemn vows, which like baptism, washes away all sins of the past life<sup>51</sup>.

Although the viewing of religious profession as a second baptism is ancient,<sup>52</sup> the introduction of simple temporal vows, as opposed to definitive solemn vows, proposes an interesting parallel between confirmation and baptism. If we were to apply a similar theory as to the relationship between baptism and confirmation to temporal and perpetual vows, then we would see an even more striking analogy to Christian initiation. As one is initiated into the Christian life through baptism and then this work is completed by the seal of confirmation, so too one could see simple profession as a baptism into the religious life and solemn profession as a confirmation and a sealing into adulthood in religious life. Morin talks on an interesting ritual in the opening of the lips of the solemnly professed at the chapter,<sup>53</sup> perhaps this an adept expression of one being fully mature in the religious life as one is after confirmation in the Christian life. Keller suggests that Aquinas thought that Religious profession itself is a perfection of confirmation, much like he believed Episcopal consecration is a perfection of priesthood<sup>54</sup>.

This chapter has briefly traced the history of religious life and religious profession. Beginning from an almost *ad-hoc* act of adopting the religious habit, religious life eventually developed its own analogous baptismal liturgy. The monk elect was first tested in a yearly trial period, which eventually established the reception of the habit as its defining ritual. After the trial, the

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<sup>49</sup> A. NOCENT, *Monastic Rites and Religious Profession*, in *The Church at Prayer: The Sacraments*, Minnesota, Collegeville, 1987, 288.

<sup>50</sup> G. MORIN, *The Ideal of the Monastic Life*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> C. MARMION, *Christ, the Ideal of the Monk*, 115.

<sup>52</sup> G. MORIN, *The Ideal of the Monastic Life*, 60.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> P. J. KELLER, *Why Is Religious Profession Not a Sacrament? The History of the Question and Contemporary Reflections*, Pontificum Athenaeum S. Anselmi De Urbe, Roma 2007, 81.

religious made profession of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience into the hands of an ecclesiastical superior. Initially this was done once and definitively but only with the passage of time and the rise of non-monastic forms of religious life, different forms of vows and periods of time were introduced. This was mainly done to create other states and ways of living the religious life without the burden of monasticism and the choral choir. The Church for a long time had great difficulty in recognising non definitive and simple vows as a form of religious life. Finally, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these simple and non-definitive vows were recognised as truly being a form of religious life and even incorporated into all forms of religious life, as a formal preparatory stage to leading to solemn definitive profession. Solemn vows can be seen as analogous to a Sacrament, but ultimately, they were excluded from the Tridentine seven, as they were merely a development of the sacrament of baptism with which they had much in common. Following the Second Vatican Council, the Church moved towards a broader understanding of sacrament and sacramentality, which went much further than the seven sacraments.

## 2. Christ the Sacrament to the Seven Sacraments

The second chapter of the paper will discuss the road that leads from Christ Himself and his ministry on earth, through the broad notion of sacraments, to the narrow gate of Seven Sacraments. This will be done by examining and defining what a Sacrament is with a firm grounding in the incarnation and the person of Jesus Christ as the primordial Sacrament. The Church will then be examined as the continuation of Christ's earthly presence and his saving work amongst men. Next, the approach of the Fathers of the Church to sacramentality will be examined, and the development of certain rituals as Sacraments will be seen. This transition from the *mysterium* of Christ, to the *sacramentum* of the Church will be discussed. Tertullian who introduced the term *sacramentum* and its relation to the Roman military will also be considered. Augustine and his insights into Sacramentality, particularly his concept of character will also be discussed. Both the military understanding of *sacramentum* and the idea of character will be applied to the discussion of religious profession.

Next, the chapter will arrive at the codification of the Middle Ages of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas as there being seven definite and

clearly defined Sacraments as the work of Christ *par excellence*. We will also see why these two medieval theologians omitted religious profession from their lists. The chapter will then comment on the consequences this view had for the post-Tridentine Church, until the revival of a broader Sacramentality of the Second Vatican Council. Finally, the chapter will mention the concept of sacramentality and the sacraments in the Eastern Churches. Fundamentally, this chapter will answer the questions; what is a Sacrament? Moreover, why are there only seven of them?

## 2.1. Christ the Sacrament

The term sacrament has been defined and redefined many times. The Latin word *sacramentum*, was first used by Tertullian, who adopted the word from the Roman legal system. The word itself had various meanings within Roman law itself. It could mean either the sum of which two parties deposited in a sacred place, an agreement in a civil process or suit, or more commonly meant an oath with a solemn obligation, particularly a military promise. Tertullian compares the military oath of a soldier to the nature of the baptismal promises of a neophyte. Both baptism and the *sacramentum* seal the person in service of another<sup>55</sup>. More importantly, Tertullian used the word to express the Greek concept of μυστήριον. It is clear from the practise of religion that ritual precedes systematic theological reflection<sup>56</sup>. The question to be asked then is what is the mystery that needs to be explained and expressed? It is the Mystery of the Faith; the Mystery of God, who is none other than Jesus Christ.

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory (1 Timothy 3:16).

The God of Israel is not a god divorced from His people. He is not the god of deists, who creates the cosmos and then leaves it to tick away

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. E. F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, Columbia 1917, 10.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

by itself. Rather, He is perceived to be the unseen director, the marvellous producer, the tenacious technical support. He is there at the very turn of the page; He is the Lord of History. However, there comes a moment in the second act, where He enters the stage and becomes an actor. The invisible enters and becomes visible. The once unseen acts of God become seen and perceived<sup>57</sup>. By taking on flesh, Christ becomes the divine in a human way and the human in a divine way. Christ acts are divine acts, but in a human form<sup>58</sup>. Schillebeeckx offers us a definition of a sacrament as the divine bestowal of grace in an outward perceptible form. Jesus Christ as the divine with a body manifests the saving acts of God and is the sacrament, the primordial sacrament<sup>59</sup>.

Christ in his earthly ministry spoke to people; He communicated with humanity, and He healed Humanity. He came to gather the children of Israel, to find the lost sheep, to save humanity. St. John Damascene spoke of the divinity using the humanity of Christ as an instrument<sup>60</sup>. However, alas the bodily presence of Jesus could not last. Like all bodies it had to come to pass. In preparation for his departure, Christ began to organise for Himself a mystical body, so as not to leave his children orphans<sup>61</sup>. Both in His public ministry and His private life, both His deeds and His words had a saving character<sup>62</sup>. This character he passed onto the Church, which functioned as His new body among men and continues His presence amongst humanity to this day.

After the ascension of the Lord and the sending of the Spirit, the world entered the time of the Church. The Church; manifests, makes present, and continues Christ's work of Salvation<sup>63</sup>. It does this in the sacred liturgy, which coming from the Greek *λιτουργία*, quite literally means the public work. The Church was established as Christ was withdrawing His bodily presence from the earth and is itself an economy of salvation

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<sup>57</sup> EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX, *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, New York 1963, 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>59</sup> E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Christ, the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, 15.

<sup>60</sup> B. BLANKENHORN, *The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet*, in „Nova et Vetera” 4 (2006), 262.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. PIUS XII, *Encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi* on the mystical body of Christ, in *AAS*. 35 (1943), 193-248.

<sup>62</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Canadian Conference of Catholic, Ottawa 1999, 1115, from here on CCC.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. CCC 1076.

or an organisation of the saving work of Christ. The Church like Christ has a Sacramental character, and this Sacramental character is transmitted through the ages through the Sacrament of orders<sup>64</sup>. The Church is the Sacramental structure of grace, present in time and space<sup>65</sup>. Christ now does His sacramental saving and healing of the human race through His ministers in the context of the Church<sup>66</sup>. Amongst the earliest ministers of Christ, those who stand out in particular applied thought and reflection to these mysteries received through Christ and begin to systemise and organise these mysteries in a way that was accessible. These were the Fathers of the Church.

## 2.2. *Sacramentum* and Character

The idea of Sacrament matures in silence, while other subjects are monopolizing the discussion<sup>67</sup>.

It is difficult to trace the patristic development and understanding of the sacraments and sacramentality as the Fathers usually devoted their energies to either defending the faith (Apologists) or responding to heresy. The scope of this paper will only focus on the insights of two fathers, Tertullian and Augustine in regard to the development to the Sacraments.

Returning once again to the application of the term *sacramentum* to the mysteries of the faith, we have much to appreciate in Tertullian's choice of term. In Roman thought, the word itself had a deep association with the sacred. Most interesting is perhaps its use in the military. Roman citizen soldiers, and then later legionaries, swore the *sacramentum* when they entered military service. This oath established a bond between themselves and, in the earlier years of the Republic, with the Republic itself, and in the later years of the Empire with a particular general. With the strong connection of the art of war with the gods and the interplay between the state and the divine, we can discern that the oath played a role in making the art of soldiering sacred. Soldiers who fled from battle or dissented their station were deemed sacrilegious<sup>68</sup>. It is not hard to see how the term *Sacramentum*

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. CCC 1087.

<sup>65</sup> W. A. VAN ROO, *The Christian Sacrament*, Rome 1992, 161.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. CCC 1115.

<sup>67</sup> E. F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> S. PHANG, *Conflict in Ancient Greece and Rome: The Definitive Political, Social, and Military Encyclopedia*, [3 Volumes], Santa Barbara 2016, 1059-1060.

could easily be applied to baptism, after all both rites established a bond between the swearer and the authority, an enrolment in a society and offered a promise of future glory. Sin after baptism, particularly grave sin may be compared to a soldier deserting his station or fleeing in the face of the enemy. The strength of this analogy even drove Tertullian, and in a wider sense the rest of early Christianity, to see an incompatibility between a *Sacramentum* offered to the state and one offered to Christ<sup>69</sup>.

This is in truth a serious matter, brethren, and you must approach it with good heed. Each one of you is about to be presented to God before tens of thousands of the Angelic Hosts: the Holy Ghost is about to seal your souls: you are to be enrolled in the army of the Great King<sup>70</sup>.

As an aside, it would be particularly important to note, that at the very beginning of the use of the term *Sacramentum*, it already has a fitting application to monasticism. Early monks were referred to as *milites Christi*,<sup>71</sup> essentially soldiers enrolled in the service of Christ. Since the enrolment in the armies of the state has a religious or a Sacramental character, then for sure the enrolment in the monastic life should give just such or even a greater character, after all the service of Christ is greater than the service of men.

Tertullian application of the military *Sacramentum* also offers us insights into a permanence of the Sacrament, which is now known to us as a character. A Roman soldier upon entering service received a tattoo signifying that he was soldier<sup>72</sup>. In other words, he received a mark, one that may even be said to be indelible. Likewise, a Christian is sealed in the life of grace or at least in the capacity of it at baptism. Therefore, since the military analogy was already applied to the early monks, then certainly the taking of the habit would have been seen as a similar mark, and as a similar impression of a character upon the monk.

Gladiators also took a vow, a rather fearsome one, which bound them in their gruesome vocation<sup>73</sup>. Gladiators *summa summarum* are

<sup>69</sup> Cf. E. F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catechetical Lecture 3 - on Baptism: Romans 6:3-4*, translated by Edwin Hamilton Gifford, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Michigan 1894, 3.

<sup>71</sup> P. BROWN, *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity*, "The Journal of Roman Studies" 61 (1971), 94.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. A. DAVISON, *Why Sacraments*, Cambridge 2013, Chapter 3: *Sacramental Character*.

<sup>73</sup> D. G. KYLE, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, London 2012, 87.

athletes preparing for death. There is evidence to suggest a strong awareness amongst the early Christians of the explicit connection between gladiators and the ascetics<sup>74</sup>. Like a gladiator a monk prepares for death, he trains in the arena of the spirit. Just as gladiators die for the pleasure of the emperor, so too monks die for the glory of God. By taking the gladiatorial *Sacramentum* much like a soldier doing so, they are sealed for their fate in the arena, like the tattoo of the soldier which marks him for the legion.

The word ‘seal’ is derived from the Greek word σφραγίς and later the Latin term *signaculum*<sup>75</sup>. A seal is a wax relief with some sort of carving imprinted on wax or clay. It was used to lend authority to a message or to show belonging to a legion in the military service of Rome. Essentially the seal has three principal purposes. Firstly, to show identity and possession; secondly to give a mission and thirdly to confer delegated authority. A seal can witness to either to the bearers loyalty or disloyalty to the one who gives the seal<sup>76</sup>.

Augustine applies this concept of seal to the Sacraments. Although the notion of being sealed by Christ, or sealed into the mystery of redemption, or even the very term, may be found frequently amongst the Fathers and even in the New Testament itself,<sup>77</sup> Augustine is the first to apply it to the *sacramentum* of two Sacraments. In the complex controversy with the Donatists, Augustine uses the concept to answer the question of whether the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders of heretics are real sacraments or are to be repeated when the heretic returns to the fold of Mother Church. Augustine settles this dispute by saying that these two Sacraments imprint an indelible seal or character that can never be lost<sup>78</sup>. This introduces a distinction between the grace that a Sacrament imparts to the soul and the actual permanent mark of the Sacrament. Essentially a Sacrament may have the effect of imprinting its character on the soul of the recipient without conferring any grace. Furthermore, this leads to the

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<sup>74</sup> P. BROWN, *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity*, 94.

<sup>75</sup> R. W NUTT, *General Principles of Sacramental Theology*, Washington 2017, 50-54.

<sup>76</sup> L. FEINGOLD, Lecture Series 10: *Sacraments: From the Old Covenant to the New Talk #2. The Grace and Power of the Sacraments*, in Association of Hebrew Catholics Lecture Series: *The Mystery of Israel and the Church* (2010), <https://www.hebrewcatholic.net/10-02-the-grace-and-power-of-the-sacraments/> (accessed 23/02/2021), 8-9.

<sup>77</sup> N. SENZ, *Sacramental Character in Patristic and Scholastic Theology*, “Homiletic & Pastoral Review” (2015), <http://www.hprweb.com/2015/05/the-indelible-mark/> (Accessed 24/02/2021).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

concept that once this seal imprints the soul, it cannot be lost through mortal sin<sup>79</sup>. Following Augustine's formulation, this notion of character has been extended to other Sacraments beyond baptism and ordination.

The three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a Sacramental character or "seal" by which the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions. This configuration to Christ and to the Church, brought about by the Spirit, is indelible; it remains forever in the Christian as a positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of divine protection, and as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church. Therefore, these Sacraments can never be repeated<sup>80</sup>.

Although the three aforementioned Sacraments leave an indelible seal on the soul, the other four Sacraments of the church also imprint a form of character. Most recently, in *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II mentioned that the primary effect of marriage was in fact not the grace of the sacrament, but rather to establish the marital bond<sup>81</sup>. In other words, the primary effect is to imprint the character of the marital bond to a particular person on the soul of the other. As it is Church teaching that the marital bond can only be dissolved by death,<sup>82</sup> then it stands to reason that the character the sacrament leaves is not indelible. Likewise sins that have been absolved in the sacrament of confession need no longer be confessed again<sup>83</sup>. Furthermore, once a Sacramental anointing has been given in the Sacrament of the anointing of the sick, it is not to be repeated for the duration of the illness<sup>84</sup>. Finally, once the species of bread and wine have been consecrated and are transubstantiated, they remain the body and blood of Christ, losing the substantial presence of the body and blood of Christ only when the accidents of bread and wine no longer remain<sup>85</sup>. Thus, it can be seen that all Sacraments imprint a form of character; three imprint

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> CCC 1121.

<sup>81</sup> JOHN PAUL II. *Familiaris Consortio*: Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, 22 November 1981, in *AAS* 73 (1981), 13.

<sup>82</sup> CIC Can 1141.

<sup>83</sup> K. STASIAK, *From Sinners to Saints: A Guide to Understanding the Sacrament of Reconciliation*, New York 2014, 56.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. CIC, Can 1004 §2. and CCC 1515.

<sup>85</sup> S.Th III, q. 77, a. 4, respondeo.

an indelible character, whilst the other four imprint a character that is not indelible. Likewise, religious vows may also be said to impart a similar character, which this paper will discuss in its third part. Nethertheless, if religious profession imparts a character and fits the notion of *sacramentum* of Tertullian, then why is it not a Sacrament? The answer is simply that it is left off the important lists of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas.

### 2.3. Lists

The medieval era heralds an age of concise systematic thought as opposed to age of pastoral and episodic responses that were the hallmark of the patristic era. The plethora of *sacramenta* or *mysteria* of Augustine and the Fathers begins to be defined and systemised into lists, which McPartlan suggests corresponded to the shift from a communal model of the church, to one more focused on judicial structure<sup>86</sup>. Pseudo-Dionysius as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century lists six mysteries, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, while Peter Damian has fourteen<sup>87</sup>. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Victor of St. Hugh has a great deal more, but divides them into greater and lesser, which eventually leads to our modern distinction between sacraments and *sacramentalia*, to which this paper will return to in its third part<sup>88</sup>. Fulbert of Chartres lists only two, whilst Bernard of Clairvaux very patristically offers ten, twelve, or even more<sup>89</sup>. Above all the two lists of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas prove to be the most decisive in the numbering of religious profession among the Seven Sacraments.

We have already traced the history of the many attempts to define the conception of Sacrament. Peter Lombard stands at the end of this long development, summing up the work of preceding theologians, and giving his own definition, which with only slight changes in the wording was to be accepted for centuries<sup>90</sup>.

Peter Lombard defined the Catholic philosophical and theological

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<sup>86</sup> P. G. MCPARTLAN, *Catholic Perspectives on Sacramentality*, „Asian Christian Review 1”, no. 3 (2007), 88.

<sup>87</sup> E. MEYER, *Is Religious Life a Sacrament*, „Review for Religious”, 33 (1974), no. 5, 1101.

<sup>88</sup> E. F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System* 53-57

<sup>89</sup> E. FOLEY, *Rites of Religious Profession: Pastoral Introduction and Complete Text*. Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago 1989, 32.

<sup>90</sup> E.F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 69.

system for centuries and his influence can be felt to this day. Peter Lombard was born in Lombardy sometime between 1095 and 1110. The first 31 years of his life are rather unknown to us, but it is certain that he was proving himself academically in various cathedral schools. In 1136 he arrived in Paris and while studying under Victor of St. Hugh, took the Parisian academic life by storm. His popularity and success in Paris, even though he was an outsider, was crowned by his consecration as the Archbishop of Paris in 1136. His crowning work is his *Sentences*, which essentially is a theological textbook<sup>91</sup>.

In the *Sentences*, Peter Lombard first lists the Seven Sacraments that we know as such today. This list proved decisive. After defining a sacrament as “*the visible form of invisible grace gathered therein, which the Sacrament itself confers; for it is not only the sign of a sacred thing, but also the efficacy*,”<sup>92</sup> Lombard proceeds to list baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and marriage<sup>93</sup>. This list claims nothing new; rather the listing of only Seven Sacraments is the novelty. Certainly, the number seven, with its biblical association of perfection, and its enduring sacredness in Christianity, proves quite influential in his list of Sacraments and their subsequent acceptance by the Latin Church<sup>94</sup>. Although it may be said that monastic profession was omitted from this list because of keeping to the number seven, the proper question to ask would be, why did Lombard leave it off his list?

Keller notes that Lombard, when defining the concept of a sacrament, specifically states that they need to confer sanctifying grace<sup>95</sup>. Keller builds on Eynde when he suggest that the use of this *causa* of grace,<sup>96</sup> gives an explicit difference between the sacraments of the Old Testament and sacramentals<sup>97</sup> by further clarifying that the Seven Sacraments cause saving grace<sup>98</sup>. Keller suggests that this line of reasoning (with Lombard’s

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<sup>91</sup> T. M. FIN, *The Sacramental World in the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, „Theological Studies” 69 (2008), 558-559.

<sup>92</sup> *Summa Sententiarum*, tract. IV c. I. I am using the English translation provided in E.F. ROGERS, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 71.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

<sup>95</sup> P. J. KELLER, *Why Is Religious Profession Not a Sacrament? The History of the Question and Contemporary Reflections*, Pontificum Athenaeums S. Anselmi De Urbe, Roma 2007, 38.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*. Lombard is credited as introducing the term *Sacramentalia*.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

definition) infers that Lombard omitted religious profession as a Sacrament because it is not a cause of Sacramental grace<sup>99</sup>. Since commenting upon the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard forms the nucleus of academic progression in the medieval world, it comes as no surprise that the great Angelic Doctor himself adopts Lombard's seven sacraments, but his reason for omitting religious profession form among the sacraments is very different.

Thomas Aquinas offers the reasoning behind the use of seven in listing of the Sacraments as corresponding to the seven stages or needs in the natural life of humanity. For example, Baptism parallels birth, Confirmation maturity, Eucharist sustenance, Orders leadership, and Penance as forgiveness<sup>100</sup>. These mystical justifications of the septimal schema were quite common; for example, Albert the Great views the Seven Sacraments as remedies for the seven capital sins, whilst Bonaventure sees them as dispositions towards the four cardinal and three theological virtues<sup>101</sup>. Religious consecration, on the other hand offers no parallel stage or need in Aquinas' schema. After all, religious are not explicitly a part of the church's hierarchy nor can profession take the place of the sacrament of penance in the need for forgiveness nor can profession take the place of baptism or confirmation on the road of Christian holiness. According to this view of the seven sacraments, religious consecration would only duplicate the effect of another sacrament, rather than stand in its own right<sup>102</sup>.

to whatever excellence of state there is given some sanctification since a special help of grace would be necessary there, as in the consecration of kings and monks and nuns; and therefore, they are hierarchical actions and on account of this Dionysius determines them; but they do not meet the specifications of Sacrament, but only that excellence through which a man is made a dispenser of what is holy<sup>103</sup>.

Keller discusses that Aquinas's primary objection to including Religious profession on the list of Sacraments, is that it does nothing to sanctify others, or give grace to another as orders does. He sums up Aquinas

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>100</sup> S.Th. III, q. 65, a. 1, co.

<sup>101</sup> L. CHAUVET, *Sacrament: Un concept analogique*, in *Le Corps chemin de Dieu. Les Sacraments*, Paris 2010, 35.

<sup>102</sup> P. J. KELLER, *Why Is Religious Profession Not a Sacrament?*, 69.

<sup>103</sup> AQUINAS, *Scriptum D. 2 q. 1, a. 2, ad 9* Here I am using the English translation by Keller, found in P. J. KELLER, *Why Is Religious Profession Not a Sacrament?*, 47.

as suggesting that “*the grace of religious life aids the individual who makes profession, but it does little more than that*”<sup>104</sup>.

Returning to the notion of character, Keller does offer an interesting insight regarding the conferring of character in the sacraments. He suggests that the primary importance of Sacraments conferring a certain character is not lost on Thomas. Rather, Keller suggest that the grace that the sacraments give is a result of the character that was conferred in the sacrament<sup>105</sup>, He believes that Thomas doubts that religious profession has an abiding reality or adds some power to the soul of the religious<sup>106</sup>. Although Keller does state that Thomas believes that Religious consecration does create a bond with God, he goes further to distinguish that marriage creates a supernatural and religious communion, whilst profession creates an obligation towards God that is voluntarily made by promise<sup>107</sup>.

Thomas suggest that religious life is indeed a deepening of the life of baptism. Thus it would not be apparent that it confers a Sacrament character because, as a subjectively motivated but holy undertaking, it does not bestow on the religious any new power, either for giving holy things to others or for the individual’s worship of God.... Thomas believes that God gives a special grace to the Consecrated religious, it is not the *opere operato* guaranteed as in the fruitful reception of the Sacraments<sup>108</sup>.

Aquinas certainly has great reasons for excluding religious profession as a sacrament and certainly, the character of religious vows is not *ex opere operato* but certainly, his continued connection of profession to baptism has continued to be explored by the Church in various councils. It would worth concluding that the Church confirmed the formulation of the seven sacraments reached so far firstly in the council of Lyons and then finally Trent<sup>109</sup>.

Trent adds that a sacrament needs to be instituted by Christ. Unfortunately, no matter what theological and exegetical gymnastics one might use, Christ did not seem to institute a form of religious life.

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<sup>104</sup> P. J. KELLER, *Why Is Religious Profession Not a Sacrament?*, 48.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 69.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

<sup>109</sup> J. DUPUIS and J. NEUNER. *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Alba House, New York 2001, 1302, 1311.

This restrictive view of the sacraments continued in the church until the ample view of Sacramentality of the Second Vatican Council. It is interesting to note that all this development occurred exclusively in the Western Church and apart from the small but notable influence of this septimal thought on the sacraments in the council of Lyons, the Eastern Church has had a different view of the sacraments.

The approach of the Eastern Church to the sacraments is essentially the same, but is expressed in a different way, a way that perhaps lacks the precision of the Western approach. In general, the sacraments, or rather retaining the more ancient term mysteries, are said to be participations in the divine life or manifestations of it, rather than grace-causing signs. Meyendorff states that Byzantine theology ignores the distinction between sacraments and *sacramentalia* as per patristic thought. The phenomenon of listing the mysteries also occurred in the East<sup>110</sup>. Theodore the Studite (9<sup>th</sup> century) lists 6 mysteries and includes monastic tonsure on his list. Meyendorff also mentions that the east theoretically accepted Seven Sacraments, but he argues that this had more to do with a similar fascination the east had with symbolic numbers rather than being directly influenced by western Sacramental theology. Nevertheless, Monastic tonsure nor essentially what we know as religious profession is listed as a mystery consistently, especially after the West's abandonment of it as a possible Sacrament. For example, Job the Monk in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and Symeon of Thessalonica in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, Joasaph the Metropolitan of Ephesus gives a list of ten, in the same century, explicitly including monastic tonsure on the list<sup>111</sup>. In brief, even after the exclusion of religious profession from the list of sacraments by the West, Eastern Churches have kept profession as a sacrament, as it is understood under a more broad and patristic understanding of sacrament or mystery, as opposed to the defined scholastic definition of Lombard or Aquinas.

In this section of the paper, we have seen a progression from sacramentality to the seven sacraments. Through the person of Christ, the divine enters the realm of the human. Christ the God comes amongst his creation as a Man like one of them. Christ is present on earth in a human way and thus we see Christ as the Man-God. His true human body points to His divine and is a sign of it. His body is used as an instrument for

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<sup>110</sup> J. MEYENDORFF, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, Fordham 1979, 191.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 192.

man to interact with the divine. In the incarnation of Christ, the divine is made accessible to man in a human way. Christ continues His saving work amongst men by in His Mystical Body, which is the Church that He founds. This Church continues his saving work in various rituals known as mysteries that are loosely defined.

Tertullian is the first to translate the Greek term *μυστήριον* into the Latin term *sacramentum*. By using this term, he highlights the transformational and almost judicial nature of the Sacraments by effecting change. Our study here cannot escape from the heavy militaristic or gladiatorial connotations that *sacramentum* has from its very linguistical origins. These very same connotations were likewise being applied to the monastic life and can easily be applied to the act of religious profession. Like baptism and the *sacramentum* of a roman soldier, monastic profession is the enrolment in the army of Christ or a monk is none other than a *milites Christi*. Like the *sacramentum* of a soldier, baptism leaves a mark on the person, not a fleshly tattoo but rather a spiritual seal. Likewise, this concept of seal or, as Augustine develops it, may be applied to the mark that tonsure leaves upon the monk.

Following Augustine, the concept of *sacramentum* is developed and distinguished. Before long, systematic lists being to appear of the *sacramenta* of the church. Religious profession or monastic tonsure is found on these lists until the era of Peter Lombard. The modern list of seven sacraments is first written down by Peter Lombard and is later adopted by the Latin Church and officially defined in the councils of Lyons and Trent. Peter Lombard excludes religious profession from his list because it does not itself cause grace in the religious or in another. Aquinas, taking up Lombard, lists reasons that religious profession does not give any particular power to dispense grace for the Church, but rather is freely entered upon to benefit the religious solely. In addition, monastic profession does not fit well into his concept of the Seven Sacraments corresponding to the stages and needs of a person's life, rather it is said to be more a duplication of the effects and needs of several other sacraments.

Finally, this section concluded with a very brief look at the sacramental theology of the East. The East tended to avoid the explicit systemising of the West. Although unofficially adopting the list of Seven Sacraments, the East very much tended to keep monastic tonsure on its lists. Broadly speaking the East maintained a broader patristic view of the Sacraments and held a special place for monastic tonsure amongst them. The

West following the Second Vatican Council may be said to have returned to this broader understanding of Sacramentality. The third section of this paper will attempt to locate and discuss the place of religious profession in this broader post-conciliar understanding of Sacramentality.

### 3. Sacramental Permanent Character

Religious profession, as we have seen, shares extraordinarily strong and striking similarities with the Seven Sacraments. Ultimately, it was excluded from the Western Church's list of Seven Sacraments. Originally in the era of the church Fathers, with its broad understanding of sacramentality it was possible to associate religious profession with the sacraments. In the post-conciliar period and with the church's return to a more patristic way of thought, the time is opportune to consider religious profession once again in its full sacramentality. This third and final section of this paper will explore religious profession as a sacramental with a permanent character.

This will be done by exploring the Church's understanding of the distinction between sacraments and *sacramentalia*. Furthermore, the distinction between the various grades and types of *sacramentalia* will be discussed, particularly with a focus on those effecting things and persons. Returning once again to Augustine's concept of character, the paper will broadly discuss how this may be applied to the non-Sacramental orders of acolyte and abbot. Then the paper will apply these insights to the rite of religious profession. The paper will also explore the examples of an altar and a Church. Finally, the paper will conclude with summarising how solemn religious profession can be seen as a Sacramental with a permanent character.

Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted Sacramentals. These are sacred signs, which bear a resemblance to the Sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the Sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy<sup>112</sup>.

In the previous section, we have examined how the Church progressed from a broad understanding of mysteries and sacraments to a narrow list of

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<sup>112</sup> CCC 1667.

seven sacraments, which explicitly omits religious profession as one of the seven. It may come as a surprise that many other rites were also left out of the seven, such as burial, the coronation of a king, or the dedication of a church. Certainly all these other rituals, although not proper sacraments have some element of sacramentality about them, therefore, how are they related to the Seven Sacraments?

### 3.1. Sacramentals

As we have mentioned earlier, Peter Lombard is attributed the honour of naming these other sacrament-like rituals, sacramentals or *sacramentalia*. This idea no doubt built upon Hugh of St. Victor's pre-seven sacraments triple division into *sacramenta ad salutem*, *sacramenta ad exercitationem* and *sacramenta ad praeparationem*. Essentially these distinctions offer a gradation of Sacraments in the proper sense and Sacramentals in an analogous sense<sup>113</sup>. Sacramentals do not cause grace in the recipient as the Sacraments do, *Ex opere operato*, but rather they dispose and prepare the recipient to be able to receive grace<sup>114</sup>. Therefore, sacramentals require greater effort and co-operation on the part of the recipient. The effect of sacramentals is obtained through the prayer and faith of the church<sup>115</sup>.

They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism)<sup>116</sup>.

The power of sacramentals may be said to be derived from baptism, which allows for a greater flexibility in who can administer them, thus even allowing laity to administer them<sup>117</sup>. Perhaps the most common sacramental familiar to all is the humble blessing<sup>118</sup>. However, much like the sacraments themselves, not all sacramentals are the same; there is a certain order to them. The ashes of Ash Wednesday certainly cannot be said to be on the

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<sup>113</sup> E. FOLEY, *Rites of Religious Profession*, 33.

<sup>114</sup> CCC 1670.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, Const. De Sacra Liturgia *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 15 february 1964, Romae, in *AAS* 56 (1964), 60. From here on SC.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. CCC 1668.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. CCC 1669.

<sup>118</sup> CCC 1669.

same level as the consecration of a church nor the blessing of abbot, or the coronation of a king.

Certain blessings have a lasting importance because they consecrate persons to God, or reserve objects and places for liturgical use. Among those blessings which are intended for persons - not to be confused with Sacramental ordination - are the blessing of the abbot or abbess of a monastery, the consecration of virgins and widows, the rite of religious profession and the blessing of certain ministries of the Church (readers, acolytes, catechists, etc.). The dedication or blessing of a church or an altar, the blessing of holy oils, vessels, and vestments, bells, etc., can be mentioned as examples of blessings that concern objects<sup>119</sup>.

The Catechism may be said to offer us four distinctions in sacramentals: firstly, simple blessings; secondly, the blessings of things with a lasting importance; thirdly, the blessing of persons for a particular ministry; and fourthly, exorcisms<sup>120</sup>. Simple blessings are given to people or things. They are simple and by their nature may be repeated, e.g., the blessing of a house or a child. The blessing of things with a lasting importance or, more properly put, a consecration, has a lasting effect on the thing in question. Once the object is consecrated, it is kept exclusively for use in sacred celebrations and is removed from common life. For example, a chalice once consecrated is not used to drink water in day-to-day life. Things once consecrated are ought to be treated with reverence and put only to their proper use<sup>121</sup>. Continuing with our example, the book of blessing explains that the chalice and paten, once blessed, are permanently and solely intended for the celebration of the Eucharist, since by the act of the blessing they become sacred vessels<sup>122</sup>. A chalice and paten once blessed remain blessed until they are destroyed or disfigured beyond recognition; in a way they receive a sacred character. However, what of persons? Do they remain blessed?

It is useful to mention here a distinction. The book of blessings provided blessings for people who will discharge certain functions in the

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<sup>119</sup> CCC 1672.

<sup>120</sup> CCC 1672-1673.

<sup>121</sup> NATION CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN BISHOPS. *Book of Blessings: Approved for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See*, Collegetown 1989, 1076. From here on *Book of Blessings*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 1360.

ecclesial community. There is mention of the blessing of the members of the parish council for example,<sup>123</sup> or the choir or sacristans or altar servers. It is necessary to note that by their nature these blessings and the ministries discharged here are temporary. A parish councillor has a term of office, a chorister usually ceases to sing, and an altar server can be said to grow up.

### 3.2. The Acolyte and the Abbot

The Code of Canon Law and *Ministeria Quaedam* speak lay persons being able to be admitted to the ministries of lector and acolyte on a stable basis or *stabilliter* in the Latin original<sup>124</sup>. It is necessary to note that this contrasts with canon 230 sub point 2's mention of lay faithful being able to be temporarily deputed to exercise the liturgical office of Lector<sup>125</sup>. This would certainly imply that there is a distinction between a temporary blessing for someone assuming the liturgical function of lector and a lay person being stably installed in the ministry of Lector as per the rite of *institutione lectorum*<sup>126</sup>. Although the Church's understanding of Holy Orders has changed, Aquinas offers us an interesting insight into these stable institutions. Acknowledging the inherent difference between the minor and major orders, he does admit that all the traditional orders imprint a character<sup>127</sup>. This includes the minor orders, although not in the same indelible manner that the three holy orders do<sup>128</sup>. He legitimises his line of thought by saying that orders (even minor orders) cannot be repeated. It is important to note that during the reform of the minor orders into the two ministries, the *concilium* itself acknowledged that these ministries were *by their nature permanent*<sup>129</sup>. This may be evidenced by the norms

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 1897.

<sup>124</sup> CIC Can. 230 §1. Cf. PAULUS VI, Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio datae *Ministeria Quaedam*. Disciplina circa prima Tonsuram, Ordines Minores et Subdiaconatus in Ecclesia latina innovatur, 15/09/1972, in *AAS* 64 (1972), 529-534.

<sup>125</sup> CIC Can. §2 ex temporanea deputatione in actionibus liturgicis munus lectoris implere possunt.

<sup>126</sup> *De Institutione lectorum et acolythorum. De admissione inter candidatos ad diaconatum et presbyteratum. De sacro celibatu amplectendo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma 1972.

<sup>127</sup> S.Th III, sup, q. 35, a. 2, *sed contra*, and *Respondeo*.

<sup>128</sup> Using the term Holy Orders here, I refer to the three orders of Episcopate, Presbyterate and Diaconate.

<sup>129</sup> A BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, Collegeville 1990, 728.

of the Polish Bishop's Conference regarding the ministry of Lector and Acolyte,<sup>130</sup> which mention that the ministries are given permanently<sup>131</sup> and are merely suspended if a seminarian leaves formation,<sup>132</sup> and likewise may be suspended in the case of laymen by the decision of the ordinary<sup>133</sup>.

Drawing closer to religious profession, the Church also has a Sacramental blessing for an abbot of a monastic community<sup>134</sup>. This Sacramental blessing is in fact remarkably similar and may be said to imitate the ordination of a bishop. The abbot elect receives a mitre, a ring, and a crosier just like a bishop. In fact, the prostration of the candidate and the Litany of the Saints are a part of this Sacramental blessing, just as they are part of any ordination. Like the acolytate and lectorate, once an abbot is blessed, he retains that blessing permanently and may continue to use *pontificalia* even after he has left office<sup>135</sup>. Analogously, on account of its permanence, the abbatial blessing may be said to confer a certain character on the abbot. If the Sacramental blessing of a leader of the religious life has a permanent effect, then would not it be fair to say that the profession of a religious has a certain character about it?

### 3.3. The Novus Ordo

The Church in 1970 established an *Ordo professionis religiosae*, which, in the words of Bugnini, was to express a more mature theology of religious life<sup>136</sup>. This *Ordo* was to unify the various forms of religious

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<sup>130</sup> J. MICHALIK, S. CICHY, *Instrukcja Episkopatu Polski w sprawie udzielania posługi lektora i akolity świeckim mężczyznom*, „Anamnesis”, no. 52, 2nd of October 2017.

<sup>131</sup> J. MICHALIK, S. CICHY, *Instrukcja Episkopatu Polski w sprawie udzielania posługi lektora i akolity świeckim mężczyznom*, 17: *Lektor i akolita ustanawiani są na stałe*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 17: *Wykonywanie uprawnień właściwych akolicie odnośnie do Eucharystii, a także uprawnień właściwych lektorowi, ulega zawieszeniu z chwilą przerwania przez alumnów studiów seminaryjnych z jakiegokolwiek powodu, chyba że biskup diecezjalny inaczej postanowi*.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 17: *Podobne postanowienie może podjąć biskup diecezjalny z uzasadnionych przyczyn w odniesieniu do świeckich mężczyzn*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ordo benedictionis abbatis et abbatissae*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma 1978.

<sup>135</sup> A. BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, Collegeville 1990, 820, c. Concerning the *motu proprio* on pontifical insignia.

<sup>136</sup> A. BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, 763.

profession that have developed until the modern era, whilst allowing religious orders to adapt them somewhat to their own particularities and traditions. This new rite divides the process of full incorporation into a religious institute or put another way, the religious profession in to three distinct stages. These are novitiate, temporal profession and perpetual. The novitiate is marked no longer by the reception of the habit but is a mere brief formality within a Liturgy of the Word. Temporal profession on the other hand is a very simple emission or profession of vows for a set amount of time with no particular solemnity<sup>137</sup>. It is interesting to note, that the ritual desires that the habit be given at the first profession, believing that the habit is an external mark of consecration and therefore is properly associated with profession and not with novitiate<sup>138</sup>. These two stages ultimately lead to the third, which has a *seriousness and inherent solemnity of the act itself*<sup>139</sup>.

The rite of solemn profession has a questioning of the candidate which may be said to mirror a baptismal scrutiny; then there is a prostration on the part of the candidate whilst the Litany of the Saints is sung, after which the candidate emits his profession; and finally, a consecratory prayer prayed by the celebrant. It is interesting to note that the ritual assumes a *professio ad altarem*<sup>140</sup> in which the candidate reads his vows written in his own hand, after which the profession is placed and signed on the altar. This associate and unite the offering made by the candidate in religious profession with the offering of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice<sup>141</sup>. Also the ritual describes solemn profession as representing Christ's indissoluble conjugal link to the Church<sup>142</sup>. These two associations may be seen to be applying an analogous permanent character. Vows establish a permanent bond between the religious and God, like marriage. The words of the vows and the gesture of being received by the religious superior can be seen to impress an analogous character that the words of consecration impress on

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<sup>137</sup> *Ordo Professionis Religiosae*, 5: *Nulla tamen peculiari sollemnitate*.

<sup>138</sup> A. BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, 766.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 767.

<sup>140</sup> T. PULICKAL, *A Study of the Rite of Religious Profession and Its Adaption to the Cultural Traditions of India*, Pontificum Athenaeum Anselmianum, Roma 1991, 3: Historically there can be said to be three method of profession, *Super altarem* as mentioned, *super manum* that is into the hands of a superior and *super hostiam* that is directly before the sacred host.

<sup>141</sup> A. BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, 768.

<sup>142</sup> *Ordo Professionis Religiosae*, 6: *e) Professione autem perpetua repraesentatur Christus cum sponsa Ecclesia indissolubili vincula conjunctus*.

the bread and wine in the Eucharist<sup>143</sup>. Just as the Holy Spirit is invoked in the epiclesis in the Eucharistic prayer, so too is he invoked in profession.

f) *Sollemnis benedictio seu consecratio professorum, qua Mater Ecclesia professionem religiosam consecratione liturgica confirmat, Patrem caelestem exorans ut Sancti Spiritus dona super professos abundanter effundat*<sup>144</sup>.

The solemn prayer of blessing over newly solemnly professed religious does not feature in simple profession and may both be associated with a certain permanence and a consecration. Nocent says that this prayer is a totally new concept introduced by the 1970 *ordo*<sup>145</sup>. It can also be seen as an epiclesis<sup>146</sup>. The general ritual gives four patterns for this prayer, but this paper will focus on the two found in the *Ceremoniał Zakonu Świętego Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika*. The first prayer essentially outlines an *anamnesis* of certain events in the history of salvation such as the sin of Adam, the justice of Abel and the shining example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After this, we see a specific mentioning of the purpose of the prayer, which talks of God looking upon his servant and sending him the Holy Spirit, to help him worthily fulfill that which he has joyously vowed. The ritual then lists several benedictions for the religious. The second prayer is less precise but focuses more on humbly asking for the sending of the Holy Spirit to those who have adhered with strong faith to the words of Christ to leave behind all things and follow Him<sup>147</sup>.

Fundamentally this prayer can be seen as a consecration, although Gy disagrees with this suggesting that the emission of the solemn vows

<sup>143</sup> M. BADALAMENTI, *La vita religiosa come forma dell'esistenza cristiana : Alla luce del rito della professione religiosa*, Academia Alfonsiana, Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Roma 1993, 38: *Esprime soprattutto il carattere di consacrazione della vita religiosa, che viene vista come un'offerta santificata dall'altare.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ordo Professionis Religiosae*, 6 (f).

<sup>145</sup> A. NOCENT, *Monastic Rites and Religious Profession*, in *The Church at Prayer: The Sacraments*, Minnesota Collegeville 1987, 293.

<sup>146</sup> M. BADALAMENTI, *La vita religiosa come forma dell'esistenza cristiana : Alla luce del rito della professione religiosa*, 80: *Visto che questi testi sono i più importanti del rito cercherò di farne un'analisi dettagliata alla luce dei principi di interpretazione dei testi liturgici; le preghiere seguono lo schema trinitario delle preci di consacrazione "anamnesi", "epiclesi", "intercessione": dunque una prima parte che è memoria dell'opera che Dio ha compiuto nella storia della salvezza; l'epiclesi che implora lo Spirito Santo sui neoprofessi al fine di poter essere fedeli all'impegno intrapreso; la terza parte invoca infine le grazie e le virtù per i neoprofessi per adempiere a ciò che hanno promesso nella chiesa.*

<sup>147</sup> KURIA GENERALNA ZAKONU ŚWIĘTEGO PAWŁA PIERWSZEGO PUSTELNIKA, *Ceremoniał Zakonu Świętego Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika*, Jasna Góra 2002, 32-35.

themselves functions as a consecration and this additional prayer is merely a duplication of the effect of the emission of vows<sup>148</sup>. This idea has merit but neglects the epictetical element of the prayer. Furthermore, it would be worth noting that the *Ordo dedicationis Ecclesiae* and the *Ordo dedicationis altaris* both contain a similar prayer, although referred as a *prex dedicationis*.

### 3.4. Consecration

La Liturgia della vita religiosa difatti è una liturgia di consacrazione, e la professione religiosa attua una nuova e speciale consacrazione<sup>149</sup>.

Like the prayer over the newly solemnly professed religious, in the dedication of an altar there is a prayer in the same style of a preface but lacking the formal dialogue at the beginning. Like the prayer of ordination and profession, this *prex dedicationis* includes a sentence asking God to *dignare hanc ecclesiam... caelesti sanctificatione perfundere*, so that it may be a *locus sanctus semper existat*. Here we can see the consecratory preface asking God to make this church a holy place. The word *semper* by definition implies a permanence<sup>150</sup>.

Likewise, the *Ordo dedicationis altaris* the dedicatory prayer ask for *hoc altare in domo ecclesiae aedificatum* to be *caelesti sanctificatione perfunde* so that the *Christi sanctifico in perpetuum dicata*.<sup>151</sup> This also implies a specific dedication with a permanence. This *Ordo* expresses a distinction between a church and an altar that are consecrated as opposed to merely blessed<sup>152</sup>. Thus, we see that these prayers and rites that the church has established create a *Sacramentalia*, that are set apart permanently for the sacred. Certainly, one cannot imagine a church ceasing to be consecrated after three years, or an altar losing its consecration after a year, but this is the case with simple temporal profession.

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<sup>148</sup> P. GY, *On the Consecratory Nature of the Very Act of Solemn Vows in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, „Analecta O.P.” 106 (1998).

<sup>149</sup> M. BADALAMENTI, *La vita religiosa come forma dell'esistenza cristiana : Alla luce del rito della professione religiosa*, 105.

<sup>150</sup> *Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae et altaris. Editio typica*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1977, Caput II: *Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae*, 62.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, Caput IV: *Ordo dedicationis altaris; Prex dedicationis*, 48.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, Caput V.

Temporal profession by its nature is temporal and lapses after a set time, if it is not renewed or replaced by solemn vows<sup>153</sup>. This is certainly a question worth exploring. As we have seen in the first section of this paper, temporal profession was only introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>154</sup>. The concept was only grudgingly accepted by the more ancient orders. The 1917 code mandated it for all forms of religious life and most monasteries fulfilled this precept with a quite simple rite with all suggestion of definite profession removed<sup>155</sup>. This certainly is a very matter of fact way of fulfilling the requirement yet respecting the solemn and sacramental nature of solemn profession.

Although the question falls outside of the scope of this paper, it is worth asking: are temporal vows Sacramental? The church, although omitting profession from its list of Sacraments, certainly highlights their sacramentality with the addition of the solemn prayer of blessing in the 1970 Ordo. However, at the same time she downplays the sacramentality of simple profession. Following the logic of this paper it would be fair to ask, do temporal vows have a certain character about them? It would seem not as they lack the solemn blessing. As we have mentioned earlier, Gy disagrees with the prayer consecrating the religious, but rather suggests that the emission of the solemn vows themselves consecrates the religious. Since in the vows themselves the only difference consists in the specification of time, then we could assume both have the same effect, one permanent and the other for a specific period.

Returning to the analogy of profession to baptism, it would be interesting to suggest that in a similar manner to the separation of confirmation from baptism in Christian initiation, so too in the post-conciliar world the permanence and solemnity of profession has been separated into two *Sacramentals*. Temporal profession is like the gate of baptism admitting a religious into the religious state and solemn profession is like confirmation<sup>156</sup> that confirms and completely incorporates the religious into the public state of religious life. Regardless of this complication, the scope of this paper was to discuss the Sacramentality of religious profession and in the fullest and most authentic sense, religious profession is taken to mean the profession of solemn vows. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that solemn

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<sup>153</sup> CIC Can. 657§1.

<sup>154</sup> W. M. (ED.) JOHNSTON, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, London 2013, 992.

<sup>155</sup> A. NOCENT, *Monastic Rites and Religious Profession*, 291

<sup>156</sup> CCC 1316

vows are a sacramental with a permanent character, whilst simple profession is not necessarily so.

This section of the paper discussed the modern distinction sacraments and sacramentals. This distinction consists in the sacraments working *ex opere operato* through the power of Christ and Sacramentals working through the faith and prayer of the Church. sacramentals imitate the Sacraments and even borrow elements from them. The primary experience of sacramentals are various forms of blessings; the Catechism of the Catholic Church gives four categories of these blessings. One category of these blessings has a permanent and lasting effect on a person. This may be said to be analogous to a character.

The ministries of Acolyte and Lector are permanent and have a lasting effect on the person blessed by the rite of institution. This blessing cannot be lost and differs from temporal blessing or deputation. Much like these ministries, the abbatial blessing, with its analogous elements to the episcopal ordination is, too, a permanent sacramental that lasts even beyond the time of office of an abbot. If the blessing of the head of a religious community has a lasting effect, then should not the profession of a religious have one as well?

In 1970 a new *Ordo* of Religious profession was promulgated for the Latin Church in general and was to be used as a standardising template for all forms of religious life to draw up their own rites. This *Ordo* was to reflect a more mature understanding of religious life in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. This rite introduces a solemn prayer over the professed, which may be called a preface and an epiclesis. A similar prayer is found in the dedication of a church and a chalice. Gy argues that the consecration of religious occurs on account of the emission of their vows, not on account of the solemn prayer over them. In any case it is easy to conclude that solemn religious profession is a sacramental with a permanent character. Simple profession on the other hand proposes more difficulty and is beyond the scope of this paper.

## Conclusion

Religious life is a mystery of the Church. It is neither inherently clerical or lay and belongs to the very heart of the Church. Religious life

seems to have originated quite early in the history of the Church either from a desire for the glory of martyrdom or from a desire to take Christianity seriously in a lukewarm and popular state religion. Religious life grew in the deserts of Egypt with the rise of the hermits. Those hermits eventually were gathered in communities. These communities developed rules and masters and grew into a powerful host of soldiers for Christ. Up until the mendicant revolution, the communities were monastic and professed stability and obedience. One became a religious through their clothing in the habit of one of these communities and eventually making a profession of following Christ. The mendicant revolution of the 12th century saw profession morph into professing the three evangelical councils of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Until the advent of the Jesuits, profession was inherently solemn and perpetual. St. Ignatius of Loyola introduced the concept of simple renewable vows and further distanced religious profession from its monastic roots. Leo XIII introduced a period of renewable simple vows for all religious, of at least three years, for all religious after novitiate and before solemn vows. Religious profession imitates and mirrors many of the Seven Sacraments, none more so than baptism, with which it shares many parallels. Baptism is the gate to life in the Church as profession is the gate to religious life.

Christ established the Church, His mystical body that is the Church, to continue His saving work upon the Earth until its end. Christ the God-Man is divinity interacting with humanity in a human way. The Church being Christ's Mystical Body continues this divine, yet human activity of Christ among men. This activity is expressed in sacred rites that the Fathers referred to as mysteries or *μυστήρια*. Religious life for a very long time was listed as one of these mysteries. Tertullian translated *μυστήριον* into the Latin *sacramentum*, which was heavily associated with the military vow taken by Roman soldiers. St. Augustine introduced the concept of character into sacramental theology, elaborating that certain Sacraments left a permeant impression, like a wax seal, upon the recipient. Monks can be said to have professed a *sacramentum* to fight in the army of Christ and were sealed in His service by the character of profession. Following systemisation of the sacraments into lists, religious profession found itself excluded from the great list of seven.

The post-conciliar Church has returned to a broader understanding of Sacramentality and mystery. Although not a Sacrament, religious profession is certainly a Sacramental. The consecration or permanent blessing of persons for particular ministries or functions exists as a category

of Sacramentals. Just as the ministry of Acolyte or the abbatial blessing is received permanently, so too is the profession of religious vows. The mark of solemn profession endures, much like the consecration of a church or an altar. The 1970 *Ordo* of religious profession introduces a blessing over the newly professed; it is very similar to a preface. It may also be said to both serve as an epiclesis and a consecration of the newly solemnly professed religious. Solemn profession as such then may be seen as a sacramental with a permanent character.

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## PROFESJA ZAKONNA JAKO SAKRAMENTALE WYCISKAJĄCE ZNAMIE

### Streszczenie

Życie zakonne jest tajemnicą Kościoła. Z samej natury życia zakonnego wynika, że nie ma ono charakteru ani typowo „świeckiego”, ani wyłącznie „duchowego”. Zrodziło się dość wcześnie w historii Kościoła. Było motywowane albo pragnieniem chwały męczeństwa, albo pragnieniem „poważnego” potraktowania życia chrześcijańskiego, gdyż funkcjonowało ono w ramach religii państwowej, której wyznawcy nie zawsze odznaczeni byli gorliwością. Życie monastyczne rozwinęło się na pustyniach Egiptu wraz z pojawieniem się pustelników. Z czasem zaczęli oni łączyć się w społeczności, które przyjmowały specjalne zasady życia oraz zwierzchnictwo przełożonych. Ten sposób funkcjonowania wspólnot monastycznych utrzymał się aż do „rewolucji” przeprowadzonej przez zakony żebracze.

W XII wieku profesja przekształciła się w profesję trzech rad ewangelicznych: ubóstwa, czystości i posłuszeństwa, która aż do powstania jezuitów miała

charakter uroczysty i wieczysty. Św. Ignacy Loyola wprowadził pojęcie prostych ślubów odnawialnych i jeszcze bardziej oddalił profesję zakonną od jej monastycznych korzeni. Natomiast Leon XIII ustanowił okres odnawialnych ślubów prostych (co najmniej trzyletni) dla wszystkich zakonników po nowicjacie, a przed ślubami wieczystymi.

Profesja zakonna – chociaż nie ma sakramentalnej natury – jest środkiem do prowadzenia doskonalszego życia chrześcijańskiego. Profesję zakonną w pewnym zakresie można porównać do chrztu – tak jak ten sakrament jest bramą Kościoła, tak profesja stanowi „bramę” życia zakonnego. Kościół będący Mistycznym Ciałem Chrystusa kontynuuje Jego boską i ludzką działalność na ziemi. Ta aktywność wyraża się w świętych obrzędach, które Ojcowie nazywali misteriami (gr. μυστήρια). Życie zakonne przez bardzo długi czas było postrzegane jako jedna z tych tajemnic. Tertulian przetłumaczył μυστήριον na łacińskie *sacramentum*, co znaczeniowo kojarzy się z przysięgą wojskową składaną przez rzymskich żołnierzy. Św. Augustyn twierdził, że niektóre sakramenty pozostawiają na odbiorcy trwałe ślad, podobnie jak pieczęć wojskowa. Można powiedzieć, że mnisi złożyli *sacramentum* do walki w armii Chrystusa i zostali zapieczętowani w Jego służbie przez profesję. Po usystematyzowaniu teologii sakramentów profesja zakonna została wykluczona z listy siedmiu sakramentów.

Po Soborze Watykańskim II Kościół powrócił do szerszego rozumienia sakramentalności. Konsekracja lub stałe błogosławieństwo osób dla określonych posług lub funkcji istnieje jako kategoria sakramentaliów. Podobnie jak posługa akolity lub błogosławieństwo opata są przyjmowane na stałe, tak samo jest ze ślubami zakonnymi. Znak profesji uroczystej trwa, podobnie jak konsekracja kościoła czy ołtarza. Profesja wieczysta jako taka może być zatem postrzegana jako sakramentale (*sacramentalium*) o charakterze trwałym.