



Sharing in Christ's
Prophetic Mission



There is only one **prophet** in the Christian Religion: Christ. It is he who mediates God's word to the world. Now he, the vine, acts through us his branches.

In baptism we were anointed **prophet**.

‘In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was towards [pros] God,
and the Word was God.
The Word was towards God
in the beginning.



All things came into being through the Word,
and without the Word not one thing came into being.



What has come into being in the Word was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.'

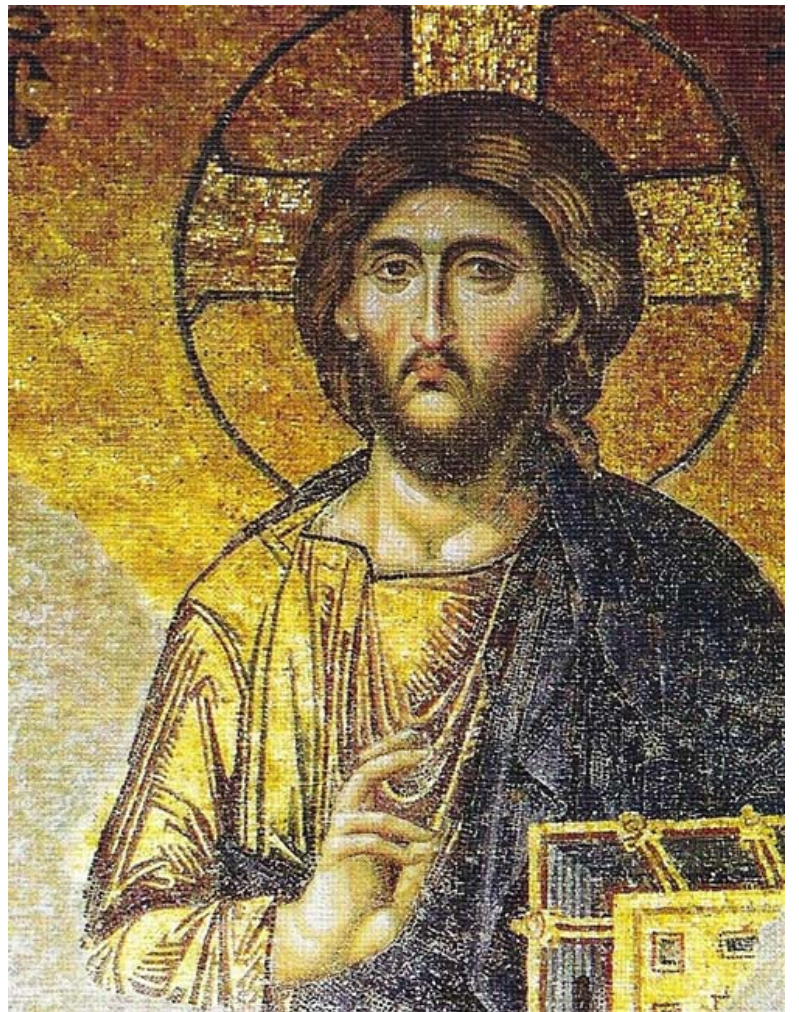
The true light, which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.
God's Word was in the world,
and the world came into being through God's Word;
yet the world did not know God's Word.

God's Word came to what was God's own,
and God's own people did not accept God's Word.

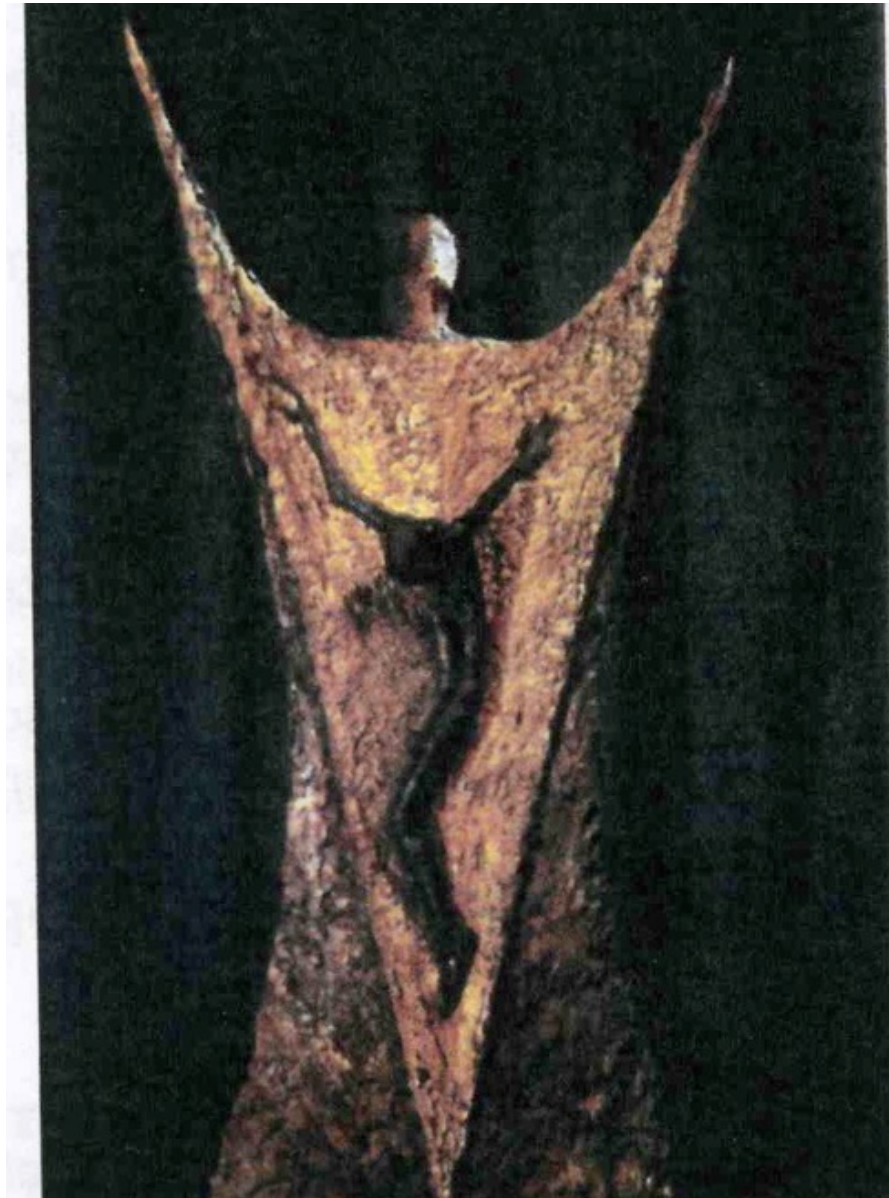
But to all who received him,
who believed in his name,
he gave power to become
children of God, who were born,
not of blood
or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man,
but of God.



The Word became flesh
and lived among us



We have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's
only son,
full of the gift of truth.



From his fullness we have all received,
grace upon grace.

‘The heart of God descends in haste
to his creation,
with the weight of an infinite love,

and the heart of creation rises towards God,
drawn by an attraction
that dominates all others in it.

It is in Jesus that these two hearts meet,
and they unite so profoundly
that the two hearts become one.’

(Jules Chevalier, ‘The Heart of Jesus, page 76.



John 1:17

‘The Law [Torah] indeed was given through Moses; the gift of Truth came through Jesus the Messiah.’





John 1:18

‘No one has ever seen God. It is God’s only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made Him known.’

Ascending Christology

God's perfect
human Word,
symbol of the
Divine Word
of the Self-giving
always Transcendent
God



Communion in the
Love-Spirit that
unites Jesus and God,
symbol of the
Divine Love-communion
of the
always Transcendent
God

Each baptised person has a unique share in the prophetic mission of the Risen Christ in the world.

Mediating God's word
to the world

Dominic spoke of our
vocation:

'contemplata tradere'

“communicating to
others what one has
contemplated”(Thomas
Aquinas, quoted n. 150).



Ignatius of Loyola used a similar expression:

‘in actione contemplativus’
(contemplative in action).

In prayer we are drawn deeper into communion with God. It is from this communion that we are sent into mission.



**‘Jesus called them to be with him
and to go out to proclaim the message’**(Mark 3:14).

‘Today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness “The deposit of the faith is one thing... the way it is expressed is another” (John XXIII 1962) (n.41)

‘Let us never forget that “the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning” (J-P II Ut Unum Sint 19) (n.41).

Opening address at Second Vatican Council - Pope John XXIII
October 11th 1962

‘Our task is not merely to hoard this precious treasure, as though obsessed with the past, but to **give ourselves eagerly and without fear to THE TASK THAT THE PRESENT AGE DEMANDS OF US** – and in so doing we will be faithful to what the Church has done in the last twenty centuries. So the main point of this Council will not be to debate this or that article of basic Church doctrine that has been repeatedly taught by the Fathers and theologians old and new and which we can take as read. You do not need a Council to do that. But starting from a renewed, serene and calm acceptance of the whole teaching of the Church in all its scope and detail as it is found in Trent and Vatican I, Christians and Catholics of apostolic spirit all the world over **expect a leap forward in doctrinal penetration and THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCES** in ever greater fidelity to **authentic teaching**. (continued next page)

Opening address at Second Vatican Council
- Pope John XXIII October 11th 1962

But this authentic teaching has to be studied and expounded in the light of the research methods and the literary formulations of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and **the way in which it is presented** is another. And it is to this latter that careful and where necessary patient consideration must be given, everything being measured according to the requirements of a

TEACHING AUTHORITY

THAT IS PREDOMINANTLY PASTORAL IN CHARACTER'.

The word of God

Hebrews 4:12-13

‘The word of God is living, active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing until it divides
soul from spirit,
joints from marrow;
it is able to judge the thoughts
and intentions of the heart.

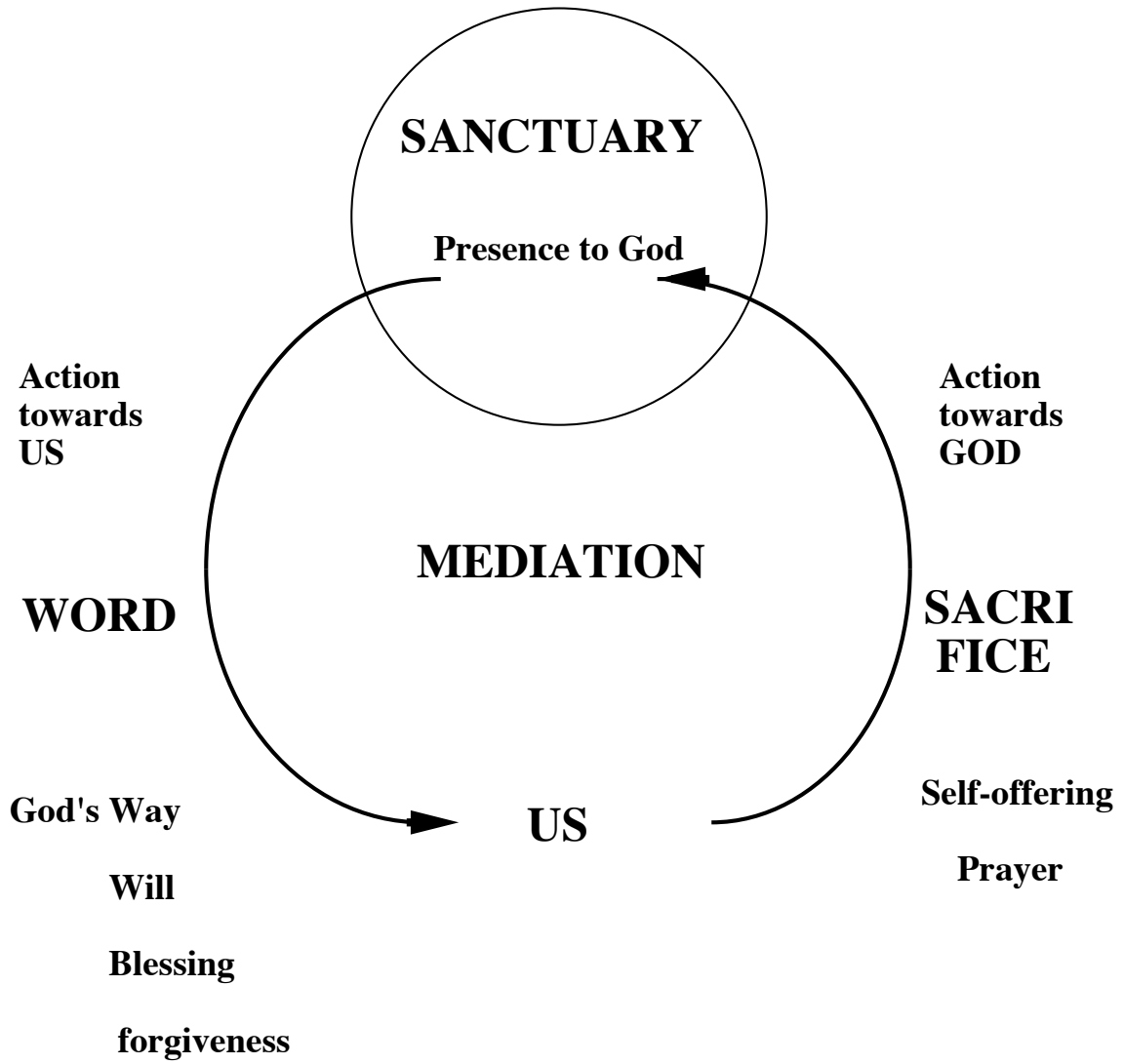
There is no creature that is hidden from God; all is laid
bare before God.

The word faces us towards God.’

The ordained minister as a sacrament of **Christ the prophet**.

The ordained are called to mediate the word of the Risen Christ to the Assembled community.

The gift of prophecy cannot be institutionalised. God can choose to speak his surprising word through anyone, including those ordained.



‘Since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of presbyters to preach the Gospel of God to all’(PO, n. 4).

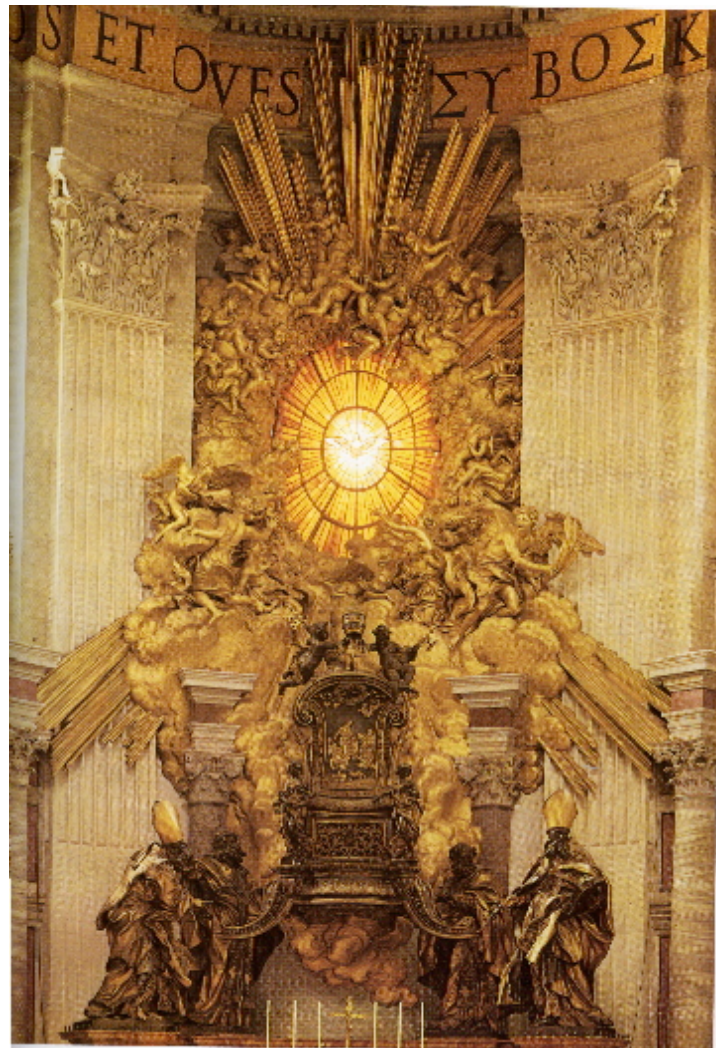
‘Their ministration ... begins with the announcement of the gospel’(PO, n.2).

It is vitally important to ‘preach with authority’, connecting people with God, the author of revelation.

Bernardin writes: ‘we are meant to lure the believers onto healthy spiritual ground’. We are inviting them into the sanctuary. The ordained minister should know the tradition and be able to communicate it in public in an engaging way.

Catechism 890

‘The pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates.’



Athanasius Chrysostom
Ambrose Augustine

‘By the sacrament of Order, presbyters are configured to Christ the priest as servants of the Head. They must be prepared to listen to the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ who gives them life and guidance’(PO n. 12).

- When an ordained priest mediates God’s word to an individual or group or community in his role as priest, he is doing so precisely as a sacrament of Christ-as-Head.

‘In what is doubtful, freedom; in what is necessary, unity;
in all things, charity’(John-Paul II, Reconciliation and Penance 1984 n.9)

Congregation for the Clergy: Priest in the third millennium (1999)

‘In our times, as always in the Church, heralds of the Gospel are needed who are expert in humanity, profoundly knowing the heart of contemporary man, who share his joys and hopes, his fears and sorrows, and at the same time who are contemplatives, in love with God.’

The Homily (nn. 135-159)

The liturgical context (nn. 137-138) A mother's conversation (nn. 139-141).

Words which set hearts on fire (nn. 142-144)

‘The preacher has the wonderful but difficult task of joining loving hearts, the hearts of the Lord and his people’(n. 143).

‘To speak from the heart means that our hearts must not just be on fire, but also enlightened by the fullness of revelation and by the path travelled by God's word in the heart of the Church and our faithful people throughout history. This Christian identity, as the baptismal embrace which the Father gave us when we were little ones, makes us desire, as prodigal children – and favourite children in Mary – yet another embrace, that of the merciful Father who awaits us in glory. Helping our people to feel that they live in the midst of these two embraces is the difficult but beautiful task of one who preaches the Gospel’(n. 144).

The Homily (nn. 135-159)

Preparing to preach (nn. 145-159).

Reverence for truth (nn. 146-148).

Personalizing the word (nn. 149-151).

Spiritual reading (nn. 152-153).

An ear to the people (nn. 154-155).

Homiletic resources (nn. 156-159).

The Homily (nn. 135-159)

‘An attractive image makes the message seem familiar, close to home, practical and related to everyday life. A successful image can make people savour the message, awaken a desire and move the will towards the Gospel. A good homily, an old teacher once told me, should have “an idea, a sentiment, an image.” (n. 157).

Karl Rahner SJ : Theology (Communio 1984)

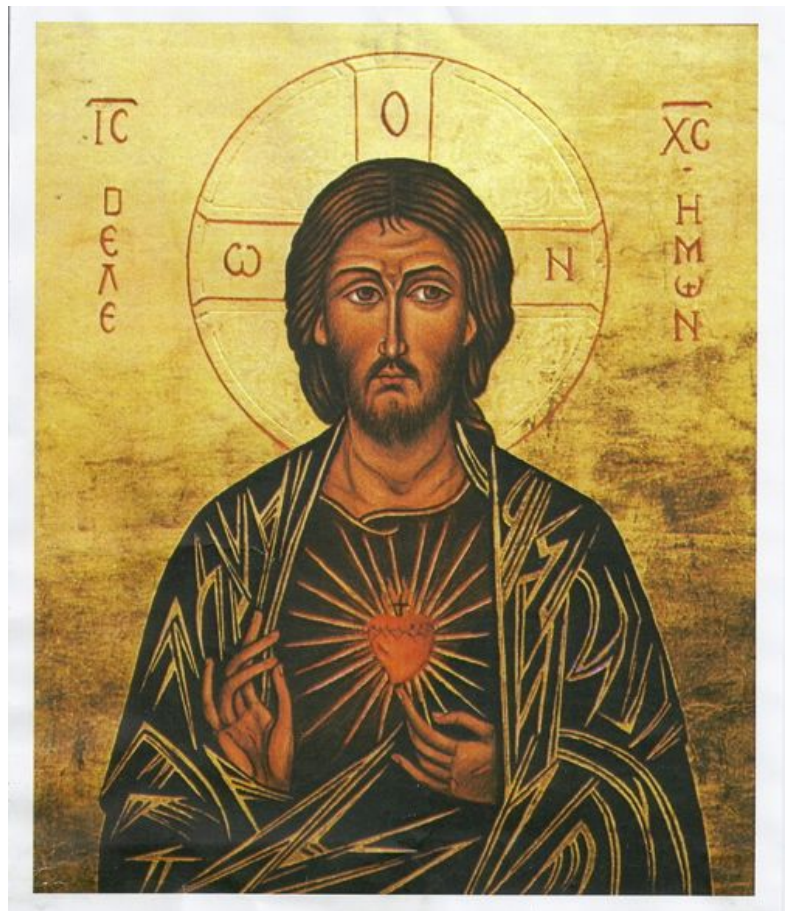
‘How much do our statements from university podiums, from pulpits and from the holy tribunals of the Church have such a ring that we fail to perceive clearly that these statements are virtually trembling with the last bit of the creature’s modesty that knows that all speech can be only the last moment before the holy silence that fills even heaven itself with the clear vision of God face to face’(page 406).

‘I would like only to testify to the experience that theologians are only truly theologians when they do not think complacently that they are speaking with transparent clarity, but are frightened at the swinging of the analogy between Yes and No over the abyss of the inconceivability of God, and at the same time experience it as holy and testify to it. I would like only to confess that I, as a poor theologian, in all my theology, think too little of this analogous character of all my statements. We talk too much about the subject and ultimately, in all this talking, forget the subject itself’(page 407).

Bernard Lonergan SJ

‘Just as theology in the thirteenth century followed its age by assimilating Aristotle, just as theology in the seventeenth century resisted its age by retiring into a dogmatic corner, so theology today is locked in an encounter with its age. Whether it will grow and triumph, or whether it will wilt to insignificance, depends in no small measure on the clarity and accuracy of its grasp of the external cultural factors that undermine its achievements and challenge it to new endeavours’(Second Collection page 58).

‘The Christian spiritual tradition regards the sacred heart of Jesus, which draws priestly hearts to itself, as a profound, mysterious synthesis of the Father’s infinite mercy’(The priest in the third millenium page 51).





Mary & the Angel