

“Clerical” and “Lay” as Analogous Terms

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Introduction

The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (CIC) defines the laity simply as the non-ordained. While helpfully direct and often useful, this definition gives no hint as to why non-ordained religious may not always count among the laity, nor of how the function and mission of the laity could be defined in positive terms. I propose to resolve these difficulties by understanding the biblical foundations of “clerical” and “lay” (κλῆρος and λαός) as essentially related by analogy of proper proportionality, with clerics as the allotted witnesses and the laity as the assembly *from whom* the clerics are allotted and *to whom* the clerics witness. This treatment helps to resolve not only the above problems with the status of religious and the positive definition of the laity, but also some common ecumenical concerns and several points of New Testament exegesis.

Contemporary Difficulties

The *Code of Canon Law* neatly distinguishes between those who, by receiving the sacrament of orders, become “sacred ministers who in law are also called clerics” and “the other members of the Christian faithful . . . called lay persons” (no. 207). These definitions have the great advantage of clarity but leave two important lacunae.

The first arises because John Paul II announced in his apostolic exhortation *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, for the 1983 promulgation of the *Code*, that it “fully corresponds to the nature of the Church, especially as it is proposed

by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in general, and in a particular way by its ecclesiological teaching.” Yet the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG), defined the laity as “all the faithful except those in holy orders *and* those in the state of religious life” (§31; emphasis added).¹ Nor is this an unimportant problem. John Paul II tells us in his 1996 apostolic exhortation on consecrated life, *Vita Consecrata* (VC): “The idea of a Church made up only of sacred ministers and lay people does not therefore conform to the intentions of her divine Founder, as revealed to us by the Gospels and the other writings of the New Testament” (§29). If “the consecrated life by its nature is neither lay nor clerical” (§60) yet “the religious state of life is not an intermediate state between the clerical and lay states” (LG §43), then the biblical sense of “clerical” and “lay” must rest on a broader theological basis than the canonical one. Some account must be given of how two legal categories can correspond to three conciliar categories.

The second lacuna arises because of the ongoing attempt to devise a “theology of the laity.” John Paul II gives a positive gloss, claiming in his 1988 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (CL), that, while “the Council went beyond previous interpretations which were predominantly negative,” there is still an ongoing “need for a definition of the lay faithful’s vocation and mission in positive terms” (§9). Others like Giovanni Magnani are more skeptical, however, and this skepticism is understandable because both conciliar and papal attempts at characterizing the laity laid positive spiritual superstructures on essentially negative definitional foundations.² Without a positive definition of the laity, it is difficult to assign them any proper function without infringing on the vocation of clergy. This problem, too, is not without consequence. According to John Paul II, “a tendency to obscure the theological basis of this difference [between clergy and laity] can lead to a faulty clericalizing of the laity and a laicizing of the clergy” and a consequent disappearance of vocations to clerical life.³ Pope Francis frequently attacks this “clericalism,” which he calls “an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation” that “is the root of many evils in the Church.”⁴ We

¹ Quotations from the documents of Vatican II will be taken from the translation by Joseph Gallagher as found in the 2012 American Press edition, ed. Walter M. Abbott.

² Giovanni Magnani, “Does the So-Called Theology of the Laity Possess a Theological Status?,” in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, Twenty-Five Years After (1962–1987)*, ed. Rene Latourelle, vol. 1 (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 568–632.

³ Pope John Paul II, papal address, Ad Limina visit of the bishops of New Zealand, Vatican City, November 21, 1998.

⁴ Pope Francis, papal address, Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of

should understand exclusivism in this pejorative sense only when clergy are "separate in wrong and destructive ways," but this leaves open the problem of defining what the correct and non-exclusivist distinction between clergy and laity might be.⁵

This essay therefore attempts a *ressourcement* of the New Testament foundations for the terms "clerical" and "lay" with a twofold aim: first, to explicate how the simple twofold clerical–lay division of canon law can be in accord with the threefold clerical–lay–religious ecclesiological division of *Lumen Gentium* and John Paul II; second, to provide an essentially positive definition of the laity while clarifying the difficulties experienced in giving such a definition. I contend that the key to closing both gaps is understanding "clerical" and "lay" as properly analogous terms.

Scriptural Foundations

The first attested explicit division of the Christian faithful into clergy and laity is probably found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus.⁶ The term "cleric" comes from the Greek κληρος, meaning an allotment. Hippolytus shows awareness of this connection, stating that the bishop has authority "to assign the lots according to thy precept"⁷ which Burton Easton's editorial note takes as a reference to ordaining clergy.⁸ The etymological connection is that many ancient leaders were chosen by drawing lots, as in the first chapter of the Book of Acts, where, in order to "let another take [Judas's] position of overseer" (cf. Ps 109:8 and Acts 1:20c), the apostles

prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:24–26; all biblical quotes from the NRSVCE).

Bishops on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, Vatican City, October 3, 2018.

⁵ John Paul II, November 1998 address, §5.

⁶ Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, ch. 19: "At the close of their prayer, when their instructor lays his hand upon the catechumens, he shall pray and dismiss them; whoever gives the instruction is to do this, whether a cleric or a layman" (trans. Burton Scott Easton [Cambridge University Press, 2014]). Nonetheless, Hippolytus's division is not quite ours, since in chapter nine he excludes deacons from the clergy.

⁷ Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, ch. 2.

⁸ Burton, trans. note in Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 63.

Kenan Osborne grants the etymology but objects to the relevance of such citations: "In Acts the term *kleros* never indicates either a minister or a ministry," but rather "(a) an *act* or procedure for determining a choice; (b) a *place* within the following of Jesus rather than in the following of one's own desires; (c) a *place* with the saints in the eschatological kingdom."⁹ If the point here were to establish a consistent referent for the term, or (still more ambitiously) a list of essential job functions, the objection would have to be taken seriously. Using the biblical text to justify later theological developments is an activity gingerly entered into by specialists. Thankfully, my ambition here is rather more modest, as will become clear in the next section. I wish only to help establish the base biblical meanings of the terms to *help us understand* later developments, not to *justify* them.

The term "lay," meanwhile, comes from the Greek *λαός*, meaning people. As the Liddel-Scott-Jones lexicon makes clear, *λαός* does not generally mean any random people within some area, but rather people *assembled*, as an army or commoners for royal review, or a theatre audience, or at least *a* people, those called by a single name. In Scripture, *the* people, without further qualification, are God's chosen people, as opposed not to the clerics but to the nations (e.g., Acts 15:14). Indeed the Septuagint's first use of *λαός* refers to "all the people who were with" Jacob (Gen 35:6) when he built the altar at Bethel in Canaan to worship as God commanded. It is this *λαός*, the Israelites, which is assembled to receive the law (LXX Exod 19 and Deut 4:10).

Sometimes the distinction between *κλήρος* and *λαός* is clear in the Septuagint, as in 1 Esdras 5, where the priests, Levites, and people are each listed separately as returning to Jerusalem (LXX 5:45), which enables right worship to resume. Mere linguistic research cannot resolve our contemporary confusions, however, since both as a matter of general Greek usage and as a matter of New Testament theology, these are not simple contrast terms. First, as Osborne points out, they "are most often used independently, i.e. they are not used in ways through which one clarifies the other. If all one had were the few instances of these terms in that early literature, one would have no clear understanding of the terms cleric and lay."¹⁰ Our reading must be in light of the tradition, and we must seek a semantic rather than merely lexical contrast.

While some of our difficulties arise from the sparsity of biblical uses

⁹ Kenan Osborne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church: Its History and Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 16.

¹⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 8.

of the terms, however, others arise from ways in which the biblical text defies our neat categories. God's people are themselves the recipients of an allotment, λαὸν ἐγκληρον (LXX Deut 4:20). This connection is carried over in the New Testament's appropriation of the Septuagint terms, as God's people are the ones saved by Jesus from their sins (Matt 1:21), which qualifies them to share in the allotment of the saints in light (Col 1:12).¹¹ Sometimes the relation between the Septuagint and New Testament terms is more fraught, as in Acts 26 when Paul recounts Jesus's words on the road to Damascus that he had been released from "the people" in order to give "the allotment" to the gentiles. If we get the relation of these terms wrong, we can end up not only with a false ecclesiology but also a supersessionist theology. Finally, Peter seems to invert the terms entirely when he exhorts the presbyters to oversee their flocks without "lord[ing] it over those in your charge [κλήρων]" (1 Pet 5:3). In Peter's terms, the *flock* is the clerics, and the presbyters are ἀλλὰ τύποι—"but types" (1 Pet 5:3; all NT Greek from Nestle-Aland [NA] 27th ed.).

Clearly neither contemporary nor biblical usage picks out consistently distinct groups of people called "clergy" and "laity." Nonetheless, the distinction is not merely situational, as may be the case with Paul's extra-apostolic spiritually gifted roles like prophets and interpreters in 1 Cor 12. In the first chapter of Acts, Peter draws a sharp distinction between the 120 brethren gathered in the Upper Room (1:15)—some of whom had accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry (1:21)—and the carefully numbered Twelve who have an allotment in that ministry (1:17: τὸν κληρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης). Matthias and Joseph (a.k.a. Barsabbas, Justus) have all the same visible qualifications, and both equally laid eyes upon the risen Lord (1:21–23), but only Matthias is allotted the ministry of apostolic witness (1:22, 24–26). He becomes an apostolic witness by allotment, and that clerical allotment is solemnly pronounced rather than situationally dependent. Contemporary usage, too (despite some variation and confusion), generally regards clerical status as something enduring and important enough to figure in fundamental legislative and ecclesiological texts.¹²

I propose that this practice is grounded in primary scriptural meanings for the terms "clerical" and "lay." If the apostles are the archetypal clerics, who

¹¹ Osborne claims that this is the general meaning in the New Testament (*Ministry*, 16).

¹² This is true even for traditions with a vastly lower view of the clerical state than Catholics, e.g. *Book of Order*, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, pt. II (United States, 2019), sec. F-302, G-201–G-210, W-203, A-4; and *Constitution and Regulations and the Basis of Union* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2018), 83–84.

witness to Christ's resurrection, the archetypal laity are those who gather together to receive that witness:

Now many signs and wonders were done among the people [ἐν τῷ λαῷ] through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem [ἀλλ' ἐμεγάλυνεν αὐτοὺς ὁ λαός]. Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women. (Acts 5:12–14)

In their foundational meanings, then, clerics are the allotted witnesses, and the laity are the assembly *from whom* the clerics are allotted and *to whom* the clerics witness.

Analogical Possibilities

How are we to make sense of the complicated textual data from these simple foundational meanings? The first hermeneutic key is the recognition that these foundational meanings are relational. There is no witness without an assembly to hear it, and no belief in testimony without a witness to give that testimony. As Magnani says, “the theological content [of *λαός* and its cognates] remains indirect . . . and is dominated by the prevalent semantic usage expressing contrast.”¹³ Rather than treating this as a pure restriction on our theologizing, as Magnani does, I propose using a Thomistic framework for analogy to situate later theology with respect to biblical usage.

Thomas Aquinas points out in his second “Disputed Question on Truth” (*De veritate*, q. 2, a. 11, corp.) that, when two ideas are understood in relation to each other, two other similarly related ideas can be called by the same names, in an analogy of proportionality. Aquinas takes this understanding from mathematics, where, since 2 is called the double of 1, and 1 the half of 2, then we can also call 6 the double of 3, and 3 the half of 6, even though 6 has, in itself, as much in common with 3 as it does with 2. In other words, we can rearrange from “1 is to 2 as 3 is to 6” to “1 is to 3 as 2 is to 6.” As Cajetan explains, the constraint on performing this rearrangement is that the original proportion must strictly preserve the same relation on both sides.¹⁴ This analogy of proportionality allows us to see how the various New Testament

¹³ Magnani, “Does the So-Called Theology of the Laity Possess a Theological Status?”

¹⁴ Joshua P. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan's De Nominum Analogia* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 126.

uses of κληρος and λαός are related, even though the terms are not used with the same meaning or reference in each case.¹⁵

In cases where God's people as a whole are referred to as an allotment (e.g., LXX Deut 4:20; NA27 Col 1:12), we must remember that God chooses his people from among the nations (Deut 7:6, 14:2). The Israelites are in fact allotted from a greater assembly before God, that of all the nations as a whole.¹⁶ Allotment to ministry in both the old and new covenants gives a share in God's glory, as Paul makes plain in 2 Cor 3. The same seems to be true for God's allotment of Israel *from* among the nations in Isa 44:23 and 49:3, which results in Israel being a light *to* the nations (60:3), witnessing the deeds that God has wrought in Israel. In fact, it is Isaiah's metaphor of Israel as light to the nations that Paul appropriates for his own ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 13:47.

The second hermeneutic key comes from the Greek text of Acts 5:13, where the verb the NRSVCE translates as "held in high esteem" is ἐμεγάλυνεν, "magnified." Allotment to ministry gives a share in God's glory, but growth in faith by those who receive the witness of the clerics is a magnification of that glory (2 Cor 10:15). The work of the redemption qualifies the saints to share in an inheritance *in the light* (Col 1:12) precisely because the requisite "fruit in every good work" (1:10) is a "fruit *of the Light*" (Eph 5:9; emphasis added). Since receiving light faithfully magnifies that light, the one who is in the λαός, assembled to receive the witness from some κληρος, is, *by the very nature of receiving that witness in spirit and truth*, allotted to give witness to others. As the apostle is to the faithful, so the faithful are to the world.

Because Jesus also receives an allotment from the Father (Matt 28:18; John 17:24; Col 1:19; Rom 8:17; Heb 2:9; 2 Pet 1:17), we can take the analogy one step further. Jesus is of one substance with the Father (John 1:1), so there is no "index of refraction" when the light passes through him (1:3–4, 8), and thus his allotment is complete (Col 2:9; Heb 1:3). Nonetheless, Jesus is also in some sense allotted *from* the community to which he is sent (Phil 2:7)—Jesus "takes" the form of man, and he receives it from a woman (Gal 4:4). Jesus then assembles his disciples in order to testify about himself (John 8:18), but because he is the perfect image of God (Col 1:15), when the disciples see him they see the Father (John 14:7–9). As in the case of God's election of Israel, the disciples' faithful reception of this witness allows them to be apostles who witness to others (Matt 10:1–4; Mark 3:13–19; Luke

¹⁵ Proportional analogy as a rule of interpretation has some foundation in Scripture (see Rom 12:6).

¹⁶ Scripture does in fact frequently treat all the nations together as a kind of assembly before God: Ps 102:22; Isa 43:9; 66:18; Jer 3:17; Joel 3:2; Zeph 3:8; Matt 25:32.

6:12–16; see also Matt 16:16–18), thereby magnifying Jesus (Acts 19:17). It is because Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12) that those who hear him preach are also light for the world (Matt 5:14–16). By the analogy of proper proportionality, as Christ is to his assembled disciples, so those disciples are to the assembled communities in which they preach.

This analogical framework allows us to resolve the problem of understanding allotment in Acts 26 and 1 Pet 5. First, the allotment Paul refers to as given to the gentiles (Acts 26:17–18) need not be Israel's status as God's chosen people. Rather, when Paul enlightens the gentiles, "open[ing] their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light" (26:18), he is doing for them what Jesus did for him. When the gentiles "receive forgiveness of sins" and are "sanctified by faith in [Jesus]" (26:18), then they receive an allotment precisely as witnesses to the as-yet-unbelieving world. Gentiles, too, are now called to glorify God (Rom 15:8–9), and *both* Jew and Greek will magnify Jesus (Acts 19:17). This interpretation is supported by a look at Paul's quotation of Hos 2 in Rom 9, often the locus of supersessionist readings of Paul. Here Paul applies God's words to a redeemed Judah, that "those who were not my people I will call 'my people'" (Rom 9:25; see LXX Hos 2:23, 25), to the gentile assembly. Paul then quotes in the next verse from elsewhere in Hosea (Rom 9:26; see LXX Hos 1:10 and 2:1), but as is often the case in Paul, this is an instance of metalepsis—the words missing from the quotation not only matter, but are actually the intended point of *emphasis*.¹⁷ After God declares to this formerly bereft and desolate people that they are *his people*, they "shall say, 'You are my God!'" (NRSVCE Hos 2:23; LXX Hos 2:25). Paul's point is that, once Israel received God's witness, they were qualified *as witnesses*, and that the same is true of the gentiles. Jesus has thus not "rescued" Paul from the Jews, as the NRSVCE renders ἐξαπολύμενός in Acts 26:17, but rather "selected" him—as is the more common meaning and more fitting to the middle voice. Paul has been *allotted from* the Jews, but *allotted to* the gentiles, enabling those gentiles' own allotment as witnesses. As God was to the Jews, so Paul is to the gentiles, and so the gentile believers will be to the whole pagan world.

Second, this analogical framework can also help us to understand the startling terminology of 1 Pet 5:3, which placed the flock, rather than the shepherding presbyters, in the role of the allotted. Peter begins the fifth chapter of his letter with the usual statements of authority: he is a presbyter,

¹⁷ For a full explanation of metalepsis, Paul's usage of the device, and its importance for interpreting Paul, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

he is a witness to Christ, and he has received an allotment of Christ's glory. In short, Peter establishes himself as a paradigmatic κληρὸς, and thus his readers must be related as an assembled λαός.¹⁸ Yet Peter enters into this passage with a keen awareness that those readers see *themselves* as clerics (shepherds and overseers). This guides Peter's diction: he introduces himself as a συμπρεσβύτερος, and instead of some derivative of κληρώω to signify his allotment, he chooses κοινωνός, which suggests that the allotment is shared. Already we need to understand the tension in their analogous situations in order to grasp Peter's tone, but so far this is the same proportional structure as in the other passages above. Why, then, should the clerics not lord their power over the laity?

Peter's diction provides two answers. First, there are the contrast terms. "Lording-over" (κατακυριεύοντες; 1 Pet 5:3) is a verb used only a few times in Scripture, and its New Testament uses all seem to echo Ps 10:5 (LXX 9:26), where it describes what the iniquitous do to their enemies. If the presbyters wish to be just rather than full of iniquity (Ps 1:1–2), and to treat their flock as friends rather than servants (John 5:15), then they should not lord their authority over the flock. By contrast, if they are to be shepherds (John 21:16; Acts 20:28) in the model of Christ the Chief Shepherd (John 10:11; Heb 13:20), then they must serve in meekness and mercy (Matt 5:5–7; 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:14–17; Jas 2:13). This comparison is strengthened by Peter's references to the presbyters as "types" (τύποι; 1 Pet 5:3), a term which generally in the New Testament indicates some kind of conformity to Christ (e.g., 1 Thess 1:6–7).¹⁹

Second, however, the Chief Shepherd is also a sheep (John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor 5:7; throughout Revelations), as Peter has just reminded his readers (1 Pet 1:19), and this invokes the logic of Jesus's third parable in Matt 25. Shepherding the sheep is feeding Christ (25:40); the flock, too, are other Christs.²⁰ If Christ is the ultimate κληρὸς, allotted capital grace, then the laity as other Christs are also bestowers of grace through their witness of the Word.²¹ Christ is the High Priest (Heb 6:20), Peter is an apostle to the presbyters (1 Pet 5:1), who are a priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices (1

¹⁸ Paul uses similar tropes of ministry, witness, and apostleship to establish his clerical status relative to his readers (e.g., Gal 1 and 1 Cor 15).

¹⁹ This text actually suggests that the logic for τύπος is parallel to that for κληρὸς: as Christ is a type for the apostles, so the apostles are types for the Christian faithful, and so the Christian faithful are types for the nations.

²⁰ John 21:15–17 also suggests this close connection: feeding and shepherding are intertwined, and Peter is to feed the sheep as Jesus has just fed him.

²¹ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summae theologiae* [ST] III, q. 8, a. 5, corp.

Pet 2:5), and indeed all of the Christian faithful are a priestly people (λαός) chosen by God (1 Pet 2:9).

Nor does this exercise of clerical witness flow in only one direction. While Christ receives no knowledge from men,²² the Church learns from the nations (e.g., Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Titus 1:12–13; see also Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* [GS] §44),²³ and the greatest of the apostles learns from the least (Gal 2:11, cf. 1 Cor 15:5–9). Surely clerics, too, can be witnessed to by laypeople, and this is exactly what Jesus teaches in Luke 9. Here Jesus first establishes that his disciples are clerics, by allotting them authority as witnesses (9:1–2) whose testimony should be received (9:5).²⁴ As soon as they return, however, grasping after their allotment (9:46), Jesus allots a *child* before their assembly, and tells them that “whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me” (9:48). The clerics in their clericalism are rebuked by being treated as laity, in contrast to a layman treated as Christ. Even then, they do not quite get the point, trying to jealously guard their powers of clerical witness (9:49) which earns them another rebuke from Jesus (9:50). This is the sort of episode called to mind when Peter refers to the flock as “allotted,” where the over-lording cleric must be placed in the receptive role of a layperson in order to receive the witness of the layperson acting as Christ, the ultimate cleric. This reading of 1 Pet 2 in light of Luke 9 is strengthened by the parallel passage of Matt 10, where Jesus performs exactly the same rhetorical inversion, sending the disciples as apostles to the sheep (10:6) and then immediately referring to the disciples *themselves* as sheep (10:16) whose witness is not their own but that of the Spirit (10:18–20).

Practical Implications

A review of the scriptural evidence has suggested that “clerical” and “lay” are relational terms: the cleric is the one allotted to witness and the layperson is the one assembled to receive that witness. As the nature of the allotment and assembly changes, the relational terms become analogous, with different referents in different cases. Perhaps this should not be surprising to Catholics, given the Church’s teaching on the analogous relationship between the

²² ST III, q. 12, a. 3, corp.

²³ See also Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections” (papal address, meeting with the representatives of science, University of Regensburg, September 12, 2006).

²⁴ The word for “received” here, δέχονται, is the characteristic term for the expected response to apostolic witness by the faithful (Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; Gal 4:14; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 2:10; Jas 1:21).

ordained ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of all believers in *Lumen Gentium*.²⁵ Yet the same document which happily treats priesthood as an analogous term retains an entirely univocal, and therefore negative, definition of laity, "here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church" (§31). We thus return to my allotted task: first, understanding the relationship between the univocal definitions offered in the *Code of Canon Law* and *Lumen Gentium* and the more analogical scriptural data, and second exploring the practical fruit of a more analogous understanding for clerical–lay relationships.

Analogy is essential to the practice of theology²⁶ but dangerous in law.²⁷ Genre constraints can thus do a great deal to explain why canon law makes use of univocal definitions of clergy and laity even when this does not always

²⁵ See *LG* §§10–11: "Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity. It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ. Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. Thus both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself. Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament."

²⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 13, a. 5, corp.; E. L. Mascall, "The Doctrine of Analogy," *CrossCurrents* 1, no. 4 (1951): 38–57; Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 1963); Thomas Guarino, "The Truth-Status of Theological Statements: Analogy Re-Visited," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1988): 140–55.

²⁷ William F. Young, "Equivocation in the Making of Agreements," *Columbia Law Review* 64, no. 4 (1964): 619–47.

seem altogether theologically satisfactory. Nonetheless, we should be able to say something about why some univocal precisifications are more fitting than others. Here again, I think the question of genre does a great deal of the work. Canon law does not attempt to regulate the relationship between the Church and the world, because law is either in the ruler or in the participation of the ruled, and the Church is not the ruler of this world, nor would the world accept her rule (Matt 22:21 / Mark 12:17 / Luke 20:25; John 14:30; Eph 2:2; see *GS* §76 for interpretation).²⁸

Canon law also does not attempt—perish the thought—to regulate the relationship between the Church and Christ her head. The *Code* therefore properly governs the order *among the Christian faithful*. Given the need for univocity then, the question is merely who is in the primary and stable role of allotted witness *within* the Church, and who is in the role of assembled receiver of that witness? The ones allotted for ministerial office within the Church are called “clerics” (*LG* §41), and they witness not (primarily and directly) to the world, but rather to “the priestly people” (§10). The univocal definition of clerical status thus presupposes the analogical definition: the clerics are understood as such in relation to the laity, while it is the laity who (primarily and directly) “stand before the *world* as a witness.” (§38; emphasis added).

The attempt to discuss a fundamentally analogous concept in a univocal framework thus explains the two difficulties exposed by John Paul II’s presentation of *Lumen Gentium*. First, consecrated religious do not easily fit into the univocal dichotomy of clergy and laity (*VC* §60), nor do they expand it into a trichotomy (*LG* §43), because their witness occurs “through prayer or active works” (§44) and “the eloquent language of a transfigured life” (*VC* §20), which apply equally *ad intra* and *ad extra*.²⁹ Second, it is impossible to give “a decidedly positive vision” of the laity without going beyond the Church, which is why, even though “the Council went beyond previous interpretations which were predominantly negative,” there is still an ongoing “need for a definition of the lay faithful’s vocation and mission in positive terms” (*CL* §9). *Ad extra*, a positive definition of the laity is possible as those who “must stand before the world as a witness to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus and a symbol of the living God” (*LG* §38).

This weighty “dignity” and “responsibility” (*LG* §37) flows from baptismal character, and if carried out would put to rest Pope Francis’s concerns

²⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 1, corp.

²⁹ This is already apparent in Hippolytus, who says: “Ordination is for the clergy on account of their ministry, but the widow is appointed for prayer, and prayer is the duty of all” (*Apostolic Tradition*, ch. 11).

about clerical exclusivism. The *ad extra* role of the laity is "distinctive" (*GS* §44) when laypeople "make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth" (*LG* §33) because clerics are excluded (e.g., "clerics are forbidden to assume public offices which entail a participation in the exercise of civil power" [*CIC* no. 285]). In sum, "laymen . . . see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city," while from clerics "they may look for spiritual light and nourishment" (*GS* §43). This *ad intra* witness, meanwhile, is the proper role of clergy, and thus "only clerics can obtain offices for whose exercise the power of orders or the power of ecclesiastical governance is required" (*CIC* no. 274). Having set "the theological basis of this difference" between clergy and laity on a firm foundation, we can hopefully avoid "a faulty clericalizing of the laity and a laicizing of the clergy," as John Paul II wished.³⁰

At the same time, thanks to our reading of 1 Peter 5 in the light of Luke 9, we can deploy the tools of analogy to avoid keeping clergy and laity "separate in wrong and destructive ways."³¹ Even though some of the Christian faithful receive ordination in order to exercise a primarily clerical role *ad intra*, they must remember that the canonical laity, too, are allotted. Meanwhile, even the highest ranks of the canonical clergy are "taken from among" the canonical laity, and thus "beset with weakness" of the same kind (*LG* §27). *Lumen Gentium* thus stresses that "all Christians," and not just the canonical laity, are "to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments" (*LG* §37). The shepherds, too, must take the role of sheep.

Further, the sheep must sometimes act as shepherds, and "not imagine" that the clergy are "always such experts that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission" (*GS* §43). As a result, "it is to be hoped that many of the laity will receive a sufficient formation in the sacred sciences and that some will dedicate themselves professionally to these studies" (*GS* §62). This *ad intra* role for the laity is not new—Thomas Aquinas insists that subjects may be bound from charity to correct their prelates.³² On the other hand, "secular duties and activities belong properly" (*GS* §43) to the canonical laity, but not "exclusively," as exceptions may often be made (*CIC* nos. 285[4]–86). This *per accidens* performance of clerical roles (both formally recognized and

³⁰ John Paul II, November 1998 address.

³¹ John Paul II, November 1998 address, §5.

³² Aquinas, *ST* II-II, q. 33, a. 4, corp.

informally performed) by laity, and lay roles by clerics (again both by formal exception and everyday necessity),³³ explains why Pope Francis insists that the shepherding clerics must “have the odor of” the lay “sheep.”³⁴ The cleric who lacks the smell of the laity has not engaged in the humble interchange of analogous roles that Christ and Peter demand.³⁵

Conclusion

The foundational biblical meanings of *κληρως* and *λαός* are, respectively, the “allotted witnesses” and the assembly *from whom* those clerics are allotted and *to whom* the clerics witness. These terms are not only relational, but analogous, as different entities perform these roles in different situations. Humility is achieved and clericalism avoided by performing each role in the appropriate situation. This perspective helps avoid supersessionist readings of Rom 9:25 and explains Peter’s otherwise confusing diction in 5:3 of his first letter. Nonetheless, those who have a stable clerical role in the Church *ad intra* are rightfully canonically distinguished from those whose stable clerical role is *ad extra* and *ad intra* constitute the laity. Religious, whose role is the same *ad intra* and *ad extra*, neither fall neatly into this dichotomy nor expand it into a trichotomy. I end with brief remarks on how this analogous framing of the biblical data may assuage certain ecumenical concerns.

Ecumenical Postscript

The degree to which other ecclesial communities will share expectations of clergy and laity with Catholics naturally depends on their background theological assumptions. As we have seen, the cleric is the one allotted to give witness to the assembly, but what is given must first have been received (1 Cor 2:1–16; Eph 2:20; Rom 10:17; 2 Tim 2:2). Reception is the role of the laity, but that reception always involves magnification (e.g., Acts 19:17). Other than in the case of Christ, who already possesses the glory of God in its fullness, that magnifying grants an allotment of light to the mirror doing the magnification (2 Cor 3). The question then becomes how to understand

³³ A previous excellent study of the Vatican II documents on this question recognizes the complexities, but not the analogical unity; see Joseph A. Komonchak, “Clergy, Laity, and the Church’s Mission in the World,” *Jurist* 41 (1981): 422.

³⁴ Pope Francis, Homily for Chrism Mass of March 28, 2013, St. Peter’s Basilica; see also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) §24.

³⁵ The Dominical parallel to 1 Pet 2 is Matt 20:25–28, so this helps characterize the service demanded of clerics.

that allotment, as described in passages like Phil 1:20 and Gal 2:20. Is it a real ontological change effected by a sacrament which gives a permanent character and a habitual grace? That is the Catholic view, and it explains why clergy and laity have strict limits, even if they are analogically understood. If, by contrast, the allotment of light is merely nominally imputed rather than ontological, as Luther and Calvin saw things, then there may be *only a per accidens*, and not a *per se*, difference between clergy and laity.³⁶ Whatever role is being performed at the moment is the only factor of importance,³⁷ and any further distinctions can be made only based on temporal factors like training and employment status, which may seem more problematic than beneficial.³⁸ Empirically, the psychologically felt distinction between clergy and laity seems to rest less upon the concrete work performed (pastoral, administrative, etc.) than on how the roles are theologically envisioned in formal documents.³⁹

A final point of ecumenical interest that follows from this analysis is a clarification of Catholic Marian piety. Catholics render Mary *hyperdulia*, a reverence first among the saints, which many Protestants find scandalous even though it is sharply distinguished from *latría*, the adoration due to God alone. I will not enter here into the scriptural warrant for that distinction, but rather I want to point out what Mary is honored *for*. Jesus, we have noted, is the ultimate κληρος, having been given all power, glory, and kingship (Dan 7:14). If Mary were revered in a similar way but merely to a lesser degree, one might wonder whether the distinction could be made adequately sharp. Catholic Marian piety, however, centers in large part on the Magnificat, Mary's song in praise of the Lord during her visitation of Elizabeth, in Luke 1:46–55. But "Magnificat" is the Latin translation of Μεγαλύνει in 1:46—Mary is revered because her soul magnifies the Lord. This makes her not an archetypal κληρος (though she possesses that allotment in various analogous respects), but rather an archetypal member of the λαός. Luke, who reports the Angel's words of praise for Mary (1:28, 30), is also the author of Acts who reports Mary's participation in the assembly in

³⁶ Denis R. Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology* (Waterloo, Belgium: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 30–33; Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

³⁷ Mark Maddix, "A Biblical Model of the People of God: Overcoming the Clergy/Laity Dichotomy," *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009): 223–24.

³⁸ Maddix, "Biblical Model," 221–22.

³⁹ Susanne C. Monahan, "Role Ambiguity among Protestant Clergy: Consequences of the Activated Laity," *Review of Religious Research* 41, no. 1 (1999): 80.

the Upper Room during the allotment of Matthias as an apostle (Acts 1:14). According to Luke's criterion that the allotted apostle must have been with Jesus "beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:22, no one could have been more qualified than Mary. Yet that was not her allotment—the God-bearer was a laywoman. Mary, Mother of God, pray for us. N.V.