

"QVAE STIO QVINTA. Whether there is any power in the church greater than the sacerdotal power.

NEXT, it is asked about the episcopacy, and first, whether in the church there is any power greater than the sacerdotal power. And it seems that there is not: because powers are distinguished according to acts, but there is no act greater than the sacerdotal act which is to consecrate the body of Christ, therefore no power is greater than the sacerdotal.

2. Likewise, the priest, in offering, represents the figure of Christ, who offered himself, but no one is greater than Christ, who is the head of the church, therefore neither is anyone greater than the priest.

3. ON THE CONTRARY, it is Dionysius who places the bishop above the priest, just as the priest is above the deacon or minister.

4. RESPONSE. First, we must distinguish between types of power: because there is a power of jurisdiction and a power of consecration. The power of jurisdiction is for governing the people. However, the power of consecration is for the consecration and administration of the sacraments, and of these two powers, if each were compared precisely and conferred one upon the other, the second would be more dignified than the first: for the first is ordered to the second, for the power of jurisdiction is so that the people may be kept away from evils and exercised in good things to be worthy of participating in the divine sacraments. Therefore, when we ask whether there is any power greater than the sacerdotal power, we do not intend to compare these two powers to each other to see which is greater, but we intend to compare the powers of jurisdiction among themselves, and consecration among themselves and those who have them, inquiring, namely, whether anyone is greater than the priest concerning the power of jurisdiction, or concerning the power of consecration.

5. And it proceeds as follows: first, it will be shown that in the church there are many who are greater than the simple priest in terms of the power of jurisdiction, and second, it will be inquired whether similarly it is so with the power of consecration.

First, this is evident as follows: because a power that is wholly given to one in its source is not in others except derived and limited according to that one's will. But the power of jurisdiction, which is for governing the people, was wholly and in its source given only to Peter and his successors when the care of the church was entrusted to him, as the Lord said to John, "Feed my sheep." For this was said to none of the other apostles, neither then, nor before, nor after, therefore, such a full and perfect power is possessed only by Peter's successor, who is for this reason called the Pope, as it were the father of fathers. In others, however, it is only derived and limited as it pleases the Pope, among whom the lowest rank is held by simple priests, who by law (of which the Pope is the author) either have no jurisdiction or the least, such as to excommunicate notorious thieves and the like in places where this is customary. Above the

simple priests, however, are the bishops, who have ordinary jurisdiction over the whole diocese. Above them are the archbishops, who not only have jurisdiction in their own diocese but also over the entire province in certain cases. Finally, above all, the Pope is placed, in whom resides the fullness and primacy of this power, and this is reasonable: because the best governance of a multitude is when it is governed by one supreme person from whom the authority of governing descends to the middle and even to the lowest. And for this reason, the regime is the best polity according to the Philosopher in Politics, but the governance of the church is most excellently instituted by Christ, therefore, in the whole church, there must be one universal rector from whom the authority of governing descends to the middle down to the lowest rectors, and this is the Pope, and for this reason, the unity of the church stands, all members are under one head: for this reason, those who deny this power are called schismatics as if they are dividers of the unity of the church. And thus the first point is clear, namely that many are greater than the simple priest in terms of the power of jurisdiction.

6. Concerning the power of consecration or order, there is great doubt. For Jerome seems to have agreed that the highest power of consecration or order was the sacerdotal power, thus every priest as far as sacerdotal power is concerned can administer all sacraments, confirmation, all orders, all blessings, and all consecrations. But for the sake of avoiding the danger of schism, it was ordained that priests should choose one among themselves who would be called a bishop, as if presiding over others, whom others would obey, and to whom it was reserved to perform orders and the like which are not performed except by bishops alone. Therefore, the bishop is greater than the priest in terms of the power of jurisdiction, but not in terms of the power of order or consecration, but they are equal, although by the church's ordination some things are reserved for bishops and prohibited to priests.

7. And thus it appears, as stated by Jerome in multiple places, showing from Scripture that he calls the same people presbyters whom he calls bishops and vice versa, not distinguishing between them when he speaks of those things which pertain to order and consecration. For the Apostle, writing to the Philippians in chapter 1, says, "with the bishops and deacons," understanding presbyters by bishops, since in one city (as in Philippi) there should not be several bishops. Again, in Acts 20, he says the same: "Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops," and he was speaking to them of the city of Ephesus alone. This is explicitly clear in Titus 1, where it is said: "For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains and appoint presbyters in every city as I commanded you, if anyone is without reproach, the husband of one wife." And immediately adds: "For a bishop must be without reproach." See, whom he first called presbyter, he now calls bishop. And in 1 Timothy 4, he says: "Do not neglect the grace that is in you, which was given you by the laying on of hands of the presbytery," that is, the bishop, and Paul calls himself a presbyter when he was a bishop who had ordained him, and in the same epistle in chapter three, speaking of the ordination of bishops and deacons, he is silent about presbyters, understanding the same presbyters whom he called bishops in those things which pertain to ordination.

8. Similarly, it seems it can be proven by reason: because no power of order or consecration was in the apostles, in whose place bishops succeeded, except from Christ, but Christ did not ordain them except by sacerdotal ordination, as is evident, therefore neither the apostles before nor the bishops now have the power of order except the sacerdotal. Proof of the minor premise: for Christ only seems to have ordained the apostles at the Last Supper when giving them his body and blood, he said: "Do this in memory of me." And again after the resurrection when he said: "Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive," etc. Both are ordinations of a simple priest, therefore, likewise. Thus Jerome says, the bishop and presbyter were once synonymous names and also of administration, because the churches were governed by the common counsel of the priests. But to remedy schism so that each one, drawing the church to himself, would not tear it apart, it was ordained that one should preside and be called a bishop, both in name and administration, to whom the administration of some sacraments and other sacred matters would be reserved by custom and institution of the church. This is expressly stated by Jerome in distinction 93, can. "We read in Isaiah," and over the epistle to Titus, and it is recited in distinction 90, can. "Once a presbyter," etc. But custom and institution of the church can give jurisdiction but not the power of order or consecration, therefore, etc. Whoever, therefore, considers this erroneous or dangerous should impute it to Jerome, from whose words in the aforementioned canon "We read in Isaiah," the authorities quoted are taken, where he also gives an example: just as it is with the bishop in respect to presbyters, so it would be with the archdeacon in respect to deacons, if deacons chose one from among themselves who would be called the archdeacon. And in the canon "Once," distinction 95, he says verbatim: Once the presbyter was the same as the bishop, and before there were any strifes or schisms in the region incited by the devil, and it was said among the people, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas," the churches were governed by the common counsel of the presbyters. But after everyone began to consider those whom they baptized to be theirs and not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the world that one of the presbyters should be placed over the others, to remove the seed of schisms, and he would alone be called a bishop, and in regard to some administration of sacraments and sacred matters, these would be reserved by custom and institution of the church.

9. Others say that the power of order or consecration is greater in the bishop than in the simple priest not only by the church's ordination but also by the nature of the order and consecration according to divine institution. The reason for this is that those things which are in the new law are prefigured by those in the old: now it is so that in the old law the bishop or high priest was consecrated by divine ordination with a special consecration and to a special act beyond the simple priests: for it is stated in Leviticus 8 that only the high priest, who had others in his offices, was anointed with the oil of sacred anointing to perform special acts, such as entering the holy of holies, therefore similarly, it seems that by divine ordination the head of the bishop, who is the high priest, is consecrated with the chrism for a special act which belongs to him alone, such as ordaining ministers and similar things which are proper to bishops alone. And this opinion is more common and safer because it is more in accord with the doctrine of the

church which has the highest authority in matters pertaining to articles of faith and ecclesiastical sacraments.

10. Nor do the authorities adduced by Jerome stand in opposition, because according to the name and truth of the matter, every bishop is a presbyter and vice versa concerning the name: for every presbyter having care can be called a bishop as if superintending others, although the consecration of the bishop or high priest is more ample than that of the simple presbyter, but perhaps in the primitive church, they did not make so much distinction in the names as now, for this reason, they called everyone having care a bishop.

11. Some also say that at that time both powers were conferred on everyone who presided over the people, so that the people would have an ecclesiastical leader at hand who could administer all sacraments and institute ministers, but this is not true: because even in the times of the apostles, there was, in fact, a distinction between bishops and presbyters, as is evident from Dionysius in the 5th chapter of Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. Moreover, it is more remarkable that Jerome, by his words at the end of that canon 'once,' seems to equate presbyters with bishops not only in terms of consecration but also regarding the governance of the church which pertains to the power of jurisdiction, with that power over the whole church given solely to Peter and derived from him to others, as was said in the first article. Hence, Augustine, in his book on heresies, says that Arius claimed there should be no difference between presbyters and bishops, which he himself considers heretical. The reason adduced to confirm that opinion does not hold. First, because Christ did many things that are not written in the gospels, and therefore it is not a good consequence to say, 'Christ is not read to have done this, therefore he did not do it.' Second, because Christ had the power of excellence and could and did give the effect of the sacrament without the sacrament, as when at the Last Supper he gave his disciples his body and blood under the species of bread and wine and said, 'Do this in memory of me.' If by these words he gave them sacerdotal power, this was not by the sacrament of sacerdotal ordination, because priests in their sacramental ordination are given unconsecrated matter in vessels, but Christ gave consecrated matter and only for use, saying, 'Take and eat,' etc., and not for consecration. The words also said in sacerdotal consecration are different from the above words of Christ, so if he thus gave them sacerdotal power, it was not by the sacrament of sacerdotal ordination, but by the mode of the power of excellence: and similarly at other times he gave them episcopal power by the mode of excellence, although it is not read in the gospels.

12. To the first argument it must be said that no act that does not include the act of consecration is greater than it, but to consecrate and to ordain is greater than the other alone. Therefore, since episcopal power necessarily includes these two (as will appear in the following question), it is manifest that it is greater than the sacerdotal power which includes only one.

13. To the second it must be said that just as the priest, in celebrating, represents Christ as he offered himself, so the bishop, in celebrating and ordaining, represents the same as he offered himself and founded the church and instituted ministers: which is greater than the first, and thus Christ is more perfectly represented by the bishop than by the priest, therefore etc.