

ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARY PRELATES

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One hears frequently of missionaries and often about the Roman Catholic Church's missionary effort. But seldom does one find in English a survey of the canon law of Roman Catholic missionary prelates. This may be because the canon law of missions was perfected only in this century and because to this day it remains only partly codified. In any case, for reasons which will later become apparent, this body of canon law has special application in the Commonwealth.

1. THE GRADES OF ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARY PRELATES

The canon law of Roman Catholic missionary prelates in practice began with the creation of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which might be regarded as the 'Colonial Office' of the Holy See. It was created in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV as one of the several boards or commissions of cardinals of the Roman curia. 'Propaganda', to use the short title of this body, which since 1988 has been known as the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, had as its charge to superintend the Roman Catholic Church's missions and missionaries, then largely in Spanish and Portuguese overseas territories. Over the centuries it developed a hierarchy of missionary prelates and missionary districts to mark the ecclesiastical maturation of a mission land.

(a) *Vicars Apostolic*

The first kind of missionary prelate developed by Propaganda was the vicar apostolic. Here Propaganda began by putting new wine into old wineskins. The term 'vicar apostolic' was by no means new. Already in the fifth and sixth centuries the popes were naming the bishops of Arles in France and Seville in Spain their vicars apostolic—what today would be called a papal legate or apostolic delegate to a local church. The vicar apostolic of antiquity then was a representative of the Bishop of Rome to the local church where he resided. The term continued to be used in this sense until the twelfth century.

Later during the High Middle Ages the term vicar apostolic came to be used for a prelate appointed by the pope to administer an impeded see, that is, where the bishop remained alive and in office but for peculiar reasons—often political—was unable personally to administer his see. Today such a figure is called an apostolic administrator.

In the seventeenth century Propaganda began using the term in a new way. In Roman law a vicar was a chief of administration in charge of a civil diocese and perhaps for this reason the modern vicar apostolic is a bishop in charge of a missionary territory outside the Catholic world. In the first Christian millennium it was common for a bishop to be sent at the head of a corps of missionaries to evangelise a non-Christian population and so Saint Patrick was consecrated bishop and sent as apostle to the Irish, Saint Augustine of Canterbury as apostle to the English, Saint Willibrod as apostle to the Frisians, Saint Boniface as apostle to the Saxons. While missionaries, these men were also diocesan bishops.

But in the seventeenth century the missionary prelate, although a bishop, was instead styled 'vicar apostolic' and he ruled his vicariate, not as a diocesan bishop, but as the vicar of the pope. This new usage was introduced partly to avoid royal interference in the episcopal appointment process, since the right to nominate bishops had been conceded to the civil authorities in some places.

Thus, in 1659 a vicar apostolic was sent to Algiers and the same year others were dispatched to Quebec, Tonkin and Cochin China. In the case of Quebec in Canada political problems prevented the creation of a proper diocese until 1674 and so in 1659 a vicar apostolic was sent instead. Similarly a century and a half later political difficulties, now with Britain rather than France, prevented the dismemberment of the enormous diocese of Quebec, which covered all of Canada until the creation of the vicariate apostolic of Nova Scotia in 1817. Similar reasons led to the appointment of vicars apostolic to govern English Roman Catholics from 1685 to 1850, when after some parliamentary skirmishes a number of English Catholic dioceses were erected suffragan to the archdiocese of Westminster.

Vicars apostolic were invariably bishops. They would be given a titular see, usually in Asia Minor or North Africa in territories long in Muslim hands and without a Christian population. In general vicars apostolic had the privileges and style of a bishop. Traditionally, however, vicars apostolic did lack some of the liturgical privileges of diocesan bishops. They lacked the use of the *cappa magna* (the long poncho-like woollen cloak worn as choir dress over the rochet and cassock). Furthermore, since they were the pope's vicar with but ordinary vicarious (but not proper) power, they were not named in the canon of the Mass and lacked the use of the *cathedra* or episcopal throne at Mass. For this reason their church was not dignified with the title 'cathedral', unless specially privileged.¹

(b) *Prefects Apostolic*

Prefects apostolic were a different breed from vicars apostolic. They appeared later and began to be appointed with some frequency only in the eighteenth century. But the powers of this type of prelate were not quickly defined and canon law here was slow to develop. The term derived from Roman law, where it was used for the chief of an office in any branch of administration. Sometimes this missionary prelate was called a prefect of mission and was merely the superior of a band of missionary Religious with no territorial jurisdiction. In the canonical parlance of canon 134 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* of 1983 he might be an Ordinary (of Religious) but he was not to be a local Ordinary, that is, one with territorial jurisdiction. On the other hand sometimes he was both. Not surprisingly, the canonical situation was often confused and the first Vatican council in 1870 in its draft decrees (never enacted because of the Italian takeover of Rome that year) asked that prefects apostolic be abolished. But this canonical institute had considerable utility and, instead of abolishing the office of prefect apostolic, Rome clarified its powers and retained the office in the 1917 Code.

The prefect apostolic, in contrast to the vicar apostolic, while today a local Ordinary with all the jurisdictional powers of a prelate in charge of a local church, is usually a priest and not a bishop. As prefect he could, nevertheless, consecrate holy oils and chalices, confirm his subjects within his territory, and also ordain them to minor orders.²

Many Catholic jurisdictions in the Commonwealth began their ecclesiastical life as prefectures apostolic. Among the first was that of Saint John's, Newfoundland,

¹ R. Naz, 'Vicaire apostolique', in 7 R. Naz, *Dictionnaire de Droit Canonique* (hereafter 'DDC') (Paris, 1965), col. 1479; A. Berger, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 763. See also Francis Winslow, *Vicars and Prefects Apostolic* (Washington, 1924). The missionary district in Oriental Catholic canon law is the exarchate ruled by an exarch who is governed by *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* (1990), canons 311–321.

² R. Naz, 'Préfet apostolique', 7 DDC, col. 166; A. Berger, *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 64; Ignatius Ting Pong Lee, 'Praefectus Missionis-Praefectus Apostolicus', (1956) 35 *Commentarium pro Religiosis* (hereafter 'CpR') 353–358, (1957) 36 CpR 51–55. More recently, Julio Garcia Martin suggests that when the evidence is viewed more globally the development of the law of prefects apostolic was more orderly than previously supposed: 'De religiosorum regimine in missionibus synthesis historica ab initia SCPF usque ad pontificatum Gregorii XVI', (1984) 65 CpR 283–304.

which in 1784 began its distinct ecclesiastical existence as a prefecture apostolic. That same year the United States, after departing from the first British Empire, also began its distinct ecclesiastical existence as a prefecture apostolic.

The prefecture remains a useful missionary district for small places with few Catholic people. Thus, the remnant of France's North American empire, the Islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon off the Atlantic coast of Canada, in 1763 became a prefecture apostolic and remained such for two centuries until 1970 when they became a vicariate. The Falkland or Malvinas Islands far to the south in the Atlantic with but a single resident Mill Hill priest are likewise since 1952 suitably ranked as a prefecture apostolic.

(c) *Superiors of Missions*

At the turn of this century the last of the missionary prelate positions developed. Where Catholicism is in its merest infancy a superior of mission, rather than a prefect apostolic, is sometimes appointed. His missionary territory is called a mission sui iuris or autonomous mission. Like the prefect apostolic, the superior of mission is a priest. It seems that the first of these was appointed in 1912. His canonical powers were not clarified until 1934, however, when a letter from Propaganda declared that a superior of mission is a local Ordinary with powers of governance similar to those of a prefect apostolic.³

The draft for the 1917 *Codex Iuris Canonici* would have included superiors of missions along with vicars and prefects apostolic in its canons 294–311, but it was thought that the institute was too new then to pass into a codification. Curiously, six decades later during the drafting of the revised 1983 Code it seems never to have been suggested that superiors of autonomous missions be included in canons 368 and 371 (which supercede canons 293–311 of the 1917 Code) and in the new law codify the law of vicars and prefects apostolic. Thus eight decades after the creation of the first autonomous mission and the appointment of the first superior of mission in 1912 the law of this missionary district and its prelate remains uncoded.⁴

Today almost all autonomous missions lie in the Commonwealth. In the West Indies is the autonomous mission of the Turks and Caicos islands. In the South Atlantic is that of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. In the Pacific is that of Funafuti and also that of Tokelau. In Nigeria is the autonomous mission of Bomadi. From 1981 to 1989 the Nigerian federal capital territory of Abuja ranked as an autonomous mission and the Nigerian district of Kano was raised from autonomous mission to vicariate only in 1995. Nepal was also an autonomous mission until 1996, when it became a prefecture. As of 1997 the only autonomous mission outside the Commonwealth in fact was that of Ulan Bator, Mongolia, which was a merely nominal entity from its creation in 1922 until the very recent political changes there when on 19 April 1992 it was at last possible to appoint its first superi-

³ Augustinus Pugliese, 'De missione sui iuris eiusque praelato' (1937) 18 CpR 37–44, 175–184; Peter Chyang, *Decennial Faculties for Ordinaries in Quasi-dioceses* (Washington, 1961), pp 71–74. The canon law of autonomous missions developed rather casually almost 'in a fit of absence of mind'. In 1927 Propaganda requested reports from all missionary Ordinaries, and report forms were sent to superiors of autonomous missions as well as to vicars and prefects apostolic. In 1929 superiors of missions were empowered to appoint a vicar delegate, a prelate like a vicar general, giving them a faculty granted vicars and prefects apostolic in 1919. In 1932 Chinese autonomous missions were assigned to a second instance or appellate tribunal, suggesting that their prelate was a local Ordinary with a tribunal of first instance. Finally in 1934 Propaganda explained expressly that, since superiors of missions were local Ordinaries, they were required to celebrate the *missa pro populo* set forth in *Codex Iuris Canonici* (1917), canon 306. See *Sylloge, Praecipuorum Documentorum Recentium Summorum Pontificum et S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide* (Rome, 1939), pp 349, 463.

⁴ Petri Card. Gasparri, *Schema Codicis Iuris Canonici* (Rome, 1916), pp 113–120; 'De ecclesiis particulibus', (1972) 4 *Communicationes* 40–41.

or of mission. In all in 1997 there were seventy-five vicariates, forty-four prefectures, and five missions.⁵

2. THE PRIVILEGES OF MISSIONARY PRELATES

Missionary status in canon law is presumed to be transitory and perhaps for that reason one reads little about the privileges of prelates in mission lands. It is hoped that the mission will be fruitful, will take root and will grow to the point that the missionary district becomes a diocese or particular church complete with bishop, clergy and people.

That process of maturation is well illustrated by the case of Gambia which in 1931 became the autonomous mission of Bathurst. In 1951 it was raised to the rank of prefecture apostolic and in 1957 it became a diocese, today known as that of Banjul. At that point, while it may still maintain its missionary status in that it remains subject to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, it structurally resembled its more mature sister churches and achieved canonical maturity. It might be added that a missionary diocese achieves administrative maturity only when its bishops are transferred from the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples to the Congregation for Bishops.

The privileges of the three types of missionary prelate have differed somewhat over time and fall into three time periods, that before the codification of canon law in 1917, that from 1917 to Vatican II, and that since Vatican II.

(a) *The Law Before the Code of 1917*

As for his privileges, a vicar apostolic is usually a bishop and, if he is a bishop, his privileges of dress and address, as we have seen, are similar to those of other bishops. Armorially he may ensign his arms with a green ecclesiastical hat. Basically it is a broad-brimmed, flat-crowned hat which prelates in sunny climes were wont to wear to keep the hot Mediterranean sun from their heads. From the hat depend cords and a varying number of tassels on either side of the shield. The hat of a bishop is green and has six green tassels pendant on either side of the shield from green cords.

Until 1917, however, a vicar apostolic who lacked the episcopal character of a prefect apostolic had no special privileges of dress and address as such. But, nevertheless, such a prelate did rank as a local Ordinary and as such he could ensign his armorial bearings with a black ecclesiastical hat with six black tassels pendent from black cords on either side of the shield. He could also wear the prelate's garb in black. As a prelate he wore the black mantelletta or chimere over the rochet and black soutane or cassock. Until 1947 when it was abolished, the prelatial choir cassock had a train. Of course, the prefect may also have been a member of the pontifical household and thus as an honorary papal prelate would have had the use of a more distinctive prelatial dress and style of address.

(b) *After the Code*

But in 1917 during the age of papal monarchy, vicars and prefects apostolic who were not bishops were given special ceremonial privileges. Since they were regarded as vicars of the pope, by canon 308 of the 1917 Code during their term of office they

⁵ J. Van Hecken, 'Les missions chez les Mongols aux temps modernes', (1954) 10 *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 20–34; *Annuario Pontificio per l'Anno 1997* (hereafter 'AP') (Vatican City, 1997), pp 1053–1058. For Kano, see (1996) 88 *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* (hereafter 'AAS') 883; for Nepal, see (1997) 89 AAS 269. The first apostolic nuncio to Mongolia was appointed on 8 September 1992, and the first Mongolian ambassador to the Holy See presented his letters of credence on 28 October 1993: AP, pp 1333, 1363. After this article had been completed and the manuscript submitted for publication a new departure with respect to autonomous missions came about. In late 1997 the Holy See created within the former Soviet Union four new autonomous missions: those of Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan established on 29 September 1997 and that of Kyrgyzstan established on 22 December 1997: *Annuario Pontificio per l'Anno 1998* (Vatican City, 1998), pp 1086, 1087.

were conceded a special place at the pontifical court and were given the privileges of a protonotary apostolic in ordinary and accorded the title 'monsignor'.

The title came into use at the time of the Avignon papacy (1305–1376) when certain clerics at the papal court there were accorded the French secular style of *monseigneur* or 'milord'. The title became *monsignore* in Italian with the return of Gregory XI and the papal court to Rome in 1377. At first this lofty title was reserved only for ecclesiastical grandees like cardinals, who were styled *illustrissimi et reverendissimi monsignori*. But after 1630, when Urban VIII gave cardinals of the Holy Roman Church the more distinctive title of 'eminence', the old style of *monsignore* went to senior officials of the pope beneath the rank of cardinal and to any secular prelate (including bishops) entitled to wear the rochet and mantelletta or chimere.⁶

Although the origins of many of offices of the pontifical household are very ancient, the current mass of monsignors is largely a phenomenon of the nineteenth-century when the centralization of the Roman Church reached its apogee.⁷ Clerics and laity alike were transformed into supplicants for papal honors and all grace and favour, all perquisites and precedence, were seen as deriving from the pope and were fitted into a Roman honours system. The pope became the sole *fons honorum* in the Western church and all honours were seen as in his gift.

Purple silk became the tangible mark of Roman favour, and taking purple silk ever more copiously came visibly to mark the progress of a Roman Catholic clerical career. It signalled the success of the young upwardly-mobile ecclesiastic much as a progression of post-nominal initials marks the advance of a British civil servant.⁸

The papal household was composed of several colleges (or incorporated groups) of prelates and the most ancient college of honorary papal prelate was that of the protonotaries apostolic. Descended from the scribes who wrote down the confessions of the martyrs in the early church, these papal notaries came by the reign of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) to form a *schola notariorum* or college of notaries headed by a *primicerius* or precentor. Not only did this papal notarial corps have the function in the Apostolic Chancery of authenticating curial documents, but notaries also served as papal nuncios and papal judges delegate. The precentor functioned as papal chancellor and by the twelfth century this job ordinarily went to a cardinal. The notaries would also write down and refer to the Roman Pontiff petitions, and they became important mediators for favour seekers.

In 1425 Pope Martin V (1417–31) found that there were some forty papal notaries, who since the fourteenth century were called 'protonotaries apostolic' to distinguish the notaries at the papal court from the apostolic notaries functioning elsewhere in Christendom under papal commission. In an effort to reduce their number, he ordered that of the protonotaries apostolic only seven should henceforth participate in the fees of office and the remainder would be styled honorary. The upshot was that now there were two classes of protonotaries, the protonotaries in ordinary who

⁶ G. Moroni, 46 *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico Ecclesiastica* (Venice, 1847) 141.

⁷ During the Avignon papacy in the fourteenth century there was a brief efflorescence of the title of honorary papal chaplain, and some three thousand of them were created. Thereafter during the fifteenth century, with the creation of protonotaries apostolic extraordinary, the number of honorary papal chaplains dwindled: Bernard Guillemin, 'Les chaplains d'honneur des papes d'Avignon', in (1952) 64 *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'histoire: Ecole française de Rome* 227. See also Charles Burns, 'Vatican sources and the honorary papal chaplains of the fourteenth century' in Erwin Gatz (ed.), *Roemische Kurie, kirchliche Finanzen, vatikanisches Archiv: Studien zu Ehren von Hermann Hoberg*, in (1979) 45 *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae* 65–79, and K. Schaefer, 'Paepstliche Ehrenkaplaene aus deutschen Dioezesen in vierzehnten Jahrhundert', (1907) 31 *Roemische Quartalschrift* 97–113.

⁸ By way of analogy, in 1818 the Prince Regent instituted the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, which later became an honour for British civil servants. Membership was divided into three degrees, each with distinctive postnominal initials, namely commander (CMG), knight commander (KCMG) and knight grand cross (GCMG). So grand were many of the recipients that a wag later said that these postnominals were in fact acronyms, respectively, for 'Call me God', 'Kindly call me God', and 'God calls me God'.

participated in the division of fees of office and the extraordinary or honorary protonotaries who did not participate in the division.

By the fifteenth century the functions of protonotaries had become somewhat formalised. Theirs was the privilege of authenticating acts of public and semi-public consistories, which is to say drawing up and sealing papal bulls for benefices and other purposes which had been approved by the pope and cardinals in consistory. Traditionally one of them is always on hand to authenticate the acts in the canonisation of saints.

For centuries a college or corporation with extensive privileges, they had, for example, the right to create apostolic notaries, to legitimate bastards, to confer academic degrees, to use a portable altar, to use a mitre in certain liturgical celebrations, and to co-opt one cleric each year into their college as a titular protonotary.

At the turn of this century Pius X effected notable reforms in the papal household through his 1905 *motu proprio*, *Inter multiplices*. This reform placed the protonotaries apostolic at the apex of the minor prelates of the papal household, and, whilst pruning some of their extensive privileges, this document nevertheless left the protonotaries apostolic with many privileges. Like cardinals and bishops, they were by law privileged to maintain a private chapel where Mass could be offered. Before Vatican II, Mass could only be celebrated in a sacred place (such as a church or private chapel) and the erection of a private chapel then required an apostolic indult. Hence, the right to such a chapel was a coveted privilege.

Also like cardinals and bishops, protonotaries apostolic could wear a pectoral cross and a ring set with a gemstone and, with the permission of the local bishop, protonotaries apostolic were even privileged to use the mitre at Mass and vespers. Unlike major prelates, however, a protonotary could not use his mitre to adorn his armorial bearings. Instead, a protonotary placed above his shield of arms a violet prelatial hat from which, since 1644, depended on either side of the shield six red tassels from red cords.

If he could wear a mitre like a bishop, the protonotary could also use the episcopal style of address. Like a bishop (who on the Continent is commonly addressed 'Monsignor'), the protonotary was styled in Latin *illustrissimus et reverendissimus*. In English usage the protonotary's style was rendered 'Right Reverend Monsignor', in French '*Monseigneur*', in German '*hochwuerdigster Herr Praelat*'.⁹

After the Pius reform of 1905 there were actually four kinds of protonotaries: ordinary, extraordinary, *ad instar*, and titular. The first group, limited to seven in number, carried on the ancient notarial function of the group by authenticating papal documents. They were privileged to wear as choir dress a rochet, violet mantelletta, violet cincture and violet cassock. As ordinary headgear in choir they got from Pius X in 1904 the use of a red pompom on their black priestly biretta. When going to church to pontificate only their black biretta with red pompom and the red or purple colour of the silk cord from which their pectoral cross was suspended dis-

⁹ B. Kurtscheid, 'De quibusdam praelatis Romanae curiae', (1935) 8 *Apollinaris* 62–71; 'Protonotaires', (1965) VII DDC col. 389–395; Mücke, 'Die apostolische Protonotare', (1868) 20 *Archiv fuer katholischen Kirchenrecht* 231. The style of 'Excellency' was not accorded by the Holy See to all Roman Catholic bishops until 1930: see decree of the Sacred Congregation of Ceremonies (1931) 23 AAS 22. Before that time the episcopal style of address was governed by local custom, and in Britain Roman Catholic archbishops were 'Most Reverend' and bishops 'Right Reverend'—like their Anglican counterparts. In about 1900 American Roman Catholic (suffragan) bishops began to adopt the Irish usage of 'Most Reverend'. Also about this time, as the number of honorary papal prelates began to rise, American bishops ceased to be addressed as 'Monsignor', although in Britain Catholic bishops continue to be addressed as 'my lord'. The ancient practice of the apostolic chancery had been to address bishops in Latin as 'Amplitudo vestra', and a French or Québécois bishop was 'Sa Grandeur' until the new usage of 1930: Albert Battandier, 'Addresses, Ecclesiastical', I *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, pp 137–140. Interestingly, in 1969 Paul VI restored the ancient Avignon practice to some extent when he permitted cardinals (as well as bishops) to be addressed as 'Monsignor': see *Ut sine* (cited in note 11 below), arts 23, 24.

tinguished them from an auxiliary bishop in choir dress who, by contrast, wore a purple biretta and suspended his pectoral cross from a green cord.

In 1917 canon 308 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* decreed that all vicars and prefects apostolic who were not bishops would *ex officio* rank as protonotaries in ordinary. Likewise in 1934 Pius XI gave the secretaries of the Roman dicasteries, the majordomo of the Apostolic palace, the secretary of the Apostolic Signatura, the dean of the Roman Rota, and the Undersecretary of State these same privileges. Today in the wake of Vatican II all of these prelates, except for the dean of the Rota, are bishops and the secretaries by custom are made archbishops. But before Vatican II all were but priests with an honorary prelacy. Thus, Giovanni Battista Montini (1897–1978), later Pope Paul VI, was Undersecretary of State from 1939 to 1953. Not yet a bishop, he would have enjoyed the privileges of a protonotary apostolic in ordinary and thus his perquisites of dress and address during those years were the same as those of a prefect apostolic.¹⁰ These, then, would have been the special ceremonial privileges of missionary prelates from 1917 until the reforms of the Vatican council.

(c) *After Vatican II*

Vatican II wrought a sea change in ecclesiology. The council's personalism led it to describe the church as a communion of persons and also as a communion of communions or of local churches, each with a bishop at its head. Him *Lumen gentium*, article 27, would now see, not as a papal vice-gerent, but as a *vicarius et legatus Christi*, a vicar and ambassador of Christ. Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, article 895, adds 'bishops should not be thought of as vicars of the Pope'. A diocese was no longer a 'branch office' of the universal church but a microcosm of it. Given the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity, the church could not be merely a papal monarchy and missionary districts came to be seen as particular churches, even if not fully mature ones.

The deepened ecclesiology of Vatican II implied that the canon law of missionary districts and their prelates would be restructured on the conciliar model. In fact, the reforms wrought in 1968 and 1969 by Paul VI transformed the pope's domestic establishment from a papal court with its many trappings of a secular monarch into a more ecclesiastical pontifical household. At the same time missionary districts came to be conceived of as particular churches and were likened to dioceses, and at the same time their prelates were now likened to bishops rather than officials of the papal court.

The reforms came with the appearance of a trilogy of documents.¹¹ These documents are based on several principles of Vatican II. There was the desire to end the divorce between canon law and theology (that is, between jurisdiction and orders), the desire to underscore sacramental orders (especially the episcopacy), and the desire to give expression to the ecclesiological developments of Vatican II (especially the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity).

Among the clerics of the papal court, the reform found a Byzantine maze of some fourteen grades of monsignori and reduced this complex corps of 'milords' to classic simplicity. The Pauline reform found domestic prelates, four kinds of protonotaries apostolic, four varieties of papal chamberlains, and five types of papal chaplains. It left the pontifical clergy divided, like Gaul, into three parts, protonotaries apostolic, honorary prelates of His Holiness, and chaplains of His Holiness.

After the reform there were but two grades of protonotaries, numerary and supernumerary. The former were the old participating (or ordinary) protonotaries while the latter were the old extraordinary or *ad instar* protonotaries. Vicars and prefects

¹⁰ *Motu proprio, Inter multiplices*, (1905) *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 491: apostolic constitution, *Ad incrementum* (1934) 26 AAS 497.

¹¹ *Motu proprio, Pontificalis domus*, (1968) 60 AAS 305; *motu proprio, Pontificalia insignia*, (1968) 60 AAS 374; instruction, *Ut sive sollicitae*, (1969) 61 AAS 334.

apostolic were not mentioned in this integral reform of the pontifical household and so their former privileges as protonotaries in ordinary were now *sub silentio* abolished.

Setting forth the new law for missionary prelates, *Pontificalia insignia* in 1968 stated that vicars and prefects apostolic, even if not bishops, within their own territory and during their term of office, might use pontifical insignia, with the exception of the cathedra and staff. A year later *Ut sive sollicitate* stated that prelates nullius, abbots nullius, apostolic administrators and vicars and prefects apostolic who are not bishops might dress like bishops. Thus the object of the postconciliar reform was to liken these missionary prelates to bishops. Canon 368 of the 1983 *Codex Iuris Canonici* codifies this new approach.

Superiors of autonomous missions, as we have seen, were not expressly mentioned in the 1917 Code. Nor were they mentioned in the post-Vatican II reforms nor the 1983 Code. Thus, they possess no special liturgical privileges such as pontifical insignia.¹² Yet even if they are not bishops, they are local Ordinaries and thus, in law, they are prelates. This means that, even if they have no special liturgical privileges such as the use of the mitre, as a style of address they do enjoy the superlative form ('the Very Rev'd') and they possess the armorial privileges of a prelate. Thus, like vicars general and major religious superiors (which includes abbots), they may ensign their arms with a black hat with six black tassels pendent from black cords on either side of their shield.

This, then, is a short overview of the history, canon law and special ceremonial privileges of Roman Catholic missionary prelates. Many of these prelates labour in Commonwealth lands and thus for Commonwealth citizens their special canon law and ceremonial privileges may be of interest.

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¹² M. Gérin, *Le Gouvernement des Missions* (Quebec, 1944), p 178.