

An Argument for the Wider Adoption and Use of Traditional Academic Attire within Roman Catholic Church Services

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Introduction

It has often been remarked that whilst attending Church of England or Church of Scotland services there is frequently a rich and widely used pageantry of academic regalia to be seen amongst the ministers, whilst among the Catholic counterparts there seems an almost near wilful ignorance of these meaningful articles. The response often returned when raising this issue with various members of the Catholic clergy is: ‘well, that would be a Protestant practice.’ This apparent association of academic dress with the Protestant denominations seems to have led to the total abandonment of academic dress amongst the clergy and laity of the Catholic Church. The relationship between the Catholic Church and academic attire is perhaps best summed up in the Online Catholic Dictionary’s entry on the biretta: ‘the doctoral biretta, or four-cornered cap, may be worn on academic occasions, but not in choir.’¹ Much the same is said about the doctoral ring and, though there have recently been some attempts to make use of academic dress within Catholic liturgies,² it has by no means taken off and it remains unlikely that academic dress will be associated with liturgical dress let alone seen together. Such a bizarre dissociation seems prominent even within universities with a strong gown tradition. The University of St Andrews, where ‘red gowns’ are a frequent sight in the University Church of Scotland chapel, academic attire is hardly ever seen in the local Catholic Church. Yet such a disassociation seems to do both the history of academic dress and the Catholic Church a grave disservice, the two being historically intricately linked. Furthermore it seems to break ties with the Church and the universities (or the universities in which it finds its churches situated) and also seems to ignore what has been for the Church’s priests seven rigorous years of their formation and what is a huge part of the life of her other ministers also. It seems a most bizarre practice by the Roman Church, when so many other Christian bodies have integrated academic dress most skilfully into their own ceremonials.

This article aims to give a brief overview of the history of academic dress within the Catholic Church, demonstrating that the origins of academic dress and academic titles lie not within the Protestant tradition, but rather deeply within the Catholic tradition. Having established the basis of academic dress as from within the Catholic clerical custom, it will then give arguments for the wider use of academic attire with liturgical/clerical costume on the grounds of history, tradition, inculturation, and theological significance, leading to what is hoped will be a conclusive argument for the adoption and use of academic dress within the Catholic Church, after the manner of the Churches of England and Scotland.

¹ ‘Biretta’, NewAdvent.org, at <www.newadvent.org/cathen/02577a.htm> [retrieved 26 June 2014].

² Fr Edward McNamara, ‘Birettas and Academic Hats at Mass’, Ewtn.com, 5 March 2013, at <www.ewtn.com/library/liturgy/zlitur444.htm> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

Where it all began, 1222–1500

The history of Western academic dress begins in the medieval universities. All of the ancient, that is pre-Reformation, universities have been intricately tied in with the Catholic Church; even the universities whose foundation did not lie in a monastic order called for compulsory attendance at mass and prayers for the dead.³ The treatment of universities and of their students as a part of the Church extends to more than just the attendance of mass. Students of medieval universities were often tonsured, like novices of a religious order.⁴ They would be expected to engage with the monastic offices;⁵ in fact James Hannam goes so far as to say that a student was ‘treated as clergymen under the law.’⁶ There is sufficient evidence to conclude that most medieval universities and colleges were considered religious communities in all but name.⁷ This equation of students being clergy, usually with the student’s being at least in one of the Minor Orders of the Church, led to students being expected to dress in a manner that fitted both their way of life and clerical status in the popular mind. Prior to the thirteenth century it is unlikely that clerical or scholarly dress differed in any grave sense from that of the layman, save for the use of tonsure, calotte and more sober forms of garments.

After 1200 the Church began to engage far more radically with its scholars’ and clergy’s dress, the two predominantly being one and the same at the time. Whether the scholar was a priest ordained in Major Orders, or an acolyte in Minor Orders, his place in the Church led to the development of what would be ‘the clerical and therefore academical dress of the Middle Ages.’⁸ Kerr identifies three main garments particular to the clerical/academical state. These are the undertunic or cassock, overtunic or gown and the hood;⁹ though discussion will add one more to this list, which is the *pileus* later the square cap. We shall work with this model, demonstrating the historical origins individually of all four items of academic appeal in Catholic clerical dress, before formulating arguments for the retention of these now academic items in the Catholic liturgical life.

After 1200 students were called to dress in a way that reflected clerical status, that is to say they are to become ‘of the clerkly sort,’¹⁰ this is of course assuming that they were not religious, who would have worn their habits. The scholar’s clothes were to mirror that of the clergy and be sombre in colour and full in their length, yielding in no way to flamboyant secular colours or cuts of fabric.¹¹ The stipulations of the colour and length that both cler-

3 T. E. Bridgett, *A History of the Eucharist in Great Britain* (London: Burns and Oates, 1908), pp. 242–45.

4 Cornelius O’Boyle, *The Art of Medicine: Medical Teaching in the University of Paris, 1250–1400* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 46.

5 C. J. Lyon, *History of St Andrews: Episcopal, Monastic, Academic and Civil*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), Vol. II, p. 246.

6 ‘Medieval Science, The Church and Universities’, Bede.org.uk, at <www.bede.org.uk/university.htm> [retrieved 27 June 2014].

7 Mark Dilworth, ‘Canons Regular and the Reformation’, in *The Renaissance in Scotland: Studies in Literature, Religion, History and Culture*, A. A. MacDonald et al., eds (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 165.

8 Alex Kerr quoting F. E. Brightman, ‘Layer upon Layer: The Evolution of Cassock, Gown, Habit and Hood as Academic Dress’, *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 42–48 (p. 43).

9 *Ibid.*

10 J. Herkless and R. J. Hannay, *The College of St Leonard* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1905), p. 171.

11 Laura F. Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing: Clerical and Academic Costume in the General*

ical and scholarly attire should conform to were soon met in England with regulations on style also. The 1222 Council of Oxford decreed that all clergy and secular clerks (students) were to take upon themselves the *cappa clausa*, a voluminous closed garment with only one slit in the centre for the arms to pass through.¹² Many clergy avoided the *cappa clausa* for its uncomfortable and awkward nature. They did eventually take on other clerical attire such as the *pallium*, a garment much like the *cappa clausa* but with a slit on either side for the arms.¹³ For this reason the *cappa clausa* soon became more associated with high-ranking university figures than clergy,¹⁴ though this is not to say it ceased being a clerical garment. There are many pictures of high ecclesiastical figures throughout the Middle Ages wearing the *cappa clausa*, as can be seen below. It is interesting to note, however, that soon after the Council of Oxford, a Legatine council held by Ottoboni Fieschi, later Pope Adrian V (1210–76) decreed that ‘all ecclesiastics, whether in sacred orders or not, were to wear clothes of fitting length.’¹⁵ This excerpt is significant for two reasons: firstly it shows that clergy were still trying to follow secular fashion, but secondly because it makes the distinction from being an ‘ecclesiastic’ and being in ‘Sacred orders’, demonstrating that for the medieval people and the Church those in minor orders and scholars of the universities were still clergy, whether they were university students or a parish clerks, they were all ecclesiastics, orders of the church. They were still ‘clergy’; though of course the responsibilities of such would have differed with their receiving Holy orders. Students and priests were still members of the one clergy, servants of the Church, and expected to dress as such wearing the same attire; demonstrating that the origin of academic apparel and academic standing originated in the Catholic Church and that all academic apparel originated from and was considered clerical (see Fig. 1).¹⁶

By the mid-thirteenth century clerical dress was being enforced not just in the universities of England but also by all clerical superiors. For this reason garments such as the *cappa clausa* and the *pallium* were then the common dress of all academics and clergy throughout England and across Europe. Though this did not stop them from succumbing to the odd secular fashion, it is noted by Cox that the *houppelande*, an outer garment with flaring sleeves, left its mark on academic costume of the time, influencing most what we might now call the Bachelor’s gown.¹⁷ But this exact same trend also affected the clerical world and we can see some of its lasting effects on clerical and liturgical items of today such as the surplice, which remains a liturgical item and which showed signs of this fashion long before the scholar’s gown. We must therefore conclude that even at times when secular fashions influenced academic dress, they remained clerical garments and continued to be regarded as such well up into the sixteenth century, when we still get images of Archbishop

Prologue of the Canterbury Tales (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), p. 172.

¹² ‘Development of Graduation Gowns and Robes’, excerpted from Noel Cox, *Academic Dress in New Zealand* <www.academicapparel.com/caps/Graduation-Gown-Evolution.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ ‘Clerical Costume’, *Newadvent.org*, at <www.newadvent.org/cathen/04419b.htm> [retrieved 9 July, 2018].

¹⁶ ‘French Art at the Juncture of the Age of Privacy and the Renaissance’, *Arttattler.com*, at <www.arttattler.com/archivekingsqueenscourtiers.html> [retrieved 27 June 2014] (page no longer accessible).

¹⁷ Noel Cox, ‘Development of Graduation Gowns’.

Warham wearing the academical tippet and Cardinal Wolsey wearing the *pallium*,¹⁸ which in its form as the Oxford convocation habit went on to become the bishops' chimere.¹⁹ We can therefore see through the period of the Middle Ages that clerical and academical robes were the same thing, varying very little between either station, due largely to the fact that both stations were so very closely tied.

The hood, still widely seen in the choir dress of Anglican clergy, has much the same history, sharing in the religious foundation and giving us two items of academical and liturgical dress, namely the hood and tippet.²⁰ These still widely used items of the universities and Anglican Churches come from the same medieval hood, which originated from a uniform item of attire used by male and female, clergy and lay alike.²¹ Though originally a piece of attire for the whole social spectrum, the hood remained stationary in the Church and its universities as secular fashions changed, meaning that by the end of the fourteenth century it had become a sign of clerical station or university scholar;²² most likely as the result of secular fashion, changing at a more rapid rate than clerical, turning to hats over hoods.²³

Within the ecclesiastical setting the hood came to be a frequently worn and useful piece of attire, becoming part of the habit for both secular and regular clergy. The prohibition on the clergy wearing purses meant that the long liripipe or tipetum of the hood began to be used as a receptacle for the clerk's money and goods.²⁴ Within the university, still as we have established above, at this point, to a large extent, an extension of the clerical community, the hood became a symbol of the graduate, with varied factors such as silks, colours and furs, giving some indication of the graduate's degree.²⁵ These hoods continued to thrive in their academic settings and for ecclesiastical superiors and religious orders, in their medieval form as the mozzeta and cowl which can still be seen in their choir dress.²⁶ Though such hoods have no academic significance and secular clergy below the rank of canon wear no such attire; they are an example of the medieval custom that has absurdly been retained in some settings and forms whilst other hoods sharing the same common history have ceased to be displayed by clergy as equally entitled to them. The hood of the clergy and scholars was a well-established item of clerical garb in the medieval mind, one exhibiting a liturgical function, as well as comforting. Druitt speaks about the use of these hoods and, whilst speaking cautiously, he does suggest that these were probably intended

18 Archbishop Warham whilst wearing the surplice clearly wears a tippet over it. Archbishop William Warham, Tudorhistory.org, at <tudorhistory.org/people/warham/> [retrieved 9 July 2018]. Cardinal Wolsey in office clearly wears a scarlet pallium showing such a style was still considered clerical as well as academical. 'Thomas Wolsey', Nndb.com, at <www.nndb.com/people/585/000094303/> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

19 Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1984), p. 72.

20 By tippet I mean the ornament given to non-graduate ministers which we now call the preaching scarf.

21 Cox, *Academic Dress in New Zealand*, found on 'Evolution of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Hoods', Academicapparel.com, at <www.academicapparel.com/caps/Academic-Hood-Development.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

22 *Ibid.*

23 Nicholas Groves, 'Evolution of Hood Patterns', *Burgon Society Annual 2003*, p. 18.

24 Hodges, p. 139.

25 Cox, 'Evolution of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Hoods'.

26 'Cowl', Newadvent.org, at <www.newadvent.org/cathen/04463a.htm> [retrieved 9 July 2016].

for more than comfort; they were likely worn to indicate an academic status as well as a clerical one.²⁷ It is important to note that academic apparel was not just considered a way of showing one's academic standing within the community. Historically academic clothing has also shown the high status that society awards wisdom. It is not just a case of showing that one has a certain degree of wisdom, but also marks the person out as offering a special service to the community; the dress is a reminder, a charge to the bearer to use their learning to the service of the community and to alert the community that such service is available. Perhaps one of the most lyrical examples of the hood's well established place among all clerical attire, before the Reformation, can be found in John Myrc's description of how a priest ought to dress in order to administer extreme unction to the sick: 'When thou shalt to sick gone, a clean white surplice cast thee on, take thy stole with thee right, and pull thy hood over thy sight.'²⁸ By this we have established that the hood as well as the gown have come not in origin from some Protestant theology, but rather has a rich history in pre-Reformation England as an item of clerical/liturgical use that would also denote any academic standing the cleric might have.

The history of the square cap of scholars is also worth examining. This will indeed be brief as there are many articles that demonstrate the common evolution that the square cap shares with the biretta and its place as an item of clerical attire.²⁹ The square cap, be it as mortar-board, biretta, or Bishop Andrewes cap, has as its ancestor the calotte and *pileus rotundus*. The calotte, originally a clerical item to preserve the tonsured monks from the elements, was a sign of any man possessing a position in the Church. As such it became also became an academical item.³⁰ As secular fashion changed the Church in a rare move, through the Synod of Bergamo, allowed clerics to follow this secular fashion, instructing them to bear the *pileus rotundus*, 'after the manner of the layman.'³¹ As the *pileus rotundus* now of clergy and scholars evolved, it took on a square shape, which through seams and ridges came to resemble a cross. This made it an indispensable item of clerical attire, which through the clerical-scholar association trickled down into the universities.³² At the point of the Reformation, the once universal design on the square cap diverged into many trajectories; with Anglican England tending to focus on growing out and Catholic Europe of growing up.³³ That said, even within the Catholic trajectories, the design, as with England, remained more of a cultural matter than a universal, religious, or academic process. This can be seen through the many divergences in the birettas of Spain, France, and of religious orders.³⁴ Any brief glance at pictures of Catholic ecclesiastics from different nations prior to the twentieth century will show the wide range of diversity that existed in the biretta, when the Italian model became a universal norm, yet all these designs remained equally acceptable during the liturgy. In all of these cases, the square cap has always been primarily

27 Herbert Druitt, *A Manual of Costume as Illustrated by Monumental Brasses* (London: Alexander Moring, 1909), p. 104.

28 Bridgett, p. 171.

29 One such article is author's own 'The Cap and The Church', *TBS*, 14, (2014), pp. 16–34 (pp. 30–34).

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

34 'Models, Versions, Variants and Colours,' Dieter-philippi.de, at <www.dieter-philippi.de/en/the-philippi-collection/head-coverings-1> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

a clerical item, which through this association has come in its many forms to the universities. Though there are many designs of the square cap that we might today associate with academia, the fact is that the same design now though 'academic', was originally clerical. The square cap has primarily denoted one's place as a member of the clergy as well as any academic standing.

We shall finally look at some other historical elements that exemplify the unique and definite tie between the scholars and universities, and the Church and clergy. One can see the very close and even recognized links between the Church and the university, through the ceremony of receiving a new doctor into the university. Robert Rait describes the ceremony of receiving a doctor as going to the Cathedral with

his own doctor, known in Bologna (and elsewhere) as the Promoter, [who] presents him to the Chancellor, who confers upon him the *jus ubique docendi*. He is then seated in a master's chair, and the Promotor gives him an open book and a gold ring and (in the terminology of a modern Scottish University) 'caps' him with the biretta. He is dismissed with a benediction and the kiss of peace, and is conducted through the town, in triumphal procession, by his friends, to whom he gives a feast.³⁵

There can be no doubt that the process of making someone a doctor was a religious ceremony,³⁶ but the similarities of this ceremony with those of ordaining a bishop are startling; cathedral canons for a long time had the right to elect bishops.³⁷ The fact then that doctors too had to be presented to an assembly of masters and voted in after an examination suggests a huge link with the episcopal process. Even the gift of a book though a symbol of learning also was a mirror image of the ordination of bishops, to say nothing of the ring and cap.³⁸

It is obvious that the Church continued to use and adopt academic practices, particularly within the higher faculties of theology and canon law, by granting of favours to such men. It should be remembered that even as the universities began to become more secular, the Church continued to give privileges to academics. From the mid-thirteenth century doctors began to wear scarlets and purples, previously reserved for prelates.³⁹ In 1334 Benedict XII gave the scarlet gown and hood, again usually a privilege of cardinals only, to Doctors of Theology and Canon Law in the University of Paris.⁴⁰ Such ongoing benefaction for medieval scholars again ought to demonstrate the level of esteem that the Church had for her academics. But more than this it ought to also indicate that the Church saw academic dress and degrees, not as a separate entity to be ignored and kept away from the liturgical and ecclesiastical life of the Church, but as an extension of her own robes and stations, thus meaning that she continued to endorse and add to them in colour and design. The Church saw the academics and their robes as a part of her life; it willed them

35 Robert S. Rait, *Life in the Medieval University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 32.

36 Druitt, p. 122.

37 'Bishop,' Newadvent.org, at <www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

38 Carol A. Volz, *The Medieval Church: From the Dawn of the Middle Ages to the Eve of the Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), p. 30.

39 Noel Cox, 'Development of Graduation Gowns'.

40 *Ibid.*



Fig. 2. Two cardinals clearly assisting in the mass wear their *pallia* as liturgical garments. *Gregorsmesse*, Meister der Heiligen Sippe der Jüngere, 1486, Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent.



Fig. 1. Jean Cardinal Rolin (1408–83), A French ecclesiastic wearing the *cappa clausa*. Jehan de Paris, 1480.



Fig. 3. Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559), the bishop of Durham, in biretta with rosary. 1520 (artist unknown).

to show the great level of distinction that such academics had not just in their learning, but in the church itself (see Fig. 2).

The further roles that academics played in the medieval Church can be seen in their preaching. Many theologians within the medieval university were expected to preach at regular intervals, not just within the ‘university sermon’, but also in universities such as Paris, within specified churches.⁴¹ Such an induction of the university academics within the Church shows not just a perceived fraternity between the two, but a common ministry perceived between academics with clergy. They were considered to be important enough to dress in the garments and colours of the clergy, and were considered vital enough to be given the tasks of carrying out one of the most important functions of the clergy, that of preaching and instructing the faithful. This ministry, combined with the gift of colour, should immediately suggest that the Church considered the university and its students as being inseparably bonded to her. This, when added to the fact that all academical garb was based within the clerical (and until the end of the Middle Ages was clerical) and the common religious lifestyle that the students led, ought to demonstrate the fact that academic station and dress was firmly founded and associated with the concept of ‘clergy’ and station in the Church. Having established this, we can now examine two themes. One is the arguments for making this part of history part of contemporary liturgy. The other is the merits and value that might be found in adopting what has come to be thought of as an Anglican tradition.

The Reformation: Is it really Protestant?

The claim that the hood and other academicals should be abandoned in the Catholic liturgy because they are Protestant in some senses is misplaced; especially when considering the many Protestants who decried the use of academicals because they were Catholic. It has been established above that prior to the Reformation, nearly all forms of academic attire were considered clerical, and that there is a good case to be made for these items being used liturgically. However, the fact still remains that the use of academicals in clerical and liturgical dress has only survived largely in the Anglican/Protestant denominations. With the Catholic clerical origin of academic dress established, an argument will now be made, through historical precedent, for the use of academic dress in the Catholic liturgy.

When saying that the use of academic apparel in liturgy is a Protestant invention, it is notable that the first major post-Reformation reference in England to hoods and other academic attire being used in the liturgy comes in the 1549 Prayer Book that is often listed as being of the ‘Catholic Usage’.⁴² The Prayer Book states that all clergy, so entitled, ‘may use in quire, beside theyr Surpleses, such hoodes as pertain to their several degrees.’⁴³ This ought not to be surprising. The first Prayer Book was a device hoped to placate the more traditional in religion, with the retention of vestments, Sarum structure and of language still open to Catholic interpretation. The first Prayer Book is widely held as ‘favourable to

41 Phyllis, B. Roberts, ‘Sermons and Preaching in/and the Medieval University’, in *Medieval Education*, Ronald B. Begley et al., eds (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 87–88.

42 Byron B. Stuhlman, *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded* (New York: Church Publishing, 1987), p. 13.

43 Brian Cummings, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559 and 1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 98.



Figs 4 (left) and 5. Two Jesuit missionaries wearing the Confucian cap in lieu of their birettas. On left, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), by Emmanuel Pereira, 1610, Church of the Gesù. On the right, Martino Martini (1614–61), by Grentidez, c. seventeenth century.



Fig. 6. Francis Paget, DD, an Anglican priest in prescribed outdoor dress. Leslie Ward, 1894, painted for *Vanity Fair*.



Fig. 7. José Gabriel Brochero, an Argentinian Catholic priest, wearing in 1866 one of the many variations of the biretta permitted within a liturgical context.

the Romish view'.⁴⁴ Such a suggestion indicates that a book, designed in such a way as to not raise the Catholic ire, would not recommend the priest to wear a university hood unless it was not a new thing.

Percy Dearmer takes this and the 'conservatism of university authority' to suggest that the wearing of the hood was in fact a pre-existing tradition.⁴⁵ This association of academic clothing in a clerical/liturgical context, as a symbol of Catholicism and its remnants in England, seems likely, given the number of people who protested against the 1559 injunctions as reminiscent of Catholicism.⁴⁶ In fact until around the Oxford Movement (starting around 1833), the wearing of a hood with surplice was the sign of a high church minister.⁴⁷ Even within the universities, protests against the wearing of hoods and caps due to their Papist nature were lodged. In Scotland, caps and hoods were so associated with the Catholic faith that they disappeared.⁴⁸ At Oxford, the same protests had that caps and hoods were 'reliques of popery and rags of the scarlet whore'.⁴⁹ These articles would have been completely abolished in Oxford were it not for the quick actions of a few traditionalists.⁵⁰

We can see further evidence of the Catholic, clerical nature of academic attire through its association with the surplice. When attending the college chapel it was customary for the scholar to wear the surplice instead of his academic gown, with the hood over the surplice, a custom still retained amongst many of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges today.⁵¹ This custom was a continuation of the medieval practice, as the surplice was a liturgical item accessible to the Minor Orders,⁵² and as such it was a universal item of liturgical attire for university scholars who would be clerks themselves. The result of this association of academic dress and the surplice with Catholic, clerical tendencies led in 1565 to students of St John's College, Cambridge, abandoning both their surplices and hoods.⁵³ That the liturgical surplice and the academic hood should be disregarded in one fell swoop as being 'papist', ought to show the still highly liturgical and clerical nature of academic dress. That the academic hood should be considered on par with the priest's surplice should show convincingly that academic dress remained Catholic, clerical dress even after the Reformation.

Even as recently as the nineteenth century, when the prescribed outdoor Anglican clerical dress was cassock with academic gown, hood and square, we are told that a Spaniard travelling in England remarked with surprise that the English clergy dressed in the manner of Benedictine monks (although in practice the hood had become confined to

44 J. T. Timlinson, 'The Sarum Mass *versus* Edward VIth's [*sic*] "First" Prayer Book', *Church Association Tract*, 113 [n.d.], p. 16, online at <archive.churchsociety.org/publications/documents/CAT113_SarumMassvPrayerBook.pdf> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

45 Percy Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook* (London: Grant Richards, 1899), p. 84.

46 Eric Ives, *The Reformation Experience: Living through the Turbulent 16th Century* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2012), p. 240.

47 Nicholas Groves, 'The Use of the Academic Hood in Quire', *TBS*, 8 (2008), pp. 98–105 (p. 103).

48 *Ibid.*

49 William Gibson, "'The Remembrance Whereof is Pleasant": A Note on Walter Pope's Role in the Attempt to Abolish Academic Dress during the Commonwealth', *TBS*, 10 (2010), p. 44.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.

51 'The Chapel', All-souls.ox.ac.uk, at <www.all-souls.ox.ac.uk/content/The_Chapel> [retrieved 18 August 2014], but the information is no longer available on this page.

52 Percy Dearmer, *The Ornaments of the Ministers* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1920), p. 94.

53 Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress*, p. 69.

choir dress by then).⁵⁴ We can, therefore, understand that to connect the term Protestant exclusively with academic attire is of itself a little rash, given that through its history academic dress, particularly the hood and cap, has had a very turbulent course with the Protestant faith. Though, whilst there are many Protestant denominations that were content to use academic dress, the articles themselves in their history and association, have remained Catholic.⁵⁵ In the portrait of Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559), the bishop of Durham, in Figure 3 it is interesting that he chose during the turbulent times of religion to be depicted in academic clerical attire, presumably thinking it safe enough to please both factions. He does however hold a rosary hinting his leanings.

The idea that wearing hoods and other academicals in choir is a Protestant practice might stem from Andreas Karlstadt. Karlstadt, a Swiss reformer and contemporary of Martin Luther, started the custom of wearing the academic gown in place of other clerical and liturgical clothing.⁵⁶ This was distinct from the past Catholic tradition and emerging Anglican tradition, in which academicals were worn with choir vestments and possibly under the eucharistic vestments. It should be noted immediately that Karlstadt, soon after his abandoning vestments for academicals, abandoned academicals as well, as being too Catholic, choosing instead peasant garb.⁵⁷ All the same, the gown, as the sole item of distinctive dress for the minister, took off amongst a number of Presbyterian and Baptist groups; not usually in a degree-distinctive cut, but rather in the Geneva shape, which was designed to hide any of the vanities that the preacher may be wearing underneath.

Some of the earliest places where Calvinism flourished were in the New World. Preachers there took with them their Geneva gowns and they became a frequent sight in the pulpit. It was Calvinist preachers following the above model who became popular in the New World; hugely enlarged by the influx of Puritan ministers fleeing England in the late seventeenth century.⁵⁸ These preachers often wrote sermons against England's 'corrupt ministry',⁵⁹ in part due to the Church of England's retention of vestments and liturgical ornaments. The Geneva gown soon became symbolic of this Protestant group. So much so in fact, that British commanders in the Americas took to calling the preachers, 'The Black Regiment'.⁶⁰ It is probably largely from this that the association of academic dress with Protestantism comes. Yet as we have seen above, this was a late innovation, a style of only a few, among the many forms of Protestantism that emerged at the time; the Geneva Gown was distinct from any of the traditional cuts of academical costume. It has been noted above that the traditional forms of academic dress have always been regarded as reminis-

⁵⁴ T. C. Lacey, 'The Ecclesiastical Habit in England', *Transactions of the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, 4 (1900), p. 133.

⁵⁵ Meg McGrath, 'Family of Queen Katherine Parr: Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall', *The Life and Family of Queen Katherine Parr*, online at <tudorqueen6.wordpress.com/2012/09/23/family-of-queen-katherine-parr-bishop-cuthbert-tunstall/> [retrieved 1 July 2014]

⁵⁶ R. Chris Hassel Jr, *Shakespeare's Religious Language: A Dictionary* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 145.

⁵⁷ Paul H. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 234.

⁵⁸ William L Sachs, *The Transformation of Anglicanism: From State Church to Global Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 11–12.

⁵⁹ Amanda Porterfeild and John Corrigan, *Religion in American History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), p. 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

cent of Catholicism, and the accusation then of academic dress being Protestant does not really reflect this history.

Another reason for the association of academic dress with Protestantism might have something to do with the difference in shape from the medieval style. After all, the academic hoods of today do not at first glance seem at all similar to the modern mozzetta or cowl. Yet this change in style again has its foundation not in the expression of a theology, but rather in a way that met the need for added space with the introduction of periwigs into fashion, after the Restoration.⁶¹ It was this that ultimately led the opening of the cape of the hood and the form of hood that we recognize today. Yet this alteration in the style of the hood ought not to deprive it of its clerical status or history. It remains the same item, simply evolved. There are many examples of liturgical items evolving to meet the needs of modern secular fashions. The surplice in both Anglican and Catholic traditions started during the wearing of wigs, when it was cut open at the front to pass more easily over the wig, with a clasp or tie at the top to then secure the garment.⁶² The fact that the hood of universities has changed in shape from its medieval form ought not to devalue its place in the church as it was, like changes to the surplice, to meet the needs of contemporary parsons and academics alike. The hood, if drawn together, would still in most of its forms exhibit the same features of the mozzetta or cowl and has historically been used as such. Even if the shape is still a cause for hesitation amongst some, there have been many attempts to make the academic hood appear as its clerical/medieval counterpart; such as the Warham guild shape.⁶³ Were this shape to be reused in the liturgy then it would not just be the bringing back of a well-established medieval custom, but would also blend in seamlessly with the still widely used customs of religious orders and ecclesiastical dignitaries.

We have seen that academical dress was worn throughout the later Middle Ages, in what were then Catholic rites, and rather than then being Protestantized, they remained closely linked to their Catholic ancestry. It could then be argued that through historical use the hood ought to be retained in the liturgy. Though this section has focused mostly on the hood in academic attire, much the same can be said of other items such as the gown, ring, etc. The fact that through history there is a precedent for using academic dress liturgically ought to be very persuasive for many. Fr Adrian Fortescue, a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century priest, when discussing the use of Latin in the Church, said, 'it is a witness of antiquity of which a Catholic can be proud, that in mass today we are still used to the very words that Anselm, Gregory, and Leo sang in their cathedrals.'⁶⁴ Though about Latin, and oblivious to the variation in rites at the time of the above saints' lives, the quote does capture something vital to the life of Catholic liturgy: universality. The mass should not just reflect something of unity amongst countries, but also amongst times. The same mass that I witness and celebrate should not just be recognizable for someone on the other side of the world, but also something that the ancients, my ancestors, would find familiar. This principle ought to touch not just language but all parts of the liturgy, which includes vesture and dress. That academics have been worn liturgically in the history of England and other countries, ought to be a call then for their re-adoption into the liturgy if, for nothing else, as a way of connecting ourselves with our Catholic past; making the liturgy of

61 Groves, 'Evolution of Hood Patterns', p. 18.

62 Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook*, p. 83.

63 Groves, 'Evolution of Hood Patterns', p. 18.

64 Thomas E. Woods Jr, *Sacred Then and Sacred Now: The Return of the Old Latin Mass* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Roman Catholic Books, 2008), p. 72.

the Church ever more a connection of the people with their history. We shall explore this idea a little further in the section on inculturation. But it would be pertinent to close the argument of history and precedent by pointing out that tradition is always an important thing to maintain within liturgy. It creates a sense of home and communion with those living and dead. The fact that we have before us an ancient precedent, used by our ancestors since time immemorial, ought not to just be abandoned for fear of inference of another creed. Academical dress in its current form shows a steady evolution of what was Catholic clerical dress that is prescribed in law and still practical to use. There is no legitimate cause in history to abandon its use.

Conformity and divergence: thoughts on inculturation

It might be odd to think of inculturation in a country that has had, in some form or another, a Catholic presence since the third century, albeit as a minority since the sixteenth century. Yet one of the most foundational parts of inculturation is to 'protect the legitimate patrimony, traditions, and customs of diverse peoples'.⁶⁵ And yet this is exactly what has not happened. We have noticed above how, in England, there has been an ongoing tradition of academical dress being used in church services, one that was distinct and spread throughout most churches there and was enshrined in English law. The canons of 1604 command anyone in ecclesiastical authority holding a degree to dress in 'Gowns with standing Collars, and Sleeves strait at the Hands, or wide Sleeves as is used in the Universities, with Hoods or Tippetts of Silk or Sarcenet, and Square Caps'.⁶⁶ This is not, of course, the only law; the canons of 1549 and 1559 make much the same appeal. But it demonstrates what in England is a long-standing tradition which, as shown above, was founded in Catholic tradition. Yet it was not 'protected' and remains unseen amongst the Catholic clergy. There is of course an explanation for this. Doyle notes the 'imbalanced' nature of the papacy and Rome when compared to local diocese and churches after the first Vatican Council.⁶⁷ That the Roman Catholic hierarchy was restored, a mere 20 years before the Council, with the first new seminary opening on the same year as the Council, added to what was probably felt as a need to appear different from the Anglican Church, and it should explain the lack of adoption of this heavily historical tradition. Yet in the same abandonment of the custom of using academicals, the Catholic Church does appear to have rather cut off its nose to spite its face. By the using of styles, vestments, and traditions purely imported from Rome, the Church appeared something foreign to England.

The post-Emancipation Church's tendency to adopt traditions and customs only if they came out of Rome was detrimental to the loss of English Catholicism and meant a great many customs from the country's Catholic heritage were lost, including the use of academicals in liturgy. But that was, of course, just under 150 years ago, and since then the Church has adopted an approach that ought to redress the balance between a Universal Roman Church and a Church accessible to all cultures.⁶⁸ The Church now looks to foster local traditions and customs: '[when] coming into contact with different cultures, the

⁶⁵ Denis M. Doyle, 'The Concept of Inculturation in Roman Catholicism: A Theological Consideration', *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 30 (Winter 2012), p. 4.

⁶⁶ *Bishop of London & Convocation for the province of Canterbury, Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of the Church of England* (London: Church of England, 1604), Canon 74, online at <www.anglican.net/doctrines/1604-canon-law/> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

⁶⁷ Doyle, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Doyle, p. 2.

church must welcome all that can be reconciled with the Gospel in the tradition of a people to bring to it the riches of Christ and to be enriched in turn by the many different forms of wisdom of the nations of the earth.⁶⁹ In England such a quote must surely be attached to the use of such vestments and academic garb, as is expected by the people of that country and was founded in Catholic thought previous to the country's conversion to Anglicanism. In speaking to African bishops, John Paul II greatly encouraged events 'when a culture, transformed and regenerated by the Gospel, brings forth from its own living tradition original expressions of Christian life.'⁷⁰ Such words surely apply to the people of England who, in their organic faith, beginning in the time of the Catholic Church in England, took to wearing what is now academic dress, with their liturgical vestments. This tradition was fostered by the Anglican Church and evolved, often considered a remnant of Catholicism, in the Anglican Church as we have seen. By this desire then for individual countries to form their own, living traditions, surely Catholic priests ought to join in a living tradition of England which is the wearing of academics with clerical habit.

It is at this point that we ought to look at a particular component of academic and, for the Anglican Church, clerical dress and that is the trencher cap or mortar-board. This is a piece of attire that is founded in Catholic history, but then, rather than gradually evolving with fashion, transformed to express distinctly a Protestant or Anglican view.⁷¹ It therefore ought, if we are to seriously consider the adoption of academic dress in the Catholic Church, to pose the greatest question for the cleric considering its use. As has been described above, the square cap in England grew out; eventually becoming a square board attached to a skull cap. This through a variety of ways came to represent Anglicanism and support of the monarch as governor of the English Church.⁷² Of all the academic garments then, it would seem to be the most likely to be left abandoned, even with the principle of inculturation considered. Yet this form of a problem is not unique in the history of the Church of Rome and it would be prudent of us to briefly consider the case of the Jesuits in the China.

The Jesuit missions in China started around 1582. There had been earlier attempts but they had largely failed. Almost immediately upon their arrival in China they learnt of the great distrust that Europeans, in their native costume, would provoke; they therefore resolved originally to dress in the manner of Buddhist monks.⁷³ Though long before the Second or even First Vatican Council, the Jesuits already demonstrated a deep understanding of inculturation. In 1988 the International Theological Commission noted: 'given the great place of religion in culture, a local or particular Church implanted in a non-Christian sociocultural milieu must take seriously into account the religious elements of this milieu.'⁷⁴ This statement, though centuries after the mission, can be seen as the driving

69 Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments, *Instruction: Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy*, Fourth instruction for the right application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy issued 29 March 1994, paragraph 6, online at <www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdwinclt.htm> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

70 'Address of John Paul II To the Bishops of Kenya', Vatican.va, at <www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1980/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19800507_vescovi-kenya_en.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

71 Hargrave, pp. 25–26.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Amelia Peck, *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), p. 215.

74 International Theological Commission, *Faith and Inculturation* (1988), Section III, Pr 9, online at <www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1988_fede>

principle for the first Jesuit priests in China, who, knowing the respect that the Buddhist monks commanded, decided to adopt something of the monk's ways into their daily lives and to create a feeling of continuity. It later happened that the association of Buddhism became more of a hindrance than a help.⁷⁵ But in this they did not then turn back to their European dress, fearing that association with any other creed might lead to apathy or, worse, heresy. Rather, in 1594 they adopted the dress of another religion or philosophy, that of the Confucian scholars.⁷⁶ What is perhaps of special significance to us is the fact that in choosing Chinese dress they replaced their birettas with the tall four-cornered caps of the Confucians, such as in Figures 4 and 5.⁷⁷

The association of the Jesuits with Confucianism is something that ran through the main bulk of their mission there. When hoping to relieve leaders of superstitions, it was not uncommon for the Jesuits to turn to the teachings of Confucius.⁷⁸ In this they not only showed themselves as deserving of the robes they wore, but that they had come to enrich Chinese culture, not usurp it. This became clear also through the Church's eventual acceptance of the veneration of ancestors amongst the Chinese. Although originally tolerated by the Jesuit missionaries, ancestor worship, among the less culturally aware religious orders, came to be thought of as superstitious and idolatrous. Yet the Church came to understand how fundamental it was to the Asian communities and with Pius XII allowed the veneration of ancestors so long as it was a 'civic political act'.⁷⁹ Pius XII, in another move of the Church towards inculturation and conformity to local norms and customs, spoke of the respect due to 'peoples, who sometimes boast of a very old and highly developed culture of their own'.⁸⁰ He further reinforced the principle with the, perhaps slightly patronizing words, 'Church is no obstacle to the native talent of any nation, but rather perfects it in the highest degree'.⁸¹ The need to preserve the indigenous culture and history is vital in all Christian activity; the Church is to complement not uproot the culture.

It has always been of a great importance within the Church to preserve rites and customs of Christian origin in a way that is unique to a specific culture and people. Such a commitment to accommodation can be seen in the Catholic Church's dealing with Eastern rite churches. In the encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas*, Pope Leo XIII insisted that the rites organically grown in the Eastern church be free from Latinization, going so far as to say that should a Latin rite priest encourage a movement away from Eastern to Latin rite he will be 'deposed and excluded from his benefice'.⁸² This desire to preserve rites and customs unique to the Eastern Church, has been carried forth in *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, in which Pope Paul VI states: 'all members of the Eastern Rite should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an

[-inculturazione_en.html](#)> [retrieved 09 July 2018].

75 R. Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 135–36.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

77 *Ibid.*

78 Hsia, p. 128.

79 Peter C. Phan, *Vietnamese-American Catholics* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), p. 88.

80 'Evangelii Praecones', Vatican.va, <www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones_en.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

81 *Ibid.*

82 "Orientalium Dignitas," Papalencyclicals.net, at <www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13orient.htm> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

organic improvement.’⁸³ In all this we see that the Church through its history, in dealings with cultures and their impact on the Church, has tried to foster and nurture diversity and familiar surroundings in the liturgical home of the laity.

So how does this help us in the case of the mortar-board or any other academical dress for that matter? We have established that missionaries within the Catholic Church have often chosen to adopt the dress of religious officials in the country in which they are on mission, using the missions to Asia as an example, both to ingratiate themselves into the community and to show respect and continuity with the country’s culture. This, as we have seen, has been the policy of missionaries and more recently the policy of the whole Catholic Church: to introduce the Gospel and faith without damaging the legitimate customs of a nation. Though England has not been a mission territory for over 150 years, it could be argued that the same principles as outlined above apply to the use of the mortar-board in lieu of the biretta and of academicals with clerical dress. Pius XII asked his priests to remember that their flock do not, on embracing the Catholic faith, ‘cease to be citizens of their earthly fatherland’.⁸⁴ Within England this fatherland has developed of itself its own customs regarding clerical dress and vestments. The mortar-board evolved out of the same predecessor as the biretta and though it came to embody doctrine and beliefs specific to the Church of England, they were still also a cultural evolution of what was a remnant of Catholicism in England. The embedded symbolism of monarchy that the cap represented, through its denunciation by the Puritans,⁸⁵ ought not to be too foreign from Catholic doctrine either, even as late as the 1960s, prayers for the monarch were prescribed for after mass.⁸⁶ Furthermore, had the priests of the newly re-established Catholic Church in England been willing to adopt such attire as the square cap and hood, as opposed to importing Italian customs, then maybe there would not have been such suspicion as to the re-introduction of Catholicism. Across Europe the cleric’s biretta appears different from country to country. The adopting of England’s evolutionary trajectory of the square cap in the mortar-board should surely be seen as inculturation and respect for the history of England, as well as the Catholic heritage the pre-Reformation Church left her with (see Fig. 7).⁸⁷

All the above might be considered ancient history, a set of reflections on how the Catholic evangelization of England ought to have taken place in the mid-nineteenth century. Today we ought to be looking towards the future of the liturgy, and that has no need for further pomp or liturgical items, even within the Anglican Communion academic garb seems to be falling out of favour. One expansion on the Anglican Ceremonial states: ‘the custom of wearing academic insignia (tippet and hood) is perhaps best abandoned, for they have no explicitly religious significance.’⁸⁸ This statement is quite bizarre, not least for the fact that in another section the author seems perfectly happy for the bishops to continue the wearing of the chimere.⁸⁹ We shall discuss some of the religious significances that

83 “Orientalium Ecclesiarum,” Vatican.va, at <www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_orientalium-ecclesiarum_en.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

84 *Ibid.*

85 Hargrave, p. 27.

86 Father Feder, *The Layman’s Missal* (London: Burns & Oates, 2008), p. 831.

87 “The Spanish Bonete — Bonete Español de 4 Picos con Borla”, Philippi-collection.blogspot.co.uk, at <philippi-collection.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/spanish-bonete.html> [retrieved 6 July 2014].

88 Stuhlman, p. 33.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

academic insignia might have in the liturgy later; but for now let us return to why, even after over 150 years of ignoring the English Catholic heritage left in Britain, we ought to still seriously consider the re-introduction of academic dress into the liturgy.

The reintroduction of academic dress within the Catholic liturgy ought to be taken seriously, for what is continuing to be a matter of interest, by Anglicans, in the Catholic Church. The Ordinariate of Walsingham, a Catholic rite for those who wish to retain their Anglican heritage in the Roman Church, in guidelines issued for the Easter celebration in 2013, said that whether the priest is celebrating the liturgy, according to the Anglican or Roman rite, he ought to ensure that it is done in a way that expresses the traditions of the Anglican Communion ‘not least in the choice of sacred music and vesture’.⁹⁰ The fact that Anglican vestments are allowed to be used interchangeably in the Roman and Anglican rite must surely give ministers in the Roman tradition hope that they too can have some level of the same flexibility. Many Anglicans have been turning to the Catholic Church because traditions that they love are being eroded in the Church of England. If the Catholic Church is to be a welcoming community for such people, ought it not also to be willing to embrace some of their customs, especially those which demonstrably date back to the pre-Reformation Church? Canon 284 states that all clergy ought to wear suitable ecclesiastical garb ‘according to legitimate local customs’.⁹¹ Given that the wearing of academic garb with ecclesiastical clothing comes through the medieval Catholic Church and survives in the Anglican Church through Anglican statutes, such as those of 1549, 1559, and 1604, as symbol of the clerical state, it is possible to argue for ‘legitimate local customs’.

The fact that the Anglican Church also seems to be moving away from this rich tradition ought to be an incentive for Catholics to regain in their liturgy a custom that was originally Catholic and that is distinctive of English worship. The Catholic Church has a rich history in England. The use of academical attire forms a part of this and ought then to be included in the English Church’s worship; both as a sign of engagement with that history and as a sign of welcome to the Anglicans and Ordinariate. In article 43 of the ‘Instruction: Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy’, the text prescribes that vessels and vestments ought to be chosen in a way that reflects ‘the life and tradition of the people’.⁹² It must be remembered that the life of the English people is intimately bound up in the Anglican Church, which remains the established Church, influencing many of the laws as customs that make Britain, with representatives in the House of Lords. This is not to suggest that this necessitates mimicking the Church of England but rather that when the Catholic Church comes into contact with customs that are compatible with its own, such as the use of the hood, cap and chimere in choir, or the cap and gown with clerical costume, Rome as a church ought to think twice before abandoning it, if not to show our Catholicism, our one universal church, and faith engaging with all the cultures and people of the world, then to demonstrate our own part in the making of England and its history. It is hoped then that through this it has been demonstrated that there are grounds under the Church’s mission of inculturation for the adoption of academic dress with clerical dress. We ought now final-

90 ‘Guidelines for the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, Easter 2013’, Ordinariate.org.uk, online at <www.ordinariate.org.uk/cmsAdmin/uploads/2013-04-18-guidelines.pdf> [retrieved 6 July 2014].

91 “Code of Canon Law Book 2.” Vatican.va, at <vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_PY.HTM> [retrieved 6 July 2014].

92 ‘Instruction: Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy’.

ly to look at some of the theological benefits for the introduction of academic garb into the clerical wardrobe. (See Fig. 6.)

‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.’ Some final thoughts on academic dress

It is at the mass and other liturgies of the Church that the main body of the faithful find themselves in contact with the Church, both as a community and an institution. With this in mind one ceremonial states that ‘the evangelizing power of noble Catholic worship should never be forgotten or underestimated’.⁹³ Of course, the liturgies of the Church are primarily about the praise and glory of God and the communion of his people, but the symbolism and messages that the liturgy send out should never be far from the minds of the faithful either. The Church’s liturgies attract all manner of people and what they witness will play a large part in forming their opinion of a particular church and denomination. That is why it is important that the Church asks herself how she can use her liturgies to show the general populace what it as a Church believes and practises. The greatest stumbling block of the Church in modern times is its presentation in popular media as being anti-education. Richard Dawkins in his infamous *God Delusion* remarks that one of the worst problems of religion is that ‘it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding’.⁹⁴ This is a portrayal of Christianity all too often seen in our culture and one that closes the minds of many to Christianity. The use of academic dress within the liturgy then can serve a very practical purpose, that these invaluable symbols of learning are being worn by the ministers of the Church would demonstrate that the Church is not anti-education, far from it: she engages with education and requires it of her priests. When entering a church, one ought to be immediately brought into the community, the legacy, and the institution that is the Church. Remembering the evangelizing potential of the liturgy, ought not academic dress be used in it then? Not only to show that the Church supports learning and academic institutions,⁹⁵ but also to remind the people of the close link that Western universities shared with the Church. The Church ought to be seen as the mother and fosterer of the university, not as its opponent as it is often presented. The re-introduction of academic dress with the liturgical vestments ought to be the sign to the world, not just of the openness of the Church to education, but of the legacy that the church has left the West in her founding of the universities.

The legacy of the Catholic Church and its relationship to the ancient universities of England and indeed Europe, are uniquely expressed in academic apparel. The tippet and hood, a most frequently seen image of both clerical and academical costume within the medieval Church, were ingrained not just in the medieval mind, but also upon many of the memorial brasses of medieval clergy. Historically this can be seen in the Tudor sumptuary laws which allowed the higher graduates, such as Masters of Arts, to wear expensive and exotic furs in their academical clothing, a dignity usually reserved to ‘gentlemen’, and which in itself made the graduate a gentleman.⁹⁶ This granting of material distinction to gradu-

93 Peter J. Elliot, *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of Hours* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), p. 38.

94 Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Black Swan Books, 2007), p. 152.

95 An important article on this is article 5 of Pope Paul VI’s *Gravissimum Educationis*, online at <vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html> [retrieved 9 July 2018].

96 Noel Cox, ‘Tudor Sumptuary Laws and Academical Dress: An Act Against Wearing of Cost-

ates as well as clergy (the sumptuary laws deal with them in the same breath, indicating their being viewed again equally), is something the Church through her clerical dress ought to recapture. Such robes, as can be seen through these historical laws, were developed in part out of a desire by society to privilege the cleric and academic the same, probably due to the godly nature of both their callings through the teaching and bettering of society. The distinction that exists between the clerical and lay state is well established in Catholic doctrine.⁹⁷ Surely this ought to enable clerics to exhibit the distinction of their learning as well as their order. Although the academic garb should not just be seen as academic but, through its history, clerical, it also needs to be viewed through this historical precedence not just as the distinctive garb of learning but also as the gift of society. The sumptuary laws show society was willing to grant distinction in learning and order through the luxuries of dress. Academical dress ought in part to be retained by the clergy as a way that historically has not just shown the privilege they possess but as a reminder of the privilege society has placed in the clergy and the need to keep the good faith of the people.

The issue of distinction will also raise some questions. Such a claim will innately raise the objection that through other clerical garb such as collar, cassock and biretta, the priest already shows his separate calling; further additions to clerical attire are therefore unnecessary especially during the liturgy. I am tempted to answer this in the manner of an old Catholic dictionary that states that any attempt or loss of distinction of ‘status that is real, and fundamental, and rests on divine institution, can but lead, where ever found, to trouble, confusion, and the deprivation of morals’.⁹⁸ Instead, perhaps a more rational response might be that were this the summit of my argument then I should be inclined to agree that academic garb need not be used. But the use of academic robes amongst clergy should not come about only to distinguish the separate ministries that the clergy and faithful exercise, but also to embellish them. The Catechism states that bishops and priests have as their first task “to preach the gospel of god to all men”... “they are authentic teachers” of the apostolic faith.⁹⁹ The argument for academic garb being used in Catholic liturgy lies, then, not just in that they distinguish the priest, but also that they embellish his duty as a teacher; who is obligated to instruct his faithful well. In a time when mass media means many are well read in issues of Christian theology, when there are many well qualified and conflicting accounts of the Christ and his Gospel; it must surely be important both inside and outside of the liturgy to demonstrate that the priest/person in question is one who has attained a good degree of knowledge. To demonstrate he speaks with the many years of study and learning behind him; his words are more than those of the local street preacher or Wikipedia article.

This again might raise the argument that there are other, historical symbols of the priest’s duty as a teacher still in use. Such an argument, however, must consider the issue of inculturation and what native English indications can be used; academical garments, be they the mortar-board, hood, gown, or any combination of them are iconic, inseparable symbols of the teaching profession and should be instantly recognizable by the congrega-

ly Apparel 1509 and An Act for Reformation of Excess in Apparel 1533’, *TBS*, 6 (2006), pp. 15–43 (p. 20)

97 Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Lumen Gentium*. 21 November 1964, §10.

98 William E. Addis, Thomas Arnold and T. B. Scannell, *A Catholic Dictionary: Containing Some Account of the Doctrine, Discipline, Rites, Ceremonies, Councils and Religious Orders of the Catholic Church*, 14th edn (London: Virtue, 1928), p. 199.

99 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edn, p. 888.

tion. From the earliest times Christ was depicted and regarded as a teacher. The *pallium*, now reserved only for metropolitans, derives from a classical garment used to symbolize a teacher. Christ himself was believed to have worn it, and as such it was once universal to the presbyterate.¹⁰⁰ The role of Christ as a teacher is foundational in Christian theology, liturgy, and iconography. This surely ought to suggest that there needs to be a symbol of the priest's place in the mass as Christ the teacher, accessible to all orders and recognizable to the congregation. We have seen how in China the need to appear as teachers, as disciples of the Heavenly Teacher, led the Jesuits to adopt the habit of the Confucians, a sign of learning recognizable to all the people of China. Ought not the same principle to be adopted by the Catholic Church in England?

The sumptuary laws show historically both the perceived similarities in office of both academics and priests, as well the privileges that society was willing to afford them for the kindness of their being willing to teach and minister to the community. Surely in a time when many are filled with questions, not just on what the other denominations are saying about the faith, but on what the priest himself is saying, it might be helpful, like the Anglican Church, to have the priest exhibit his academic hood over the surplice whilst preaching. The priest ought to wear some of the academic attire to which he is entitled during his preaching, be it at the Eucharist, Divine office or any other occasion, so as to give conviction to his words, to remind the faithful of the priest's honoured place as a teacher, and to remind the priest himself of the honour that the people have historically given and continue to give to him and the need to act in a manner that shall retain it.

It has been established above that there is a rich history and tradition of academic dress within the Catholic Church. This then should open the path for the reintroduction of academic dress into the Church. In the section of his commentary on the rites of the Church entitled 'The continuity of our tradition', Elliot suggests that one of the three most important features in Catholic worship ought to be 'unity and coherence of the Church's tradition'.¹⁰¹ This must surely give academic dress some hope of being used by the Church, since it is a large part of the Church's history and tradition, being some of the few surviving remnants that link the Church back to the Catholic history of England. Elliot goes on to say that 'we should respect gracious customs and traditions'.¹⁰² It seems impossible, though, to hold true to such a dictum when the Church is currently ignoring a tradition both well established in Catholic history and preserved in the established Church of the country. Yet it is stressed to clergy that 'we should strive to recapture the qualities of liturgical mystery and peace from times past'.¹⁰³ There is a strong case then to be made for the retention of academic dress such as hoods and caps within the Catholic liturgies as vital, not just as another way of capturing a part of the Church's history. Rather as a way of adding to the mystery of the liturgy through adding to the imagery and riches of the liturgy, and as a way of adding to the 'peace' of the mass through demonstrating the liturgical and academical items of attire that are shared with other Christian counterparts and also as a reflection of the fostering of continuity between the Church and university.

On one discussion of the use of academic dress by clerics there is tell of one monk who said he would not wear any form of academical garb over his habit since 'no earthly

100 Herbert Norris, *Church Vestments: Their Origin and Purpose* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1949), p. 22.

101 Elliot, p. 6.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

103 *Ibid.*

honour could equal that of serving God.¹⁰⁴ This of itself seems to be a valid reason, not just for the clergy's declining academic robes, but also for their abandonment in the liturgy. However, when we examine this statement a little more deeply it does seem to have major flaws. Wisdom and understanding, of which the academic robes are a sign, are by no means an earthly honour but rather are, according to paragraph 1831 of the Catechism, gifts from the Holy Ghost.¹⁰⁵ The argument set forth by the unnamed monk seems to imply that what is implicitly a gift from God ought to be treated as a civic honour. It would be an error that demonstrates little understanding of the universities, or the history of academic dress, to see academical attire as a way of making a show of the privileges that some civic institution has bestowed upon the wearer. The university degree is not so much a civic key to unlocking the worlds of employment and prestige. Rather it is the recognition of a body, as we have seen above, largely modelled on the religious and ecclesiastical hierarchies; recognizing a degree of wisdom in the individual. Br Keenan speaks of the way we should not so much consider university graduates possessing a degree but rather they are 'possessed by their degree'.¹⁰⁶ The dress of the graduate is not to make him stand out in dignity, but rather to distinguish him as someone possessing a high degree of wisdom, whose words can be considered authoritative and who has responsibilities to the university and the populace.¹⁰⁷ This is in much the same way that a priest ought not to wear clerical dress to inspire the awe and respect of the people, but rather to mark him out as a member of the body that is the clergy: available to help, counsel and sooth those who need him.

We have established that academic garb can hardly be considered a worldly vanity since it derives from clerical dress detailing the great bond between Church and university, as well as marking out a person who has learning and responsibilities to the university and community. But it might also be prudent to ask if academic dress can add to our 'serving God'. Thanksgiving and praise have always been a fundamental part of the mass. St John Chrysostom says, 'continual thanksgiving is the sure guardian of all God's graces'.¹⁰⁸ During the preface to a service the people are reminded, 'It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks'.¹⁰⁹ During the offertory the congregation is told it is also appropriate to bring with the gifts, 'symbolic objects, particularly signs of work'.¹¹⁰ Such words and symbols of praise are fundamental to the liturgy, where the Christian community gives thanks to God for all his blessings. This too seems to suggest that the use of academic dress in the Catholic liturgy would enrich the services. The work of universities, teachers and learning in general in the world is inestimable; they give so much into the communities in which we live. Since in the mass the community gathers to give thanks and praise, might not the uses of academic dress amongst the ministers and people of the Church qualified to wear it be a great sign of this thanksgiving for wisdom? That God has enriched so many of those with the gift of wisdom, and has through the universities and

104 Tom Forbe, comment on John Zuhlsdorf, 'Quaeritur: Academic Attire for Priests', *Fr. Z's Blog*, posted 3 May 2010 (1:11 p.m.), online at <wdtprs.com/blog/2010/05/quaeritur-academic-attire-for-priests/> [retrieved 09 July 2018].

105 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edn, 1831.

106 Oliver James Keenan, 'How Can Academic Dress Survive in the Third Millennium?' *TBS*, 10 (2010), pp. 99–125 (p. 110).

107 *Ibid.*

108 Thomas Crean, *The Mass and the Saints* (Oxford: Family Publications, 2008), p. 96.

109 *The CTS New Sunday Missal: Peoples Edition* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010), pp. 549–89.

110 Elliott, p. 272.

schools of the nations worked such good in the world, might not making a representation of these institutions in our liturgies be a vital sign? Not just that the Church in her liturgies is engaging with her history, her tradition and inculturation, but also with the community that she finds herself in. The Church, through services, ought to foster joy and thanks in the people for the gifts of God. Amongst this, might not wisdom and thanksgiving to the Holy Ghost through the wearing of the garb that his grace has helped us to achieve be a sign of such joy and thanks?

Drawing the threads together

This article set out to argue that the wearing of academic robes with clerical vestments in the Catholic Church's liturgies, in the manner of the Anglican tradition, ought to be accessible and encouraged amongst the Catholic clergy and faithful. Also I have argued for a greater recognition and interaction between the Church (especially liturgically) and universities. We have traced the origin of academic dress back to the clothing of clerics and demonstrated that it continued as clerical attire, changing and diverging organically due, not to any theological divergence, but, to time and culture. We have discovered that throughout the history of the university the Church has always been a faithful mother bestowing upon the universities many of the privileges and symbols pertaining to clerical status, justifying then the view that academic dress remains, in many ways, an extension of the clerical. It has been discussed that even in cases in which items of academic attire might be thought of as symbolic of a Church other than Rome, there are good reasons for their use, such as the mortar-board in lieu of the biretta. Such items still show signs of cultural influence, and are in a rich line of inculturation, that is adopting and Christianizing what is a widely recognized and developed part of the English culture. Finally we have examined what other reasons, theological and liturgical, there might be for the adoption of academic garb with liturgical vesture, be they representing Christ the teacher, engaging with Church tradition, or praising the Holy Ghost for his many gifts to the Christian people.

There are signs gradually emerging that the Church is beginning to engage more with academic dress and degrees when confronted with them. One article in 2013 discusses the protocol for when during the mass graduates dressed in academic robes ought to doff and don their mortar-boards.¹¹¹ However, these are small and isolated incidents, with the vast majority of university churches and chaplaincies making no provision for the use of academic dress among laity let alone clergy. We have seen that there is a rich and vibrant history and symbolism of academic dress in the liturgy still utilized by the Anglican Church but, for whatever the reason, the Catholic Church, which started and endowed such traditions has long neglected this custom and her ministers make no sign of regaining it. At a time when the Ordinariate of Walsingham is flourishing, when interest in the Church and her traditions is thriving, as well as support for inculturation and more local customs is growing, might not this be the time to regain and encourage this hallowed tradition, deep-rooted in the English heritage and indicative of the Catholic Church and her legacy in the world? Might not this be the time when the church, thought by some to be the vehement opponent of intellect, allows her ministers to use the hood of their degree over the surplice? Might not this be the time to draw the gifts of wisdom and understanding into the church's liturgy and dress?

111 'Birettas and Academic Hats'.