



Durham Research Online

Deposited in DRO:

23 May 2008

Version of attached file:

Published Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Forrestal, A. (2003) 'Making bishops in Tridentine France : the episcopal ideal of Jean-Pierre Camus.', *Journal of ecclesiastical history*, 54 (2). pp. 254-277.

Further information on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S002204690200564X>

Publisher's copyright statement:

2003 Cambridge University Press

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in DRO
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full DRO policy](#) for further details.

Making Bishops in Tridentine France: The Episcopal Ideal of Jean-Pierre Camus

by ALISON FORRESTAL

The experience of Jean-Pierre Camus, a reforming bishop in seventeenth-century France, highlights the problematic ambivalences present within French Catholic reform after the Council of Trent: the persistent tensions between bishops, the papacy and lower clergy over the most effective means of achieving renewal and the most appropriate forms of ecclesiastical government, as well as the growing emphasis upon episcopal perfection within an episcopate that was, paradoxically, closely linked to politics and secular society. His publications on episcopacy provide an insight into the motivations and beliefs of a prominent episcopal reformer and into the ecclesiastical culture of seventeenth-century France. This article seeks to demonstrate that Camus' episcopal ideal was a coherent adaptation of traditional and contemporary views produced in response to post-Trent circumstances and that the bishop's published views had a significant impact upon his fellow prelates and their relationship with the papacy.

I

Jean-Pierre Camus' lengthy episcopal career (1609–52) coincided with the decisive decades of Catholic renewal in early modern France, years of major development within the Church in regard to reform of the higher and lower clergy and the standardisation of religious life amongst the faithful. The basis of that reform was the Council of Trent which, between 1545 and 1563, provided a programme which shaped ecclesiastical practice within the Catholic Church for several centuries. Its most obvious innovation was to devise an organisational strategy, based upon the office of bishop, which was designed to restore religious and moral discipline to the clergy and laity and perhaps regain some of the souls lost to Protestantism. The council's entire programme of institutional reform was built upon the episcopal office, and called upon bishops to discipline their clergy through synods and visitations, to preach regularly and, of course, to reside permanently within their dioceses.¹ In the decades following the council, many bishops throughout

¹ *Canons and decrees of the Council of Trent*, ed. H. J. Schroeder, St Louis–London 1941, sess. x, ch. 1, 46–8; sess. XXXIV, chs II–III, 192–8.

Catholic Europe strove to implement its decrees and to organise their ministries according to the precepts which it had laid down.² But, as we shall see, although designed to guide bishops, these precepts opened up new dilemmas for them; the experience of Bishop Camus, as revealed through his extensive writings, demonstrates this particularly vividly. Equally, his experience provides a window onto the structural and organisational difficulties which plagued the emerging Tridentine Church in France.

Camus was representative of many Tridentine bishops who, while welcoming the council's decrees, regarded them as inadequate for the practical requirements of bishops. Many of them came to realise that the Council of Trent did not offer a comprehensive treatment of episcopacy in all its facets but concentrated principally upon the administrative responsibilities of prelates. The council presented the role of the bishop in overwhelmingly legalistic and jurisdictional terms, a product of Trent's emphasis upon implementing an efficient ecclesiastical governmental structure. By contrast, it presented only the bare bones of an episcopal theology to support the comprehensively listed duties of government and discipline. Administration was just one aspect of episcopacy, if a crucial one, and post-Tridentine bishops both in and out of France were well aware of this fact. It was for this reason that a number of works on the *officium episcopi* were published during the late sixteenth century, envisaged as guidebooks for bishops on the spiritual and practical aspects of their office. The driving forces behind works on episcopacy during this period were, not surprisingly, prelates themselves. A number of them produced texts based upon their own practical experiences and reflections and attempted to provide an episcopal spirituality to inspire and supplement administrative action.³

As a general council, Trent would seem to have been the ideal occasion for a theology of episcopacy to be officially defined, particularly since the council's decrees concentrated so much on the notion of episcopal government. There were very obvious reasons, however, why the council failed to provide a full theology, with the result that, by Camus' time, debate over the nature and function of episcopacy remained a divisive issue. This was because reflection did not just focus upon episcopal spirituality but also upon the potentially more explosive issues of hierarchy and jurisdiction. Trent avoided the thorny questions by deliberately failing to address the problematic issue of the nature of episcopal jurisdiction when the topic arose during the debates on episcopal residence and the sacrament of order. In fact, in debating whether a bishop held his jurisdiction directly from God (*de iure divino*) or indirectly via the pope, the council very nearly collapsed in

² Joseph Bergin, 'The Counter-Reformation and its bishops', *Past and Present* clxv (1999), 30–73.

³ Hubert Jedin, *L'Evêque dans la tradition pastorale du xvie siècle*, trans. Paul Broutin, Bruges 1953, 85–114.

disarray and was only able to avoid this by deliberately omitting any reference whatsoever to the issue. To confirm that episcopal jurisdiction was held immediately from God severely limited papal jurisdiction over bishops and within dioceses, because it denied the pope's right to intervene in a bishop's exercise of his diocesan jurisdiction. It was for this reason that the papacy, represented by its legates and *zelanti* bishops, so categorically resisted all pressure on this doctrine, fearing that it would weaken papal authority within the Church and perhaps even open the door to conciliarism once more.⁴

Similar suspicions characterised the debates over sacramental order. The council decreed finally that bishops were distinct from and superior to priests as a result of their authority to govern as successors of the Apostles and as a result of their ability to confer the sacraments of ordination and confirmation.⁵ Here, the council plumped for the dominant, though previously unofficial, scholastic distinction between episcopal order (bishops' power to confer order and to confirm) and jurisdiction (their power to govern) and confirmed that the prelate could be distinguished from the priest by his power of order and his greater jurisdiction. Yet the failure to discuss the theology of this distinction meant that an area of episcopacy which had long been a source of theological and canonical reflection remained unresolved. Once again, the council confirmed the jurisdictional powers of bishops but deliberately refrained from responding to the logical questions: first, did this jurisdiction come directly from God or indirectly via the pope, and second, precisely what degree of independent jurisdiction could a bishop expect to possess within his diocese?

Significantly, since Trent's final decrees on episcopal residence and the sacrament of order made no reference to the issue of jurisdictional *ius divinum*, it remained open to future interpretation. Certainly it was a charged subject, with potentially crucial consequences for the jurisdictional authority of bishops and the pope and for the status of bishops *vis-à-vis* the papacy and lower clergy. This was an issue which would become particularly pertinent in the context of ecclesiastical reform, most glaringly in the relationship between bishops and the religious orders. Members of the regular orders, most obviously the Jesuits, but also the Capuchins, Franciscans and others, had been to the fore of Catholic reform, in France and elsewhere, even before Trent, and their initiatives had won them considerable independence of bishops within dioceses. Trent's decrees were thus, in part, a reaction to this development; it favoured parochial pastoral care under

⁴ Alain Tallon, *La France et le Concile de Trente (1518–1563)*, Rome 1997, 770–84; Hubert Jedin, *Crisis and closure of the Council of Trent 1562–1563*, London 1967.

⁵ *Canons and decrees*, sess. XXIII, 162; André Duval, *Des Sacrements au Concile de Trente*, Paris 1985, 328; J. Pégon, 'Épiscopat et hiérarchie au Concile de Trente', *Nouvelle Revue théologique* lxxii (1960), 580–8 at p. 581.

episcopal supervision, decreeing that the diocesan bishop's approval was necessary in order to hear confession or to preach if one did not hold a benefice.⁶ Parochial preaching and attendance at mass were also advocated⁷ and Trent specifically confirmed the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215),⁸ which had directed that 'all the faithful ... should individually confess all their sins ... to their own priest at least once a year'.⁹ The phrase 'own priest' was ambiguous however: some considered it to mean the parish *curé* whilst for others it designated any priest, including a regular, who possessed a mandate to administer to the faithful by canonical delegation.¹⁰

The council did not intend to exclude the religious orders from pastoral activities; rather, its decrees were intended to subject them to the supervisory authority of bishops. In practice, regulars frequently refused to accept this line and, in their defence, cited papal privileges which allowed them to administer sacraments and to preach without episcopal leave because they acted as papal delegates. When they did so, they clashed heavily with reforming bishops determined to wield the governmental power which they believed that Trent confirmed as belonging to their office. This was certainly the case in Tridentine France where many bishops struggled to bring independently-minded regulars under their effective jurisdiction. As a result, disputes frequently exploded in dioceses, often catapulting protagonists onto the national stage through pamphlet wars and via the Assembly of Clergy which usually became directly involved in specific quarrels when bishops appealed to it for support.¹¹ The regulars' episcopal critics argued that they prejudiced diocesan discipline, caused rivalry between secular and regular clergy and ultimately hindered the progress of reform. But these sustained and frequent struggles for control of religious practices within dioceses meant that it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the bishops would succeed in stamping their authority upon diocesan ecclesiastical structures and personnel. The issues at stake were fundamental to the future shape of the Church and to the power of bishops within it. It is for this reason that quarrels assumed broad importance for bishops and regulars; they were never simply petty squabbles over, for instance, the simultaneous celebration of masses in regular and

⁶ *Canons and decrees*, sess. XXIII, ch. XV, 173; sess. XXIV, ch. IV, 195.

⁷ 'Decree concerning the things to be observed and avoided in the celebration of mass': *ibid.* sess. XXII, 152.

⁸ *Ibid.* sess. XIV, ch. V, 94.

⁹ *Decrees of the ecumenical councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, London-Georgetown 1990, i. 245.

¹⁰ Charles Chesneau, *Le Père Yves de Paris et son temps (1590-1678)*, Paris 1946, i. 30-1. See *Le Pacifique à messieurs les évêques et cures: pour les religieux*, Paris 1625, for a modest exposition of the regular position. For a stronger interpretation see Jacques de Vernant, *La Défense de l'autorité de N.S.P. le pape, de nosseigneurs les cardinaux, les archevêques et évêques, et de l'employ des religieux mendiants: contre les erreurs de ce temps*, Metz 1658.

¹¹ Alison Forrestal, 'Fathers, pastors, kings: visions of episcopacy in seventeenth-century France', unpubl. PhD diss. Manchester 2000, 109-35.

parish churches on feast days. Rather, they were quarrels which encapsulated the much larger dilemma of the loci of power within the Church.

A persistent tradition of Gallican independence made French bishops especially sensitive to these questions of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In the early fifteenth century, France had been a hotbed of the conciliarist doctrine which had been given its most famous exposition in the decrees of the Council of Constance in whose drafting Jean Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris, had played so major a role.¹² By the sixteenth century, ecclesiastical Gallicanism had also become associated with the loosely-defined 'liberties' of the French Church, which claimed to fix the boundaries of papal jurisdiction in France.¹³ Yet Gallicanism was at least as much an attitude as a codified set of laws, and represented a spirit of independence which resented papal intervention in French ecclesiastical affairs. In addition to favouring conciliarism, it was, more generally, opposed to unrestricted papal monarchy in day-to-day ecclesiastical government and granted bishops considerable independence of action within dioceses. Within the French episcopate, Gallicanism had long passed its medieval heyday by the early 1600s, and a vocal party of ultramontanes, led by Cardinal Du Perron and Cardinal La Roche-foucauld, then dominated its affairs. Yet, rather than being a spent force, the tradition lay dormant and simply required specific catalysts to return to its former strength. Amongst those catalysts in the seventeenth century would be the catalogue of disputes involving the triangle of bishops, regulars and the papacy: there was a natural correspondence between the bishops' defence of their jurisdiction over the regular orders and the traditional doctrine of Gallicanism which rejected papal autocracy and accorded the episcopate an active role in conciliar government. Over the course of the century, the episcopate increasingly linked its position with Gallican principles of ecclesiastical independence, a pattern which the legacy of suspicion left by each individual dispute would exacerbate. These quarrels were, therefore, crucial to the shifting structure of relations between, not only bishops and regulars, but also between the episcopate and the papacy.

¹² Held in 1414, the Council of Constance declared that general councils held their authority directly from Christ and that everyone, including the pope, was bound to obey their decrees. This decision was subsequently overturned by a papal bull of 1460 which condemned appeals to councils against papal decisions and, for good measure, by the Councils of Florence (1437) and the Lateran (1512), though conciliarists continued to deny the legitimacy of their decrees: *Decrees of the ecumenical councils*, i. 409–10, 532–4, 595–6; Aimé-Georges Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Paris 1953, 47; Walter Ullmann, *Medieval political thought*, Harmondsworth 1975, 219–22. On Gerson see D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and laity in the theology of Jean Gerson*, Cambridge 1987.

¹³ The standard works on Gallicanism are Victor Martin, *Le Gallicanisme et la réforme catholique*, Paris 1919, and *Le Gallicanisme politique et le clergé de France*, Paris 1929. See also his *Les Origines du gallicanisme*, Paris 1939, for the medieval background to seventeenth-century disputes.

II

The French Church was rather late to the drive for ecclesiastical reform, due mainly to the fact that the country was virtually crippled by religious war during the late sixteenth century. Yet the early decades of the seventeenth century saw a concerted effort by the episcopate to bring religious order to dioceses. Reform-minded individuals resided in their dioceses and began to organise them along Tridentine lines by introducing regular synods and visitations. Simultaneously, the crown, under the influence of reformers like Vincent de Paul, increasingly appointed bishops who were in orders, theologically educated and experienced in diocesan administration.¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Camus was one of this new breed of reforming bishops, and was appointed to Belley in south-east France in 1609. From a wealthy *robe* background, he was highly and broadly educated, and undertook intensive theological studies prior to his ordination around 1608.¹⁵ A bishop of the *dévo*t stamp, he became a close confidant of both François de Sales, bishop of Geneva, and Pierre de Bérulle, founder of the French Oratorians and the French spiritual leader of the early seventeenth century. Indeed, these reformers acted as decisive, though not exclusive, influences upon his theological outlook and ecclesiastical career. Camus was a prolific writer, publishing 250 works during his life (1584–1652), comprising treatises, discourses, homilies, manuals of instruction and devotional texts. He continued to publish even after his resignation from Belley in 1629, a decision made in the wake of much soul-searching. This produced the rather ironic situation of a bishop without a bishopric, who argued consistently for episcopally-led reform within dioceses, although in no position to carry it out himself. But even though he was never to hold a diocese again, Camus, having been consecrated, retained his episcopal status, and this motivated him to continue his work of reform through publication and instruction. Because he was still a member of the episcopate, he remained just as keen to continue refining his views of episcopacy and ecclesiastical hierarchy, and because his time was not absorbed in diocesan administration, he was able to devote extended periods to championing the episcopal office through his publications. His writings upon episcopacy were, almost without exception, produced in this later period.

These texts, published between 1615 and 1642, assumed several forms. The *Homélie*s des états généraux and the *Homélie*s panegyriques de Saint Charles Borromée¹⁶

¹⁴ Joseph Bergin, *The making of the French episcopate, 1589–1661*, New Haven–London 1996, 416–541; René Taveneaux, *Le Catholicisme dans la France classique 1610–1715*, Paris 1980.

¹⁵ Henri Brémont, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, Paris 1935–6, i. 154–5; Claude Michaud, *L'Église et l'argent sous l'ancien régime: les receveurs généraux du clergé de France aux xvi^e–xviii^e siècles*, Paris 1991, 405–8.

¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Camus, *Homélie*s des états généraux (1614–15), ed. Jean Descrains, Geneva 1970, and *Homélie*s panegyriques de Saint Charles Borromée, cardinal du titre de saint praxède, archevesque de Milan, Paris 1623.

were published shortly after their delivery by Camus to clerical audiences. In fact, the homilies on Borromeo contain eight lengthy sermons on the former archbishop of Milan, all heard by large congregations in Parisian churches between 1616 and 1622. Camus' reputation as an orator ensured that his preaching always attracted crowds, but it is perhaps more difficult to assess the levels of circulation and readership which his writings on episcopacy and hierarchy enjoyed once they were published. None of the texts went through more than one edition, though the multi-volume *L'Esprit du bien-heureux François de Sales*, first published in 1639, was reprinted several times after 1700 and became the standard reference source for Salesian spirituality.¹⁷ Equally, the manuals for bishops written by French clergy during the seventeenth century do not direct bishops to Camus' publications. The works they did recommend as inspirations for bishops' daily sessions of prayer and study tended to be hagiographic *Lives* of saints or primary sources of guidance, such as the decrees of Trent and the Gospels, rather than commentaries which filtered the ideas contained in such texts.¹⁸ This was also the case with the reading recommended by the conferences attended by five south-western bishops in 1649 and 1656, under the presidency of Alain de Solminihac, the reforming bishop of Cahors.¹⁹ Some of Camus' publications were undoubtedly too combative or thematically focused to be suitable daily reading, but he did produce a manual of instruction for bishops, *Les Fonctions du hierarque parfait*, which discussed the key spiritual and theological aspects of the episcopal office such as its origins, pastoral duties and virtues, and it was published seven years before the five bishops first met in Mercuès.²⁰ This was the first text of this type to be published in French and by a Frenchman in the seventeenth century and it might be expected that it would have been commended by the conferences.

The fact that the bishops who attended the Mercuès conferences did not recommend Camus' manual suggests that they were not familiar with it or did not consider it to be suitable. But, if Camus' *Hierarque parfait* may not have been well-known within the episcopate by the mid-century, the same is certainly not true of several of his other publications on episcopacy. These

¹⁷ Idem, *L'Esprit du bien-heureux François de Sales, eveque de Geneve*, Paris 1840.

¹⁸ For example, René Le Mée's *Le Prelat accomply, représenté en la personne d'illustrissime seigneur Philippe Cospean, eveque et comte de Lizeux*, Saumur 1647, 129. Le Mée was a Cordelier, which might also account for his reluctance to recommend Camus' works. But see also Nicolas Pavillon's (bishop of Alet 1639–77) *Rule of life* in Paris, BN, MS Fr. 14428(i), fos 133r–47v, which, like *Le Prelat accomply* identifies Scripture as appropriate reading material.

¹⁹ BN, MS Fr. 14428(i), fos lv–82v. The conferences recommended reading of Scripture, the Council of Trent and the *Lives* of saints. Participants were Alain de Solminihac of Cahors, Nicolas Pavillon of Alet, Étienne Caulet of Pamiers, Nicolas Sevin of Sarlat and Philibert de Brandon of Périgueux.

²⁰ Jean-Pierre Camus, *Les Fonctions du hierarque parfait*, [sic] où se voir le tableau de l'evesque que accomply, Paris 1642.

treatises were very influential, emerging in a period when relations between bishops and regulars were rapidly becoming strained.²¹ In fact, the works published by Camus on hierarchy during the 1630s acted as seriously destabilising forces in the sphere of papal–episcopal relations, resulting in bitterness on both sides which was to affect co-operation for decades.²² By this time, the French episcopate was already at odds with regulars over the vexed questions of sacramental administration and preaching within dioceses and it had felt forced to issue a categorical *Déclaration* in 1625 which affirmed the authority of bishops over regulars in these activities.²³ Since, however, many regulars failed to recognise this directive and continued to claim that they could administer the sacraments and preach without episcopal approval, the debate rumbled on. By the 1630s all that was required was a high-profile case to produce a quarrel on the international ecclesiastical stage once more.

Already a well-known author and reformer by 1630, Camus published from this date a series of related works which, in trenchant terms, confirmed the subordination of regulars to bishops' authority within dioceses. These aroused such a furore that the crown was forced to intervene through bishops like Henri de Sourdis of Bordeaux as well as through Richelieu himself in efforts to restore equilibrium to the French Church.²⁴ Rome proved equally concerned with the threat posed by this dispute and tended to blame Camus for inciting it: Nuncio Bichi accused Camus of excessive sarcasm and imprudence, but warned against imprisoning him, placing him under guard or forcing him to leave France since this would simply further incite the episcopate's fury.²⁵ This was certainly true and highlights the impact of the Camus case upon French bishops: papal efforts to silence Camus during the 1630s merely distanced the episcopate from Rome and encouraged it to use this case to defend the dignity of the episcopal office. Certainly, Camus' fellow-bishops, having appointed their own assessors to examine and report to them on his publications, were well aware of the arguments adopted by

²¹ Idem, *De la Primauté et principauté de saint Pierre, et de ses successeurs: traite chronographique*, Paris 1630 (there are three copies of this in the BN); *De l'Unité [sic] de la hierarchie*, Douai 1634; *Considerations hierarchiques*, Paris 1642. The ideas on hierarchy and authority in these volumes were reproduced succinctly in other publications by Camus, but they approached the questions of hierarchy and authority from the basis of the religious vocation, analysing particular features of it such as the value of vows and cloistered life, rather than from the episcopal. For this reason, this article concentrates on those texts in which the primary themes are the merits and powers of the episcopal vocation.

²² Forrestal, 'Fathers, pastors, kings', 124–8.

²³ *Collection des procès-verbaux des assemblées générales du clergé de France*, ed. A. Duranthon, Paris 1767–78, ii. 60–9. The *Déclaration* was affirmed by the assemblies of 1645, 1650, 1655 and 1665, indicating consistently strong hierarchical support for its principles: Forrestal, 'Fathers, pastors, kings', 110–22.

²⁴ Chesneau, *Yves de Paris*, i. 89; Eugène Griselle, 'Camus et Richelieu en 1632', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* xxi (1914), 676–711.

²⁵ Chesneau, *Yves de Paris*, i. 149.

him and, as the episcopate informed the nuncio, it was in agreement that these contained nothing contrary to principles of faith and hierarchy.²⁶ The bishops defended Camus, therefore, for two reasons. In the first place, they considered the attacks upon him and upon his publications by Rome and the regulars unwarranted because his ideas were thoroughly orthodox. Secondly, he was a fellow bishop and these attacks besmirched the honour of the office which he shared with other prelates. Both these factors ensured that the episcopate strongly opposed any censure of Camus by Rome and contributed to the progressive cooling of relations between the papacy and the French episcopate during the 1630s. This quarrel also motivated the Assembly of Clergy, dominated by bishops, to revive the 1625 *Déclaration sur les réguliers* in the hope of pushing Rome towards approval of its rules. While this was not successful, Camus was not ultimately condemned by the papacy, so the episcopate scored some success against the papacy and the regular orders in this respect. But, undoubtedly, this clash hardened the attitude of French bishops and helped to convince them that episcopal authority and dignity must be protected from all attacks. This would become even clearer over the course of subsequent decades when future quarrels erupted between the episcopate, regulars and the papacy.²⁷

Camus, then, was not only a significant literary figure, as is well-known, and as is testified by the quantity of his publications; his writings had substantial influence upon the relationship between French bishops, the papacy and regulars during the 1630s and his ideas were regarded by prelates as according with their own views. His texts offer crucial insights into the religious culture of early modern France and, more specifically, into the development of French episcopal ideology during the first half of the seventeenth century. Until now, little or no attention has been paid to Camus' publications on episcopacy.²⁸ Yet, it is in these that the forthright Camus reveals much about his own perception of episcopacy and about the wider struggle of reforming French bishops to stamp their authority upon the French Church, to achieve a relationship with the papacy and lower clergy which reflected the status of their office and to underpin their activities as reformers with a coherent theological base. These were difficulties faced by bishops elsewhere too, but they were perhaps most intensely evident within the seventeenth-century French Church with its strong Gallican traditions and intense *dévo*t atmosphere. By examining the responses of one particular prelate to the dilemmas which he encountered in his episcopate, we learn how the

²⁶ Ibid. 183.

²⁷ Forrestal, 'Fathers, pastors, kings', 109–35.

²⁸ In contrast, valuable studies have concentrated upon Camus' views of other aspects of religion and society: Thomas Worcester, *Seventeenth-century cultural discourse: France and the preaching of Bishop Camus*, Berlin–New York 1997; Jean Descrains, *Bibliographie des œuvres de Jean-Pierre Camus, évêque de Belley (1584–1652)*, Paris 1971, and *Essais sur Jean-Pierre Camus*, Paris 1992.

circumstances within which Tridentine bishops operated could affect their perceptions of the role and character of their office.

It was natural for a bishop like Camus, intensely pious and theologically literate, to conceive a theology of episcopacy which was intended to provide contemporary bishops with a composite image of the episcopal office. He certainly felt that French bishops urgently required this kind of guidance in their quest to bring ecclesiastical order to their dioceses, especially since, as a result of the religious conflicts, official Tridentine reform had begun later in France than in several other European states.²⁹ His theology of episcopacy was heavily influenced by contemporary French theological and spiritual currents. He absorbed emerging ideas on the role and position of bishops within the Church but also, crucially, adapted them for wider dissemination in his publications. Camus fitted ideas to the needs, as he saw them, of the French Church, which he believed required a united and self-assured episcopate to govern it effectively. So he did not simply regurgitate the ideas of others, but wrote as one who felt a need to provide a coherent, but relevant, theology of episcopacy which could guide prelates in their ministries. These convictions provided the starting-point for his deliberations upon episcopacy; they were the reasons for his lengthy defences of the office against its detractors within the Catholic Church and for his anxiety to produce manuals of instruction for his fellow bishops. While Camus' writings are representative of broad trends within French views of episcopacy, he was also an active developer of a personal theology which he offered for the edification of other prelates.

To achieve this, Camus drew upon a long tradition of theology relating to the character of the episcopal office. It is possible to identify several theological influences within his writings: for his pastoral theology, the lives and teachings of the early Church Fathers figured prominently, with Camus citing them as examples of appropriate behaviour and virtue for contemporary bishops to follow. His pastoral theology was also indebted to Salesian humanism, which is not surprising given that, until his death in 1622, de Sales was Camus' closest advisor.³⁰ At this point Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle replaced de Sales as Camus' spiritual guide, and his version of Pseudo-Dionysian theology became the most striking and dominant influence upon Camus' thought. Camus, in fact, may be described as a prominent member of this French school of theology, which was centred upon Bérulle but which was to include such figures as Jean Eudes, Jean-Jacques Olier and Vincent de Paul as the century wore on. Yet, it is essential to note that Camus was not simply a blind follower of any one theological authority: a learned and energetic figure, he consistently reveals himself as someone with strong

²⁹ Martin, *Gallicanisme et la réforme catholique*, 136–48, 261. The Assembly of Clergy published the council's decrees in 1615.

³⁰ See their correspondence in *Oeuvres complètes de Saint François de Sales*, Annecy 1892–1964.

opinions of his own, but also capable of filtering and refining theological views.

One of the ways in which Camus demonstrated this ability was in his blending of theological strands to emphasise the integral nature of preaching to the episcopal ministry. He based this advice upon the recent directions of the Council of Trent,³¹ but developed its bare guidelines using apostolic, patristic and Salesian teaching. So Camus cited Trent's decrees in calling upon bishops to preach regularly, but then proceeded to provide far more detailed instructions upon that duty than the council had done. In advising prelates upon the theological justification for preaching, he initially linked the episcopal duty to preach with the apostolic nature of the office through reference to the evangelising activities of the Apostles and first disciples. He simultaneously stressed the paternal character of the episcopate.³² Cultivating effective preaching skills, with the ultimate objective of directing souls towards salvation, was presented as a fundamental element of the bishop's role as father. The concept of fatherhood was an ancient and venerable analogy for the episcopal office, closely associated with the Pauline New Testament writings, but it could also be traced to the famous sixth-century *Pastoral rule* of Gregory the Great, who had adopted it to enumerate the pastoral virtues of bishops.³³ Indeed, Camus expressly made this connection to Gregory's teaching, commenting in the *Hierarque parfait* that his advice 'to love robustly, to be rigorous, but without bitterness, to have circumspect zeal, accompanied by wisdom and moderation' was lifted from Gregory's teaching.³⁴ Similarly, Camus regularly utilised the traditional biblical and patristic image of the good shepherd to highlight key characteristics of the episcopal pastorate.³⁵ Of course, Christ was the 'good shepherd' *par excellence*, but, like fatherhood, this particular analogy had been carried down through the centuries: John Chrysostom, in his fourth-century panegyric of Ignatius of Antioch, had presented the martyred bishop as a shepherd who, like Christ, had laid down his life for his sheep.³⁶ Ignatius himself, in the letters which he wrote prior to his martyrdom, had explicitly linked the concepts of fatherhood and shepherd to episcopacy, when he urged that bishops be regarded as the earthly representatives of Christ, the archetypal father and shepherd.³⁷ Through the medieval period, both 'father' and 'shepherd' had

³¹ *Canons and decrees*, sess. v, ch. II, 26; sess. XXIV, ch. IV, 195; ch. VII, 197.

³² Camus, *Hierarque parfait*, 113–14, citing 1 Tim. i. 15; 375–6, citing Acts vi. 2: 'instruire l'entendement de l'homme des volontez de Dieu, qui ne visent qu'à sa sanctification et exciter sa volonté à les executer pour arriver à la fin pour laquelle Dieu l'a crée, qui est de le glorifier par cognoissance par amour au temps de ceste vie, et en l'éternité de l'autre'.

³³ *A select library of Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church*, trans. Charles Lett Feltoe, Oxford–New York 1895, xii, 9–71.

³⁴ Camus, *Hierarque parfait*, 270–1, and *Borromee*, 149.

³⁵ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 375–6, 387.

³⁶ J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, London 1885, i. 46.

³⁷ Ibid. i. 375.

continued to be standard terms of reference for bishops amongst ecclesiastical reformers,³⁸ so it is quite unsurprising that Camus should have adopted them for his own vision of episcopacy. Both enabled him to stress the disciplinary authority of prelates over their children or sheep, but also their affection for them, and their duty to lead them through compassionate guidance. There were dual aspects to these roles therefore: regulated discipline and loving advisorship. Strict government would keep children on the straight and narrow path, while teaching and example would provide the 'spiritual nourishment' necessary to enable them to grow in faith and to attain salvation.³⁹

For Camus, preaching was a highly effective means of instructing the faithful and, as such, it was essential that all bishops cultivate the skill as much as possible. They did not need a natural capacity for eloquence in order to discharge this obligation for 'If they are faithful in this task, God will inspire them ... to degrees of Preaching that they could never have reached by studying the most subtle Theology.' It was most important, therefore, to preach from the heart, to preach simply and clearly upon heavenly themes according to the potential understanding of one's audience.⁴⁰ This was a firmly Salesian view, with the emphasis upon effective, direct preaching which was inspired by the Holy Spirit, rather than upon the cultivation of complicated rhetoric; indeed, Camus directly attributed his advice to the wisdom of his former guide.⁴¹ To illustrate his point further, Camus pointed to the example of Charles Borromeo, former bishop of Milan and, by the seventeenth century, the most famous Tridentine bishop. This might appear a rather misplaced choice, given that de Sales and Borromeo presented contrasting episcopal styles, the former known for his Christian humanist spirituality and the latter for his rigorous institutional episcopalism.⁴² However, Camus' choice is not so unusual when situated within its immediate didactic context. He was determined to demonstrate that it was the inspirations and motivations for preaching which were the keys to its effectiveness: Borromeo, according to Camus, was not a natural public orator, but had followed the Gospel injunction to preach to all nations, so that 'he was a poor Preacher, according to the normal judgement of the world, but a very

³⁸ M. Piton, 'L'Idéal épiscopal selon les prédicateurs français de la fin du xve siècle et du début du xvie', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* lxi (1966), 77–118; Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, New York 1992.

³⁹ Camus, *Borromée*, 144–9, citing Matt. v.13.

⁴⁰ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 452, and *Borromée*, 141–65. See de Sales's instructions on preaching: de Sales to André Frémyot (archbishop of Bourges), 5 Oct. 1604, and de Sales to Camus, 7 Mar. 1611, in *Oeuvres de François de Sales*, xii. 299–325; xv. 28–9.

⁴¹ Camus, *Hierarque parfait*, 451–2, and *François de Sales*, i. 107–9.

⁴² The differences between their episcopal styles should not, however, be exaggerated. De Sales consciously modelled some of his administrative practices on the Borromean model: Paul Broutin, 'Les Deux Grands Evêques de la réforme catholique', *Nouvelle Revue théologique* lxxv (1953), 282–99, 380–98; Forrestal, 'Fathers, pastors, kings', 207–13.

perfect and accomplished one according to the school of Jesus-Christ'.⁴³ In this way, Borromeo fitted comfortably into the Salesian oratorical mould, as a prelate who, although not a natural public speaker, was stimulated by God to fulfil this episcopal duty.

Anxious to expand upon Trent's limited vision of episcopacy, Camus strove to relate closely administration and government to theology and spirituality, providing readers with a composite understanding of the spiritual motivations for the bishop's administrative work, and the theological reasons for sacramental administration, teaching and governing, upon each of which Trent had laid emphasis. His, then, was not simply a catalogue of precepts and duties; rather, it was an attempt to inspire bishops by underpinning administrative practicalities with 'divine' principles. Wishing, as he described it, to 'hold up a mirror in which [bishops] could contemplate' themselves, he pointed to the illustrious origins of the episcopal office, tracing its apostolic roots and unbroken succession through the ages,⁴⁴ and then repeatedly emphasised the need for bishops to cultivate the personal spiritual and moral perfection which would do justice to that glorious legacy. A life of virtue, was, he realised, a basic requirement for any Christian, but the episcopal office demanded of its incumbents a greater degree of virtue and therefore of personal perfection than any other vocation.⁴⁵ Before investigating precisely why Camus placed such emphasis upon perfection, we should first examine its characteristics as he presented them.

The good bishop, commented Camus, should not only discharge the administrative duties demanded of him by the Council of Trent.⁴⁶ It was not enough that he be resident, hold visitations and synods and preach; these activities had to be inspired by his love for God and his flock. For Camus, this intense affection was manifested in the virtue of charity, with which the bishop's entire ministry should be infused. Charity was, therefore, the fundamental bedrock of the episcopal vocation because without it, a bishop could not possess the other virtues essential to the episcopate, namely, humility, zeal and piety. With charity underpinning these virtues, however, the bishop would make 'powerful impressions upon the souls committed to him'.⁴⁷ Naturally, a prelate must cultivate his faith and piety, through prayer, study and sacramental observance, so that he was positioned to nurture these in those under his care.⁴⁸ But, without humility, he faced the danger of becoming

⁴³ Camus, *Borromee*, 142. Camus also cited Jesus and St Paul as worthy models of effective, but simply styled, preaching (pp. 157–8).

⁴⁴ 'J'ose icy vous représenter à vous mesmes tels que vout etes, que je vous estime, que je vous desire, et que vous devez estre ... Je ne fay que tenir le miroir dans lequel vous pourrez vous contempler': idem, *Hierarque parfait*, preface (unpaginated), 84–90.

⁴⁵ 'Ce n'est pas assez d'estre preferé aux autres en dignite, si on ne les surpasse aussi en sainteté': ibid. 162–5, citing St Jerome.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 386–7, 559–64, citing Rom. ii.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 172; *Borromee*, 85–8; *L'Esprit*, i. 360–1.

⁴⁸ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 115–16, 162–3.

excessively proud of his position and of forgetting the nature of his vocation.⁴⁹ His office brought great dignity, Camus noted regularly, but also great obligations of personal perfection and zealous, vigilant supervision of his flock.⁵⁰

Camus adopted the term 'irrépréhensible', meaning blameless or irreproachable, to summarise the perfection desirable in a bishop's person, frequently calling upon prelates to live lives which would not be open to accusations of corruption, but which also, more positively, would be examples for others to follow and would be congruent with their position as the foremost representatives of 'the House of God'.⁵¹ Of course, Camus borrowed his desired virtues from orthodox spiritual teaching and openly related his own advice to that given in the New Testament, by early Church Fathers like Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory the Great and by François de Sales. When he asked that prelates cultivate the virtue of charity therefore, he legitimised this by citing Paul's advice to Timothy, but he also hailed François de Sales as the contemporary model of perfect episcopal charity, a bishop who was fair, compassionate and loving towards his charges.⁵² Yet, although de Sales was Camus' favoured model, he also believed that charity could manifest itself in more than one way, and he was able to call upon Charles Borromeo to illustrate this, in the sermon which he delivered at the Church of St James in Paris in 1618.⁵³ Here, Borromean charity was described through a recitation of the archbishop's administrative activities, such as visitations, synods and the foundation of monasteries, all motivated, in Camus' view, by the charity which burned like 'a light ... in the darkness of the century'.⁵⁴ At one level then, this was a different episcopal model to that which Camus presented as personified in the late bishop of Geneva: for him, Salesian charity was principally centred upon and manifested by the bishop's personal character when dealing with God and individual members of the faithful, while Borromeo's charity was indirectly revealed through his administrative genius. Yet both styles were underpinned by the same essential quality of episcopal charity so that, ultimately, Camus saw no profound discrepancy or incompatibility between them.

Although Camus' vision of episcopacy contained plenty that was universal fare within Catholic episcopal theology, it was also strongly conditioned by a more specifically French view of the office. These concepts of episcopacy, at their most fundamental level, related to the role and status of bishops too, but

⁴⁹ Ibid. 311–12; *Borromée*, 8–15.

⁵⁰ 'Le mérite de la personne doit correspondre à la prerogative de sa dignité. Celui qui ne sçait pas vivre mieux que ceux qu'il conduit, ne doit pas entreprendre leur conduite, de peur qu'il ne vienne à commettre ce qu'il est obligé de corriger aux autres': idem, *Hierarchie parfaite*, 165–6; *Borromée*, 205–6, 317; *Homélies*, 319–20.

⁵¹ Idem, *Hierarchie parfaite*, 16.

⁵² Ibid. 172, citing 1 Tim. iv. 'François de Sales Evêque de Genève, le miroir des Prelats de nos iours, entendoit parfaitement ce secret, et le pratiquoit excellemment': ibid. 264–5, 674.

⁵³ Idem, *Borromée*, 82–108.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 90–103.

dealt specifically with episcopal perfection, the sacramentality of the episcopal office, ecclesiastical hierarchy and the jurisdictional powers of bishops. Camus' view of hierarchy was a product of contemporary Bérullian theology, which emphasised the dignity of priesthood and, ultimately, the authority and eminence of episcopacy, so that his conception of episcopal perfection was informed by and in fact dependent upon his understanding of hierarchy. According to Bérulle, the position of bishops within the ecclesiastical hierarchy meant that their office was superior to that of priests and that they held extensive authority over clergy and laity. Adopting this view, Camus then justified his demand that bishops strive for personal perfection by pointing to their status within the ecclesiastical hierarchy and to the rights and duties which this brought.

The hierarchical schema underpinning Bérullian thought retained the essential elements proposed by Pseudo-Dionysius, then still widely, though mistakenly, held to be the learned companion of St Paul and patron of France.⁵⁵ Bérulle was certainly not the first to incorporate modified Dionysian concepts into his own thought: indeed, variations of Dionysian hierarchy and mediation formed important elements of both medieval and early modern thought and could be found in the theological views of, amongst others, Thomas Aquinas, the humanist John Colet, the poet Edmund Spenser and the Protestant divine Richard Hooker.⁵⁶ Bérulle's particular version of Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy was designed to underpin the distinctive sacerdotal theology that he hoped would re-establish 'virtue and perfection in the sacerdotal state'.⁵⁷ He divided his hierarchy into three triads, with each of these then subdivided into ascending ranks. The first division was subdivided into baptism, the eucharist and unction and the third into monastic orders, initiates (or holy people) and catechumens (those not yet admitted to the sacraments). Ordained priests formed the second rank of the middle triad while hierarchs and deacons formed the first and third ranks of this division respectively.⁵⁸ Bérulle has been described as initiating a 'Copernican revolution in theology and religious life', on the basis of the

⁵⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius was in fact a sixth-century Syrian writer who adopted the pseudonym of Denis the Areopagite, Paul's companion in Acts xvii. 34.

⁵⁶ Wayne Hankey, 'Dionysian hierarchy in St. Thomas Aquinas: tradition and transformation', in Ysabel de Andia (ed.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en orient et en occident: actes du colloque international Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, Paris 1997, 405-38, and 'Augustinian immediacy and Dionysian mediation in John Colet, Edmund Spenser, Richard Hooker and the Cardinal de Bérulle', in Dominique de Courcelles (ed.), *Augustinus in der Neuzeit: Colloque de la Herzog August Bibliothek de Wolfenbüttel, 14-17 octobre, 1996*, Turnhout 1998, 125-60.

⁵⁷ Bérulle's *Projet de l'érection de la Congrégation de l'Oratoire de Jésus* is contained in *Correspondance du Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle*, ed. Jean Dagens, Paris-Louvain 1937-9, i. 118.

⁵⁸ *Pseudo-Dionysius, the complete works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, New Jersey 1987, 201-32.

Christocentrism which characterised his hierarchical mysticism.⁵⁹ Allied to this emphasis on the person of Christ was the crucial focus upon the Catholic priest, earthly representative of Christ and mediator of the grace which united the Christian with the divine.⁶⁰ Bérulle characterised priesthood as an office of sacrifice and servitude, whereby the priest communicated divine grace through the sacraments, most especially the eucharist, but was also obliged to strive towards the annihilation of his own will so that it was replaced, following Christ's example, by complete obedience to God's wishes.⁶¹

Bérulle simultaneously placed significant stress upon authority and obedience within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This principle was in place as early as 1610: his *projet* for the establishment of the Oratory clearly enunciated the reliance which would be placed upon the authority of bishops: '[The Oratory] will be joined to prelates by the vow of obedience, regarding the exercise and employment of ecclesiastical functions.' The character of obedience was further underlined in the *projet's* confirmation that no member of the congregation would actively seek employment from bishops or anticipate their commands.⁶² Bérulle consistently claimed that relationships between bishops and priests should mirror that which existed between archangels and angels in the celestial hierarchy. In this analogy, priests were earthly angels acting as 'mediators on earth of God's counsels on his souls and works'. Bishops, however, in correspondence to the relationship which existed between the heavenly archangels and angels, were in command of priests since they were the earthly manifestation of archangels.⁶³ So, although Bérulle heightened the status of priesthood within his hierarchical pattern, he was careful to elaborate a doctrine which placed bishops above them in authority and which called upon episcopal authority to encourage clerical sanctification.

The cardinal also presented the bishop as *grand-prêtre*, the figure who enjoyed the closest relations with God. For priests were mediators of God's grace by virtue of the authority attributed to them by historical succession, but bishops, in Bérullian thought, were the supreme mediators whose authority could be traced to the early Church. While priests illuminated those of the lower hierarchical grades, bishops drew them to perfection through

⁵⁹ Hankey, 'Augustinian immediacy', 54–60; William Thompson (ed.), *Bérulle and the French school: selected writings*, New York 1990, 5–6.

⁶⁰ Michel Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce: étude historique et doctrinale: textes inédits*, Paris 1969, 70, 131.

⁶¹ Ibid. 132.

⁶² '... celle-ci serait jonte aux prélats par le voeu d'obéissance, quant à l'exercice et emploi des fonctions ecclésiastiques ... et par ce moyen, on renouvellerait l'usage du voeu qui se fait en la consécration des prêtres, et qui semble être essentiel à l'état de prêtrise': *Correspondance de Bérulle*, i, 118.

⁶³ '[I]ls sont les médiateurs en la terre des conseils de Dieu sur ses âmes et sur ses œuvres': *Oeuvres complètes du Cardinal de Bérulle*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, Paris 1856, col. 607. See also his *Correspondance*, iii, 413, for a letter reiterating the angelic character of priesthood.

revelation and the grace-giving sacraments of ordination and confirmation. The office of bishop granted its participants the greatest understanding of the divine mysteries in order that they might impart them to those under their charge. But the episcopate was also the most divinised rank of the ecclesiastical hierarchy since it contained within itself the grace of all the ranks beneath it and the clearest view of divine truths.⁶⁴ The dignity of the episcopal office was therefore supreme within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. To live according to the nature of that rank, it was essential to be regulated by the spirit of God in all things. Bishops were to 'use their hierarchical power only in the measure that they are moved by the Thearchy ... for it would be sacrilege for holy initiators ... to act even once against the sacred ordinances of the One who is the principle of their own initiation'. In conformity with the mystical spirit of Bérullian thought as a whole, complete self-renunciation was vital in order to destroy personal will and serve God alone. It was he who was to be 'the end and principle' of the bishop's work.⁶⁵

Although Camus never referred directly to Pierre de Bérulle in his writings, it is obvious that his understanding of Dionysian hierarchy was profoundly informed by the views of his spiritual advisor. Quoting Pseudo-Dionysius *verbatim*, he regularly defined the bishop as 'A divine man, filled with sacred knowledge, who first accomplishes in himself all the Hierarchical functions (which are to Purge, Illuminate, and Perfect oneself) and then communicates them to others according to their condition and their capacity'.⁶⁶ But having based his own treatment of hierarchy on Dionysian structures, he then went on to interpret them in a specifically Bérullian manner. Like Bérulle, Camus highlighted the integral link between hierarchy and authority, granting the diocesan bishop extensive authority over priests and laity by virtue of his position within the ecclesiastical hierarchy: 'Jurisdiction belongs only to those who are ordained for the conduct of souls, it is not equal for all, for that of *curés* is a lot less than that of Bishops'.⁶⁷

Camus simultaneously presented the bishop as the supreme mediator, or the *grand-prêtre* of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Again, he was here explicitly indebted to Bérullian theology: when Camus outlined the relationship between bishop and parish priest, he distinguished the bishop by the title *grand curé*, the figure who possessed all the qualities of an ordinary parish priest, but in greater abundance and intensity.⁶⁸ In part, this title referred to the jurisdiction which a bishop enjoyed over his priests, but it also embraced the other functions of his office. For the bishop, as an ordained priest, certainly shared the sacerdotal function of communicating Christ through the

⁶⁴ P. Cochois, 'Bérulle, Hiérarque Dionysien', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* xxxvii (1961), 314-53; xxxviii (1962), 355-75, esp. p. 358.

⁶⁵ *Oeuvres de Bérulle*, col. 813.

⁶⁶ Camus, *Hierarque parfait*, 24; *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 15-21, 35-47; *Considerations*, 68-80.

⁶⁷ Idem, *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 52; *Considerations*, 68-9.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 111-12.

eucharist,⁶⁹ yet beyond this, he also held the greatest ability to reveal or mediate God's truths to his people through teaching and through the sacraments of confirmation and ordination. So, 'the divine man, filled with sacred knowledge' purged sins, enlightened souls and drew them to virtue and ultimately union with God.⁷⁰ But he should first ensure that he matched the objective dignity of his office with perfection in his own personal life.⁷¹ For the episcopal office was objectively perfect, as Bérulle too had been at pains to stress: 'Bishops are in a state of exterior and instrumental perfection ... as masters, tutors and doctors of perfection.' This status, however, demanded a corresponding standard of virtue, otherwise the prelate would be 'like the Sun which warms all things without having any degree of heat in itself'.⁷² Bérulle had also used this precise argument to encourage bishops towards personal perfection. Since the episcopal office contained within itself the grace of the ranks beneath it and the clearest knowledge of divine truths, the episcopate was the most perfect hierarchical office, its members the most god-like of creatures, and thus the supreme earthly images of God.⁷³ So, for both Bérulle and Camus, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was one of authority, mediation and sanctity, and because the episcopate was situated at its summit, its members must live according to the character and obligations of that position. To do so, it was essential that the bishop be guided by the spirit of God in all things. The 'enlightener' must therefore be fully receptive to the divine will and to the truths communicated by God to him through the Holy Spirit. Personal 'divinisation', meaning holiness and intimacy with God, and selfless servitude were therefore key hallmarks of the office.⁷⁴ In the introduction to his 1634 work, Camus emphasised the concept of episcopal service to the faithful and to God. The episcopate was a glorious and worthy vocation, he added, but one which demanded constant and tireless effort.⁷⁵

III

In itself, a reassessment of episcopacy which stressed the dignity and perfection of the episcopal office as well as the spiritual and moral demands upon its incumbents would not necessarily arouse great hostility within the Church. On the one hand, Camus' theology of episcopacy can be understood

⁶⁹ Idem, *Considerations*, 91–2.

⁷⁰ 'Dequoy sert que le bassin de la fontaine soit remply si le jardinage n'en est arrosé, un tresor caché et dont on ne fait nul usage, est un tresor perdu.' : idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 237; *Considerations*, 64–5; *Unité de la hierarchie*, 39.

⁷¹ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 12.

⁷² Ibid. 649; *L'Esprit*, ii. 11.

⁷³ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 11–12; Cochois, 'Bérulle', 348.

⁷⁴ Camus, *L'Esprit*, i. 109–11; ii. 32–4, 316; iii. 214–15.

⁷⁵ Idem, *Unité de la hierarchie*, 7–14; *Hierarque parfait*, 148–51.

partly as a product of the post-Trent reform atmosphere prevalent in France. However, it is also directly related to two other contemporary factors: the relationships of bishops with regular clergy residing and operating within their dioceses and with the papacy. Both of these relationships were of crucial importance to French bishops, profoundly affecting the nature and extent of their jurisdiction within dioceses. When he evaluated their implications, Camus provocatively extended the Bérullian principles of episcopal authority and dignity to areas of theology and ecclesiastical discipline which the cardinal, perhaps anticipating the potential pitfalls, had never felt obliged to face directly.

Although Camus was not anti-regular *per se*, he certainly wished to submit religious firmly to episcopal control, even if that meant drawing clear limits to the jurisdictional power of the papacy, a papacy which was growing increasingly monarchical in its conception of its authority during this period.⁷⁶ In his writings on hierarchy and episcopacy therefore, Camus painstakingly defended episcopal jurisdiction and supported his claims with detailed theological arguments. It is fair to say that there is occasionally more than an air of polemic to his writings against the regular clergy. He labelled their claims blasphemous and impious, and argued that their unwillingness to submit to episcopal discipline would inevitably lead to complete disorder within the Church, so that the 'masters' of the regulars, meaning the bishops, would become their slaves: '[The regulars] abuse their privileges so openly, prejudicing Church peace, and confusing the Hierarchy, and the authority of Ordinary Pastors'.⁷⁷ But this dire prediction of an ecclesiastical world turned upside-down should be understood within its immediate context: Camus wrote in direct response to what he believed to be the indiscipline of regular clergy and their refusal to submit to the legitimate authority of diocesan bishops, a jurisdictional right which Trent had confirmed. Only when this order was achieved in practice, he felt, could true reform and renewal take place within the French Church. If it did not, then it was quite conceivable that chaos would reign.⁷⁸

Embedded within Camus' framework of hierarchy was his understanding of the traditionally problematic issue of episcopal sacramentality. His writings adopted the Tridentine distinction between priesthood and episcopacy, on the basis of the episcopal powers of order and jurisdiction held by bishops. Indeed, his stance also fits comfortably within his overall view of the episcopal office. At first glance, his position on sacramentality appears to have evolved through his career, though close inspection reveals that this was not actually the case: in 1634 he played little attention to the distinction of order

⁷⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo, 'L'Episcopato nel cattolicesimo riformato xvi-xvii secoli', in Bernard Vogler (ed.), *Miscellanea historiae pontificiae*, Brussels-Louvain 1987, viii. 268-86.

⁷⁷ Camus, *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 114, 139-40; *Considerations*, preface (unpaginated).

⁷⁸ Idem, *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 114.

between bishops and priests, but stressed instead that a prelate's power of jurisdiction distinguished him from a priest.⁷⁹ However, since his 1634 composition on hierarchy was principally designed to highlight the supervisory and disciplinary authority of bishops over regular and secular clergy, this would explain why Camus chose to stress their power of jurisdiction rather than that of order. This is even more likely given that recently produced regular texts dealing with episcopal power tended to reduce the importance of episcopal jurisdictional authority, in order to weaken the claim of bishops to rights of government over religious.⁸⁰ Evidently, Camus was willing to interpret or even manipulate official ecclesiastical doctrine in ways that enabled him to enhance episcopal authority over lower clergy, for just eight years later he altered the balance that he had earlier presented between the powers of order and jurisdiction. In his 1642 text, he explicitly embraced the notion of a specific episcopal character which distinguished the office of bishop from that of priest. In this manual, moreover, he stressed that the distinction of character was based equally upon both power of order and of jurisdiction so that the episcopal office was not just an extension of the priesthood but actually contained within itself specific powers to perfect and govern.⁸¹ What these texts demonstrate above all, therefore, is that Camus was extremely anxious to portray the office as a vital and unique hierarchical element within the Church, whose incumbents were certainly priests but were much more than corollaries of that ministry by virtue of their specific powers of ordination, confirmation and jurisdictional authority.

In stressing both the bishop's power of order and of jurisdiction, Camus fitted his understanding of episcopal government within his hierarchical scheme of mediation and authority. But addressing the question of episcopal jurisdiction at all obliged him to examine the origin of that jurisdiction, particularly if he was to provide, unlike the Council of Trent, a comprehensive theology of episcopacy that other bishops could adopt. The position which he assumed upon the origin of episcopal jurisdiction is extremely important because it is central to his understanding of the relationship between bishops and the pope and bishops and their clergy. As we noted above, he was heavily involved in public and acrimonious disputes with members of the regular clergy during the 1630s, most notably with the Capuchin Yves de Paris, over the 'abuses' of unreformed religious. Even after his personal relations with Paris improved in the late 1630s, Camus continued to advocate the position that bishops possessed the jurisdictional authority to ensure that

⁷⁹ '[La juridiction] n'appartient qu'à ceux qui sont ordonnez à la conduite des peuples, elle n'est pas egale en tous, car celle des [prêtres] est beaucoup moindre que celle des Evesques': *ibid.* 52.

⁸⁰ An example of such a text is the anonymous *Le Pacifique à messieurs les évesques et curez: pour les religieux*, Paris 1625.

⁸¹ Camus, *Hierarque parfait*, 94–5, 390–6.

regular ‘abuses’ be eradicated.⁸² The issue was exacerbated by the very public conflicts which other bishops had with regular clergy in their dioceses.⁸³ Camus proved one of the staunchest opponents of what he considered to be the illegitimate attempts of regulars to extricate themselves from the discipline of diocesan prelates, on the basis of papal privileges which placed them under the direct authority of the pope. All of the texts which he produced on episcopacy bear witness to the tensions between bishops and religious during his career. He cites contemporary case studies to illustrate his points. One of these was the 1633 clash between the episcopate and religious, including Jesuits, Carmelites, Augustinians and other orders, which resulted in the regulars being forced to sign a declaration, which they subsequently repudiated, recognising that they could not preach or administer sacraments in dioceses without the permission of the appropriate bishop.⁸⁴

Camus was never afraid to raise and examine contentious points, even when he knew that he trod dangerous ground and risked regular and papal reproaches. As a result, he distinctly expressed his support for episcopal *ius divinum*, as a basic principle of diocesan government. He utilised the *ius divinum* doctrine to legitimate the authority of bishops over regulars within dioceses, even when religious claimed to be exempt from their governmental discipline as a result of papally granted privileges. This claim was vigorously contested in Camus’ writings; he argued that regulars could never be independent of episcopal jurisdiction in their pastoral activities, but must always seek their bishop’s leave before attempting to preach or administer the sacraments. Camus advanced two reasons for this: in the first place, Trent had categorically stated that parochial observance was the most effective mode of ecclesiastical organisation and that bishops had to ensure that this system was put in place.⁸⁵ But they could not carry out this duty if regulars were to be free of their governmental supervision. This first argument was a practical point therefore, based upon Trent’s reform objectives. Camus’ second argument, however, was principally theological, and related directly to jurisdictional *ius divinum*.

Unlike Trent, Camus offered a definite theological opinion upon whether episcopal jurisdiction was held directly from God or from the pope. Bishops were not only the direct successors of the Apostles, he claimed, they also held their jurisdictional authority directly from God. Camus could ‘see none who

⁸² Chesneau, *Yves de Paris*, i, 169–87; Griselle, ‘Camus et Richelieu en 1632’, 676–711.

⁸³ Examples include Arnauld of Angers, Harlay of Rouen, Joly of Agen, Le Prestre of Quimper and Netz of Orléans. On earlier efforts to reform the old orders see Joseph Bergin, ‘The crown, the papacy and the reform of the old orders in early seventeenth-century France’, this JOURNAL xxxiii (1982), 234–55, and *Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld: leadership and reform in the French Church*, New Haven–London 1987, 136–264.

⁸⁴ Camus, *Considerations*, 151–7; *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 136–40.

⁸⁵ Idem, *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 145, 89–91, 150; *Considerations*, preface (unpaginated), 219–20, 750; *Hierarchie parfaite*, 332–4, 602–7.

contradicts this, not only regarding order, but also regarding jurisdiction', a rather disingenuous comment given that he was well aware that both regulars and the papacy felt that they possessed watertight cases against the doctrine.⁸⁶ Judiciously, Camus harnessed the views of the revered François de Sales to grant added legitimacy to his claim, recalling how de Sales had advised a non-resident bishop that his pastoral obligations were held *de iure divino* and must therefore be fulfilled through conscientious, constant administration.⁸⁷ This was, of course, a clever ploy, given the esteem in which de Sales was held within the French Church; the implication was that a doctrine endorsed by someone as learned and holy as the bishop of Geneva had to be entirely orthodox and correct. The ramifications of this position on the *ius divinum* of episcopal jurisdiction were clear: because the pope did not grant bishops their power of jurisdiction, he could not interfere in their dioceses. The claim of papal privileges made by the religious was completely illegitimate therefore, since the pope could not force bishops to accept exemptions from their jurisdiction through special privileges. For 'if privileges were permitted despite [the bishops], and notwithstanding their just opposition, it would remove the bishops' charges from them, and abolish the Episcopate, and all normal authority'.⁸⁸ Rather, the bishop could accept privileges if he wished, but if he chose not to do so, then this was his prerogative. No pope could override the diocesan jurisdiction of a bishop, unless a bishop acted contrary to established canon laws. In the case of privileges contrary to the decrees of the Council of Trent, this was certainly not the case, because here, bishops acted in accordance with church laws. As Camus himself succinctly put it in 1634, the pope was 'Bishop of the Universal Church, but not Universal Bishop'.⁸⁹ Camus was therefore a proponent of episcopal Gallicanism, meaning that he ascribed considerable independence of government to bishops within their dioceses.⁹⁰ Yet he would never have classified himself as anti-papal and, in fact, he defended the papal succession within the Church and denied that the pope himself intended to harm episcopal rights when he offered privileges. For him however, the papal–episcopal relationship, was one of 'unity of subordination', whereby the rights of each bishop were to be respected and maintained.

At first glance, Camus' conception of hierarchical jurisdiction might appear contradictory. It accorded the pope primacy within the Church but did not allow him to control the jurisdictional power of bishops within their dioceses, unless he acted to correct any violations of canon law. However, for Camus, there was no contradiction because the power of jurisdiction held by all bishops came not from the pope, but from God. Therefore, it did not upset the ecclesiastical hierarchy when bishops exercised that power in

⁸⁶ Idem, *Hierarque parfait*, 83.

⁸⁷ Idem, *L'Esprit*, i. 155–6.

⁸⁸ Idem, *Unité de la hiérarchie*, 127.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 130.

⁹⁰ Bergin, 'Counter-Reformation and its bishops', 50.

examining regulars' ability to perform pastoral functions because this was a right inherent to their office and granted by divine law. If one argued the contrary, he claimed, then a dual hierarchy existed within the Church, one with bishops (including the pope), the parish clergy and the laity and the other containing, in ascending fashion, members of the regular orders and the pope.⁹¹ This could not be the case, both because established Church law denied it and because it would lead to chaos in ecclesiastical government. Moreover, prelates were not mere delegates of the pope, but fellow bishops entitled to judge for themselves whether their dioceses needed the activities offered by 'privileged' regulars. When they decided that regular support was necessary, they approved privileges and thus delegated regulars to carry out the hierarchical functions of preaching and sacramental administration, in the same way that bishops delegated parish clergy to carry out these essential tasks.⁹²

In Camus' theology, bishops were thus accorded full power to weigh up important questions of ecclesiastical government within their dioceses and to decide precisely what strategies would best suit the needs of the clergy and laity under their care. They were 'doctors', he wrote, not only because of their ability to teach by preaching and instruction, but also in consequence of the wisdom which they brought to all of the tasks under their jurisdiction.⁹³ Indeed, this was the manner in which he perceived his own literary activity; as a prelate of the Church, it was his responsibility to judge matters of theology in the light of his own wisdom, learning and spirituality and, subsequently, to present these views so that others could share and learn from them. This could only benefit the Church and the faithful. Moreover, Camus also perceived the bishop as the 'doctor', not only of those under his direct care within his diocese, but of all members of the Church. Certainly there were limits to a bishop's administration, since he held just one diocese, but this did not prevent him from being actively and constantly concerned with the welfare of the entire body of faithful. This assumption was a major driving force behind Camus' publications.⁹⁴

When he formulated his theology of episcopacy, Camus was, at one level, answering his own personal need for guidance in his vocation. Simultaneously, he was responding to what he believed to be a fundamental function of the episcopal 'doctor' within a reform-active Church which needed

⁹¹ Camus, *Considerations*, 94–101, 175, 709, 718.

⁹² 'Les Conventuels n'exercent ces fonctions que comme Delegez et Commissaires des Evesques envers leurs Diocesains, non comme Missionnaires du S. Siege': *ibid.* 151.

⁹³ *Idem*, *L'Esprit*, ii. 31–2; *Hierarque parfait*, 233–4.

⁹⁴ *Idem*, *L'Esprit*, iii. 285–6. 'Quoi que les Evesques soient attachez à la garde de certains limites, que l'on appelle Diocese, à cause qu'ils sont commis à leur administration, ils ne perdent pas pourtant le soin de l'Eglise en general, au bien de laquelle ils doivent travailler de toutes leurs forces': *Hierarque parfait*, 87–8.

effective leadership. Indeed, his desire to provide that guidance led to a quarrel which soured episcopal relations with the papacy and pushed his fellow French bishops towards a resolute defence of their office during the 1630s and thereafter. But what is equally significant is that his writings provide a revealing insight into the mind, and therefore, motivations and beliefs, of a prominent seventeenth-century episcopal reformer and ultimately into the ecclesiastical culture in which he participated. As a bishop who for many years did not possess a diocese and as an individual whose outspoken opinions aroused the wrath not of only the papacy but also of the formidable Richelieu, he might appear a rather idiosyncratic character. Yet there is no doubt that, as a case study, Camus' episcopal ideal points clearly in the direction in which the French episcopate as a whole was moving during the seventeenth century. In the wake of Trent's ambiguity over the underlying questions concerning episcopacy, he expressed his support for jurisdictional *ius divinum* a full fifteen years (1642) before the Assembly of Clergy, the official and episcopally-dominated mouthpiece of the French Church, would finally do so,⁹⁵ and he was amongst the most vocal defenders of episcopal rights of leadership and authority *vis-à-vis* the papacy and regulars. But crucially, his view of episcopal leadership and dignity was infused with a strong spiritual and pastoral tone, the product of his association with reformers such as de Sales and Bérulle. Camus' experience highlights the problematic ambivalences present within French Catholic reform; the persistence of tensions between bishops, the papacy and lower clergy over the most effective and legitimate means of achieving renewal and the most appropriate forms of ecclesiastical government, as well as the centrality of episcopal perfection to an episcopate which was traditionally closely linked to politics and secular society. Yet equally, his theology of episcopacy is a vigorously voiced, coherent adaptation of traditional and contemporary views in response to post-Trent circumstances, with disputed issues resolved to his satisfaction and theological opinions blended and re-worked to accommodate the requirements of his own vocation and those of his fellow bishops.

⁹⁵ *Mémoires de Godefroi Hermant*, Paris 1906, iii. 278.