

**ORGANIZATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ROLES
IN AN ERA OF CHANGE:
THE CASE OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY**

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

Jane Power

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Abstract

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The effects of transformations in the cultural context on the structures of the Catholic organization and consequently on the identity and role of priests is explored in this research. The way these transformations affect clergy relationships with the church, diocesan authorities and parishioners, and ultimately the psychological wellbeing of priests, are investigated in the light of recent research and literature. Quantitative and qualitative data from the Catholic Church Life Surveys (CCLS) of 1996 and 2001 is analyzed, together with qualitative data generated through semi-structured interviews.

The theoretical underpinning for the interpretation of changing clerical identity and roles and the relationship dynamics is personality theory, including a neoanalytic model (Horney, 1950), and a psychodynamic approach using an iconic reading of Freud (Cozzens, 2000). Social identity theory (Haslam, 2001), and Fowler's (1996) theory of faith development also contribute to the theoretical framework. The NEO-FFI personality factors (Costa & McCrae, 1992) are used as covariates throughout the analysis.

Four major themes are addressed in this research. First, ambiguities in the identity and role of clergy brought about through structural changes in the organization following the Second Vatican Council. Second, cultural changes which challenged the institutional hierarchical structure of the church and some of its theological and ecclesiological positions. Third, the contribution to satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing made by priests' relationships with the organization, diocesan authorities, and parishioners, as well as intimacy with colleagues and friends. Finally, the impact of psychodynamic factors on the spiritual and psychological dimensions of priestly life.

It was found that although the sacramental role of priests remains largely intact, their identity as religious and spiritual leaders is under challenge through greater participation in parish life by educated and theologically trained lay people. It is argued that the competence to appropriately express leadership, preach meaningful homilies and promote spiritual growth in parishioners rests on the attainment of mature psychological development and continued faith and spiritual formation.

Analysis of personality factors showed that sound organizational and structural supports are needed to assist priests in their personal and professional lives. Over half the priests in the present study were found to be vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress, while others had strong resources to cope with increased ambiguity and complexity in ministry.

A review of literature suggests that cultural changes over the last 30 years compound the effects of Vatican II, particularly the patriarchal hierarchical structure of the organisation and teachings on sexual morality that are under pressure from changing attitudes by both clergy and laity. Quantitative and qualitative analyses showed that there is little support by priests for the obligation of celibacy, the successful attainment of which demands a high level of mature psychosexual development. It was argued that without a strong clerical commitment to celibacy, education and training programs currently being implemented in seminaries would be largely ineffectual.

Key factors impacting on the relationships of priests with parishioners were found to be first, a decline in the authority of priests, second, the revelations of sexual abuse by priests, and third, the difficulty numbers of clergy have with establishing and maintaining close, intimate relationships. The NEO-FFI factors Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness were found to be significant predictors in the quality of relationships between priests and parishioners, with 30% of clergy experiencing difficulty in these relationships.

It was argued that maturity in spiritual, psychological, and psychosexual development was found to impact significantly on clergy personal wellbeing and professional competence, which in turn contributes to satisfaction with ministry.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This research will focus on professional and personal roles in an organizational setting under the impact of social and cultural change. It will specifically examine the case of Catholic clergy and the effects of transformations in the cultural context on the structures of the Catholic organization and consequently on the identity and role of priests. The way these transformations affect clergy relationships with the church, diocesan authorities and parishioners, and ultimately the psychological wellbeing of priests, will be investigated in the light of recent research and literature. This chapter outlines the background, significance of the topic and application of the findings. The purpose of the study is outlined and key research questions posed.

BACKGROUND

Writers on contemporary Catholicism are unanimous in pinpointing the years following the Second Vatican Council as witnessing dynamic changes, with structural, political and relational transformation occurring at all levels of Church organization. The costs and benefits, as well as the effects of this transformation, are the subject of ongoing debate and research into clergy, particularly in the United States (J. Carroll, McMillan, & James, 2002; Cozzens, 2000; Greeley, 1972; Hoge, 2000, 2001, 2002; Hoge & Wenger, 2002a, 2002b; Kennedy & Heckler, 1972; Schoenherr, 2002; Tentler, 1998).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Four major themes about the professional and personal lives of Catholic clergy arising from the current crisis in the church will be explored in this thesis. First, the impact on the identity and role of clergy of structural changes following the Second Vatican Council. Second, the effect of cultural changes that challenge some of the orthodox doctrinal and ecclesiological positions of the hierarchy (predominantly the teachings on sexual morality). Third, exploration of the effect of the foregoing changes on professional and personal relationships of clergy and the ways in which these relationships contribute to satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing. Finally, the influence of psychological, emotional and spiritual development as factors in the ability of priests to cope with the increasing pressures and complexities in ministry, to balance tensions between pastoral practice and personal integrity, and to form close supportive relationships with others.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC

Few large-scale sociological and psychological studies focused specifically on Australian Catholic clergy have been conducted. O'Connor's (1991) demographic profile of priests in Australia, Swinburne's (1991) quantitative analysis of clergy stress and burnout, Anderson's (1998) study of celibacy, and Harrigan's (1999) psychological investigation into supports for integration of a celibate life, have contributed significantly to this body of knowledge. Other writers such as Blaikie (1979), Whetham and Whetham (2000), and Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001), have looked at Australian clergy in a number of Christian

denominations (including brief reference to Catholic clergy), and examined the effects of social change, problems and stresses leading to burnout, and clergy roles and relationships.

For this thesis, the value of the studies by Blaikie (1979), Whetham and Whetham (2000) and Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) is in their identification of some of the effects and directions of changes currently impacting on the professional and personal lives of Australian clergy as a whole. However, the findings of these studies are limited for the present investigation, as the distinctive hierarchical structures of the Catholic church, and the particular theological and pastoral strategies of Catholicism, make the position of Catholic clergy quite unique.

This paucity of research has left a gap in current knowledge about the effects on Catholic clergy of the relatively rapid social and cultural changes that have occurred over the last 30 years, and specifically the impact of these on the personal and professional lives of priests working in parish ministry. The thesis will attempt to bridge this gap, and extend the focus of previous research by including a personality instrument, examining priestly satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing, and analyzing the data from a dispositional as well as a situational perspective.

Recent writers such as McGillion (2003) and Porter (2003) have attempted to explain the genesis of factors contributing to the overall erosion of active church involvement by lay Catholics and the problems of clerical sexual abuse of children. Questions surrounding the influence on the lived experience of priests of the celibate male culture that is the context of priesthood have been raised by writers such as Sipe (1995), Schoenherr (2002), Cozzens (2000), Porter (2003) and Wills (2000). The difficult nature of conducting research into the issues surrounding celibacy, sexual orientation and sexual behaviour means that very little accurate quantitative data are available to answer questions about the private lives of priests. Qualitative data in this research provide evidence that clergy see the issues of celibacy and homosexually oriented clergy as having a significant impact on the shape of the organization and on the lives of priests. A

significant contribution to the scant knowledge about the attitude of Australian priests will be made through an exploration of the topics of celibacy and homosexuality in Chapter 5.

APPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

Identification of structural factors that contribute to stress and difficulties in the professional pastoral role of priests, and the integration of these with the psychological and emotional effects on the personal lives of clergy, will contribute to the current knowledge about priest resignations and declining numbers of seminarians. It is anticipated that results of the quantitative analysis and discussion of the qualitative material will provide valuable information for those in the Catholic organization with responsibility for the selection and training of seminarians. Recognition of factors that support both the personal wellbeing and professional lives of clergy will inform the development of appropriate programs designed to overcome some of the structural and procedural limitations in seminaries and dioceses suggested by this research.

It is hoped that the project will be of considerable benefit to the participants in that their personal voices will supplement the quantitative data, and their insights, experience and wisdom will inform both the nurture and support of those committed to the pastoral care of the Church community, and the future direction of church pastoral strategies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis will address key questions about Catholic clergy and place the analysis and discussion in the Australian context: What is the nature and effect of changes within the Church and its social and cultural environment on the identity and role of clergy in Australia? How have these changes impacted on clergy attitudes to pastoral strategies and experience of parish ministry? What are the dynamics in the relationships of priests with the church, bishops, parishioners, friends and colleagues? What factors determine professional satisfaction with priestly vocation and a sense of personal wellbeing for clergy?

KEY DEFINITIONS

Church authority includes a bishop, a leader of a religious institute and the senior administrative authority of an autonomous lay organization and their authorized representatives.

Church personnel includes any cleric, member of a religious institute or other persons who are employed by a church body, or appointed by a church body to voluntary positions in which they work in forms of pastoral care.

Pastoral care means the work involved or the situation that exists when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another. This includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care and assistance in times of need (*Towards Healing: Principles and procedures in responding to complaints against personnel of the Catholic Church of Australia*, 2000, p.8).

Attendees refer to Catholic laity who responded to the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) and Catholic Church Life Survey (CCLS) in 1996 and 2001. The surveys were distributed and filled in at Mass, which meant that results show the attitudes of the most committed Catholics (87% attend Mass at least once a week and 50% are over 50 years of age; (NCLS, 2001). Catholics who do not attend Mass were not included in the surveys.

Organization refers to the institutional church and includes a diocese, religious institute and any other juridical person, body corporate, organization or association, including lay organizations, that exercise pastoral ministry within, or on behalf of, the Catholic Church.

Church includes all of the above with the addition of all the baptized members of Catholic laity.

Interview respondents refer to active diocesan and resigned priests who participated in the semi-structured interviews.

Respondents refer to active diocesan priests who completed the CCLS surveys in 1996 and 2001.

Respondent comments refer to information provided by respondents in answer to two open-ended questions at the end of the CCLS 2001 survey questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a background to the study and outlined the purpose and significance of the research. Applications for the findings were detailed, and the major research questions were raised. A list of definitions was provided. In Chapter 2, a literature review will support the selection of themes for analysis and provide material for the development of the major research hypotheses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter situates the evolution of what is being described as a crisis in the church within a historical context (McGillion, 2003; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995), and highlights the elements contributing to a deepening of that crisis. The theoretical underpinning for the interpretation of changing identity and roles, and for the relationship dynamics is included, together with a rationale for the use of the NEO-FFI personality instrument used as a covariate throughout the analysis.

Four major topics will be discussed. First, the historical context that highlights the ambiguities in priestly identity and role brought about through structural changes in the organization following the Second Vatican Council. Second, changing cultural beliefs and values and the way that social challenges to some of the ecclesiological and theological positions of the church impact on priestly ministry. Third, relationships of priests with the organization, with diocesan authorities, colleagues and friends, and the effect of unconscious forces in these relationships on the professional and personal wellbeing of clergy. Fourth, developmental processes supporting the movement towards self-actualization of priests, and the influence of personality factors on satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing will be discussed. These topics provide the basis for the development of the four major themes that inform the research methodology.

CHANGING IDENTITY AND ROLE OF PRIESTS

Historical context

Historical accounts of Catholicism in Australia by writers such as Campion (1987) and Dixon (1996) are valuable resources for church history; however, for this research they do not focus sufficiently on the way that changes in both the cultural and organizational contexts affect the lived experience of clergy. A comprehensive history of Catholic diocesan clergy in the United States provides a context for the evolution of the current crisis in the organization (Tentler, 1998). Although the study was localized in Michigan, Tentler claims that the Michigan diocesan scenario reflected the experience of most American dioceses. This historical work pointed to some important factors currently impacting on the role of priests, namely, the changing status and role of priests and the influence of this on clergy relationships with theology and ecclesiology, diocesan authorities and laity (Tentler, 1998).

According to Tentler (1998), young priests from the 1920s onward were routinely socialized into a new balance between the rewards of ‘otherness’ (which was an aspect of the separateness from laity that had characterized clerical life in the last decades of the nineteenth century), and the demands of their pastoral role. By the 1950s, the vocation of the priesthood was under increasing competition from other professions, such as medicine and law, which also provided options for the channeling of idealistic vision by young men with a desire to serve humanity.

Adding pressure to this challenge were the changes emanating from within the private and professional lives of many priests, and Tentler (1998) argues that by the late 1950s, aspects of priestly life were increasingly experienced as alienating by significant numbers of clergy. Tentler (1998) claims that one reason for this alienation, which resulted in a growing source of tension between the priests and laity, was the “increasing pressure on priests to present Church teaching on contraception with frequency, vigor and clarity” (p. 345). This issue, according to Tentler, eventually became a palpable threat for a number of priests, to their sense of integrity, pastoral effectiveness and authority.

In the 1960s and '70s, the question of celibacy dominated debates in Detroit's Priests' Senate, with substantial support for a change in the law. According to Tentler (1998), younger Catholics were embracing secular standards of sexual morality, which eroded the social supports for celibacy. A comprehensive sociological study by Greeley in 1972 found that a majority of priests did not agree with obligatory celibacy (Greeley, 1972). This finding was supported by later research by Hoge, Shields and Griffin (1995), Hoge (2000), and Sipe (1995). Schoenherr (2002) argues that the continuation of the obligation of celibacy does significant harm to the organization and severely threatens Catholicism's "political and economic well-being" (p. 212).

Polarization of views within Catholicism

Schoenherr (2002) in the United States, and Collins (2001) and McGillion (2003) in Australia, discussed the continuation of the alienation between clergy and laity, clergy and clergy, and clergy and the organization identified by Tentler (1998). While the list of topics of dissention continues to grow, these writers point to the policy emphasized by Pope John Paul II, that debates on topics such as the ordination of women, acceptance of homosexual clergy, and allowing those who have remarried without annulment of their first relationship to receive Eucharist, are closed for discussion. The effect of this tension on priests in Australia will be explored in Chapter 5 where obligatory celibacy and homosexuality in the priesthood are analyzed, and in Chapters 6 and 7, which look at clergy relationships with the church, bishops and parishioners.

Compounding the impact of secular standards of sexual morality is an increased acceptance of homosexuality in Western societies, an acceptance that can be seen to exacerbate the gap between the orthodox position of the organization, and clergy with more liberal attitudes. Research and literature consistently report that the numbers of gay clergy are increasing, and point to a need for open discussion and debate about issues pertinent to this situation (Anderson, 1998; Cozzens, 2000; Harrigan, 1999; Hoge & Wenger, 2002a; Schoenherr, 2002). The issues of celibacy and homosexually oriented clergy have been highlighted with greater intensity since media saturation of revelations of clergy sexual abuse of minors (McGillion, 2003; Porter, 2003).

The whole area of the psychosexual development of priests, and the culture of a male celibate system, has been opened up for public discussion. Organizational structures, the theological and ecclesiological position of the hierarchy and the formation of seminarians are examined in Chapter 5, which looks at the identity of priests as celibate moral role models. The effects of a continuing policy of obligatory celibacy on the experience of clergy is analyzed together with some of the issues raised in current literature about gay clergy (Anderson, 1998; McGillion, 2003; Porter, 2003; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995).

Effects of Vatican II

Tentler's historical account is important first for its positioning of clergy in the relationship dynamics in their professional role and second, in identifying future trends in ministry in the United States. Tentler believes that the postconciliar period is the start of something new, rather than just another chapter in the history of the Catholic clergy. This theory of adaptation and transformation is the basis for Tentler's assumption that an end to celibacy would, presumably, result in a rise in vocations to the Priesthood, and end the heavy reliance of parishes on lay ministers. Tentler (1998) also suggests that a married clergy would mean important changes in the formal theology of the priesthood, due to an end to the discipline of celibacy as fundamental to priestly life. These shifts would also bring important changes in the structure of the American church, which Tentler (1998) proposes would lead (if the number of clergy continues to decline) to the church becoming more laicised and more pluralistic in terms of belief and moral theology. Whether or not these are likely future directions in the Australian church will form part of the investigation of this research.

Dixon (1996) argues, as does Tentler, that the documents on liturgy instigated a revolution in both the church itself, and its role in the modern world. Dixon (1996) provides an historical account of the Australian experience. He offers an overview of the shift from a primarily Anglo-Celtic Catholicism, which prevailed in the Catholic church in Australia until quite recently, to the eventual multicultural mix of Catholicism seen in contemporary Australia today. Political and social upheaval throughout the 1960s and

'70s are described, and set in the context of the theological upheaval experienced after Vatican II.

Following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, many Catholics have altered their understanding of worship, sacramental theology and the role of the priesthood. For many parishioners, Tentler (1998) contends that priests have become not so much a literal conduit for the sacred as before, but a symbolic embodiment of the communities they serve, with their main role being to preside over liturgy. Some writers argue that the diminishing authority of priests - as a consequence of these reforms - profoundly affects priestly satisfaction (Carroll, 1981; Cozzens, 2000; Hoge, 2000). This assertion points to important changes in both the role of priests and their identity, topics that are fundamental to understanding the experience of priests, and significant areas of study for this research.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Organizational and structural change

Cultural changes that include disputation and rejection by some, of traditional grand philosophies of knowledge and values that up until now have remained relatively stable and well nigh unquestioned (Bilton *et al.*, 1996), have impacted strongly on organizations and institutions, particularly the Christian churches. Challenges to the structural sources of patriarchy, seen in the rise of feminism, increasing multiculturalist ideology, the decline of dogmatism and the ascent of pluralism in world views are factors in the current cultural context of Western societies (Bilton *et al.*, 1996). This context is characterized by strong trends towards increased secularization, individualism, egalitarianism and economic rationalism, trends that challenge the patriarchal hierarchical structure of the Catholic church, and impact significantly on the status and authority of the organization (Blaikie, 1979; Schoenherr, 2002).

As these changes coincided with the Second Vatican Council, the status and authority of priests and consequently the practice of ministry have been influenced in a number of ways. First, through the emphasis on *Lumen Gentium* which changed the nature of the

relationship between priests and parishioners through encouragement of greater lay participation in liturgy (Flannery, 1977). Second, the call for changes to clerical life to bring the “manner of life, of prayer, and of work” into harmony with the contemporary conditions of lay church members further diminished the separateness between clergy and laity (Flannery, 1977). For example, changes to the dress code for priests and nuns mean that the distinctive clerical garb is now worn only during performance of formal or sacramental duties. Third, Tentler argued that the combination of these social and organizational revisions has influenced the Catholic laity in terms of religious belief and practice, and perceptions of clergy. Fourth, these revisions have resulted in steep declines in Mass attendance and involvement in the life of the church (Tentler, 1998).

Decline in numbers of priests and seminarians

Together with declining lay involvement in the church, a concurrent decline in numbers of priests and seminarians has been experienced since the late 1960s. According to Schoenherr (1993), a mass exodus of priests occurred in the United States between 1968 and 1973. Recruitment gains of US Diocesan priests were severely affected during this period, with resignation losses against ordinations impacting so that between 50% and 96% of the newly ordained priests were needed to fill positions vacated by priests who had resigned. After 1973 the ratio flattened out somewhat but resignations continued, with the proportion of resignation losses against ordinations fluctuating from 32% to 44% per year until 1984 (Schoenherr, 1993).

Hoge (2000) cited a review by Lawrence Young in 1998, which supported this trend, and predicted that for the period 1966 to 2015 there will have been a 46% decline in the number of active priests in the United States (Hoge, 2000). The Australian experience has been similar, and McGillion (2003) claimed that there has been a steep decline in new vocations since 1981 with not one ordination in 1997 and only 27 seminarians beginning studies in 1999. He contrasted this with St Columba’s College, Springwood which alone enrolled 96 men to begin studies for the priesthood in 1966. Muggeridge (2000) reported an overall decrease of 80% in candidates for the priesthood studying in seminaries in Australia between 1965 and 1995.

Priest resignations and fewer applicants for seminary training bring multiple pressures to bear on those currently engaged in parish ministry. Overwork was reported as one of the key features of stress in priestly life, with priests reportedly working more than 60 hours per week (Hoge, 2000, p.12). These figures point to the importance for this research to identify the ways in which priests working in parishes are supported in their ministry and personal lives. Also important is to distinguish which of these supports are experienced as the most effective in reducing stress and/or contributing to clergy well-being (Chapters 6 and 7).

Tentler (1998) and Stark and Finke (2000) contend that changes in the relationship between priests and laity following the Second Vatican Council, which emphasized that the call to sanctity was for all and encouraged greater participation by parishioners in liturgy, contributed to uncertainty about the role and identity of priests. Other pressures cited by recent research as significant in priest resignations and declining enrolments in seminaries include the maintenance of celibacy (Hoge, Shields & Griffin, 1995; Schoenherr, 2002; Stark & Finke, 2000). Research by Hoge *et al.* indicates that there is “... considerable support from priests for making celibacy a matter of personal choice” (p. 205), and Stark and Finke (2000) argue that “the personal sacrifice required by celibacy is no longer offset by benefits in priestly life, as it was prior to the Second Vatican Council” (p. 127).

Decline in authority of clergy

Cultural pressures on the church organization, such as increased secularization, egalitarianism and feminism, in which challenges to the structural sources of patriarchy have occurred, largely mirror the pressures on clergy. Both the church and priests are experiencing diminishing status and authority, ambiguity in identity and role, and transformation in relationship with laity (Collins, 1986; Schoenherr, 2002; Tentler, 1998; Wills, 2000). The impact of these pressures on diocesan priests in relation to their role as pastoral ministers and spiritual leaders will be discussed in Chapter 4, and again in relation to their association with parishioners in Chapter 7.

It will be argued in this thesis that the diminishing status and authority of priests is a product of three main factors. First, as a result of the tensions between priests and laity in matters of church teaching (Collins, 2001; McGillion, 2003; McGovern, 2002; Schoenherr, 2002; Tentler, 1998). Second, through cultural changes (outlined above), which resulted in the gradual secularization of the laity (demonstrated by declining involvement in the life of the church (Tentler, 1998); and third, where the integrity of ordained priests has been called into question through exposure of clergy sexual misconduct. Cozzens (2000), Hoge (2000) and Schoenherr (2002) argue that the loss of public respect and trust have significantly undermined the morale of priests in parish ministry, although due to the lack of quantitative research into the question to date, the importance of this factor is unclear.

As well as a diminished perception of the authority of the church by Catholic laity, many clergy also experience problems with the way authority is exercised in the church. This was found to be a significant pressure for priests, particularly younger priests (Hoge *et al.*, 1995). Hoge *et al.*'s (1995) three studies of priests (1970, 1985 and 1993) showed that the primary problem for priests constant over all three surveys was coping with the way authority was exercised in the church. This result is in apparent contradiction with a recent report by the Archdiocese of Chicago (CARA, 2002) which found that 88% of priests in the United States agreed that they felt fully supported and encouraged by their bishops. These contradictions are discussed more fully in Chapter 6 as the research and literature demonstrated that conditions of power and authority, and perceptions of personal authority, are central to an understanding of the issues facing priests in contemporary society.

PRIESTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Priestly fraternity

McGovern (2002) argued that how the priest acts "*in persona Christi*" (in the person of Christ) as his sacred identity greatly affects his relationship with the Church, with his bishop, brother priests and by inference, the laity. Thus perceptions by priests and laity

of the sacredness of priestly identity directly impacts on the role and relationships of priests. The sacred identity of priests is examined in Chapter 4, which explores the layers of identity inherent in what it is to be a priest as suggested by McGovern (2002). McGovern (2002) identifies the sacredness of priestly identity as the foundation, with celibacy, spiritual maturity and spiritual guidance, virtue, evangelism, chastity, reconciliation and liturgy as essential elements of priestly role and identity.

This thesis will encompass all of these elements of priestly identity within theoretical perspectives that depict the process of growth towards a transcendence of human frailty implied by the sacred aspect of priesthood, as described by McGovern (2002), Cozzens (2000), Fowler (1996) and Harrigan (1999). The effect of a striving towards transcendence of personality in order to actualize an ideal self as described above is discussed in Chapter 4 with reference to Horney's (1950) neo-analytic theory. The discussion suggests that the experience of incongruence between the actual and ideal self contributes to high levels of neuroticism found in personality profiles of respondents, a view supported by research of Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne and Ilardi (1997). Sheldon *et al.* found that discrepant functioning in role demands impacts on adjustment and wellbeing (1997).

Priestly identity, according to McGovern (2002) and Cozzens (2000), is set within a context of an apostolic brotherhood, or sacred fraternity. "Like pastoral charity, priestly fraternity is both a gift in ordination and a task to be lived throughout the life of the priest" (McGovern, 2002, p. 144). McGovern (2002) argued that this fraternity is the climate in which vocation matures and flourishes as it moves towards fullness. McGovern's idea of priestly fraternity rests primarily on development of the sacred and spiritual nature of the quest for holiness, through providing human, spiritual and pastoral support for each other. He emphasized a need for priests to nourish the sense of belonging to a family through genuine care for each other in terms of hospitality, practical support when someone is sick or overworked. Especially important is "extra prayer and penance" (McGovern, 2002, p. 147) when a brother priest experiences difficulties in his vocation.

Cozzens (2000) also emphasized that the pastoral identity of priests is grounded in the spiritual bond between all priests as a gift of ordination, but went further than McGovern's somewhat limited, autocratic view. Cozzens (2000), as did McGovern, argued a need for priestly fraternity to be nurtured through their commonality in spiritual journey and ministry, and suggested that priests who meet regularly for prayer, conversation and a meal are the epitome of brotherhood. He saw the need for priest programs and support groups that remind them of their need for close, trusting relationships with each other. However, Cozzens (2000) acknowledged the effects on the clergy of the polarization of social and cultural beliefs and values in the last stages of the twentieth century. He made the claim that there was more "caution and reticence discernible when priests meet for the first time". However, priests who have known each other for a long time still "sense a commonality", even though there is tension and sometimes mistrust as a result of differing theologies and pastoral visions (p. 48).

Cozzens (2000) argued that the "sacramental, ritualized brotherhood" had its shadow side, and that this was expressed in subversive attitudes and behaviours such as "clericalism, elitism, careerism, legalism, envy, and competition" (pp. 48-49). According to Cozzens (2000), these attitudes and behaviours operate below the surface of consciousness. If the unconscious dimension of priests' lives is ignored or denied, it could be argued that any programs for reform will be superficial and eventually fail. Priests' development of their sacred identity is discussed in Chapter 4, and the experience of fraternity and support from brother priests is analyzed in Chapter 7. Exploration of the psychological and unconscious dimension of priestly life is important in order to develop adequate supports and evaluate current organizational support structures which, it could be argued, would then provide a positive foundation for the evolution of the church.

Priests and the organization

Morgan (1997) describes how corporate culture "develops as an ethos ... created and sustained by social processes, images, symbols, and ritual" (p. 132). He explored corporate culture through the use of metaphors to generate insights into the processes of change within organizations, and presented a comprehensive sociological and

psychological interpretation of these processes. Although the church has features that distinguish it fundamentally from modern corporations, some of Morgan's ideas can usefully be applied to this analysis. For instance, the way in which the culture of an organization develops through the interaction between the organization and its members.

The reflexive nature of the relationship between organizations and their members is illustrated by social identity theory that argues that the psychology of the individual is a product of group life, and that organizations profoundly influence the psychology of the individual (Haslam, 2001). Haslam (2001) argued that it is not enough to study the psychology of individuals in order to understand interaction in organizational contexts, but that “the way in which individuals create their social identities in terms of their group membership must also be taken into account” (p. 26). This understanding underpins the discussion on priestly identity in Chapter 4, and highlights the importance of the discussion in Chapter 6, where the relationship of priests with the organization is discussed. A full discussion of the process of social identity development as proposed by Haslam (2001) is outside the parameters of this thesis which is mainly concerned with the development of individual identity. However, this would be a valuable future study in the context of Australian Catholic clergy.

Similarly to Cozzens (2000), Morgan (1997) claims that organizations are shaped, not only by the environments in which they exist, but also by the unconscious concerns of their members. For example, he explains the process whereby many organizational roles become the focus for projections by members on role incumbents as a defence against anxiety of one form or another. An illustration of this projection, according to Morgan, would be where the first officer on a ship is held responsible for many things that go wrong, even if he is not directly responsible for them (p. 233). This behaviour profoundly affects the relations between members of the organization, and the relations between members and authorities within organizational structures.

Relationships and coping

Recent research by Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001), Whetham and Whetham (2000) and Hoge (2000), corroborates an important earlier psychological study by Kennedy and Heckler (1972), which revealed the importance of close relationships to the personal wellbeing of clergy. Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) and Whetham and Whetham (2000) suggest that a lack of meaningful relationships predispose clergy to burnout, and influence some to engage in sexual misconduct. These writers discuss problems of isolation, dislocation, and lack of peer friendships as having a negative impact on those in ministry.

The studies by Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) and Whetham and Whetham (2000) focus on structural and relational aspects of ministry, but fail to identify differences between clergy that would explain why some ministers manage to cope in a specific context when others do not. Therefore, inherent in Kaldor and Bullpitt and the Whethams' theses is the assumption that problems can be addressed satisfactorily through structural and behavioural changes without acknowledgment of deeper issues. It could be argued that while structural and behavioural changes are important, core factors such as personality and unconscious developmental processes need to be identified to explain fundamental sources of stress and dissatisfaction on the personal level. As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is intended that investigation into personality characteristics and attitudes of priests in the proposed study will bridge this gap, and help explain the extent to which either situational factors or personal characteristics account for personal wellbeing and satisfaction with parish ministry.

Cozzens (2000) claims that unconscious forces "shape and influence the lives and inner worlds of priests" (p. 49), which in turn, it could be suggested, shape and influence the organization. Cozzens (2000) uses an iconic (or metaphoric) reading of Freud to illustrate his argument that it is unconscious forces within the psyche that explain the competitiveness, envy and jealousy that characterizes many of the relationships between priests and prevents the full flowering of the collaborative sacramental fraternity pointed to by McGovern (2002).

Psychodynamic forces in clergy relationships

The value of Cozzens (2000) theory for this research is in establishing a framework for understanding the unconscious relationships of priests with the organization (mother-church) and hierarchy (father bishops). This unconscious dimension is important in order to make sense of some of the difficulties experienced by priests in their relationships with others, and to shed some light on the intrapsychic conflicts at work in a maturation process. While not directly referring to the competitive attitude between priests (siblings) alluded to by Cozzens, mainly because the relationship between priests was not specifically addressed in the CCLS surveys, consideration of the idea of sibling rivalry may illuminate questions arising from the analysis of the relationship of priests with their brother priests in Chapter 7. Further research would provide answers to questions about the nature of collegial relationships and an explanation for the finding in this research that clergy spend very limited time in each other's company.

Cozzens' (2000) contention that priests who have unresolved Oedipal issues are likely to have difficulty with diocesan authority supports an important finding in the Kennedy and Heckler (1972) study. Kennedy and Heckler (1972) found that the underdeveloped priests in their study had not resolved their feelings towards authority. They found ambivalence in the attitude of this group, with members wanting the protection and direction of authority on the one hand, and resenting it with hostility on the other. Later writers such as Hoge *et al.* (1995), Tentler (1998), Hoge (2000) and Cozzens (2000) discuss the issue of authority in connection with lower levels of morale, found particularly in younger priests, and those low in the hierarchical structure. Psychodynamic factors are examined using Cozzens Oedipal conflict theory in Chapter 6, where priests' relationship to the authority of the church and the theological and ecclesiological position of the hierarchy is analyzed.

Relationship to authority

This theme of priests' relationship with authority is expanded through the use of qualitative data provided by the responses of many respondents who were dissatisfied with the level of interest, support and encouragement they received from their bishops.

McGovern (2002) and Flannery (1977) cite the documents of Vatican II that stress the father-son dynamic alluded to by Cozzens (2000). They point to the exhortation to bishops to be supportive of the wellbeing of priests in all aspects of their lives, with emphasis on their spiritual welfare and support in ministry.

Kennedy and Heckler (1972) also stressed the importance of harmonious professional relationships as well as satisfactory personal relationships in contributing to the wellbeing of clergy. Kennedy and Heckler (1972) found that the groups most vulnerable to experiencing problems relating were their *underdeveloped* groups, who deeply desired close relationships but found the practice of ministry stressful and experienced intimacy as awkward and difficult. A more recent study by Tinsey (1998) found a level of strain in relationships between teachers and clergy in an Australian diocese. Chapter 7 focuses on relationships between priests and parishioners, and analyzes hypotheses about the association between relationships and satisfaction with ministry.

Morgan's (1997) writings suggest that in order to understand the complexity of the changing relationship between priests and the organization, particularly in relation to authority, unconscious factors need to be taken into account. As the previous discussion has shown, the unconscious dimensions of relationships are tied in with the level of spiritual, psychological and emotional maturity of priests. Therefore, analysis of the degree to which the personality profiles of priests impact on their sense of identity and interaction between the church and bishops will be an important focus in Chapter 6 in the present study.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Previous psychological studies (from 1931 to 1972) of priests and seminarians had shown that religious life attracted more than its share of introverted individuals with feelings of inferiority (Moore (1936), cited in Kennedy & Heckler, 1972), and concluded that pre-psychotic individuals were frequently attracted to the priesthood. Personality studies, particularly using the popular Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), consistently found that religious samples scored higher on several scales indicative of

maladjustment (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972). However, Kennedy and Heckler (1972) point out that although the MMPI is useful for detecting personality problems, emotional problems and psychopathology, it has limited use in identification of positive personality traits.

Studies by Rodgers and Piedmont (1998) argue that the Five-Factor model of personality (NEO-FFI) offers an important advance in the areas of personality research, as well as serving as a useful tool for religious researchers. They show that the model serves as a useful reference point for developing and evaluating religious variables (Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998), and that the five factors are reliable indicators of a taxonomy of personality traits of clergy. This instrument was used in the CCLS 2001 survey of priests in parish ministry.

Two major sociological and psychological investigations into the priesthood in the United States were conducted between 1969 and 1972 (Greeley, 1972; Kennedy & Heckler, 1972). Greeley's study was primarily sociological. However, results of his use of the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) as an instrument for measurement of the personality profiles of respondents provides useful information for hypothesis formulation for the present study. 'Self-actualization' was the principle of this instrument, and Greeley (1972) found that active priests fell between normal and non-self-actualized groups on most scale measures when age was not taken into account. Active priests under 45 years of age were more likely than older priests to be extremely close to the 'norm' on virtually all measures of the POI, with all scores showing a decline with increasing age (Greeley, 1972, p. 55). Therefore, personality differences between age groups, and personality and age differences are analyzed as covariates throughout this research.

Psychosocial development

Kennedy and Heckler (1972) conducted a comprehensive psychological profile of a sample of 271 priests in the United States that focused on aspects of personality and personal development. They raised important questions about the selection, training and

functioning of the participants in the study. Erik Erikson's multi-stage schema of human psychosocial development was employed as the theoretical underpinning of the research. This framework identifies eight stages of psychosocial development experienced by humans, from the total dependence of the infant, through to mature responsibility and healthy generativity, which implies a “deeply sensed interest and involvement establishing and guiding the next generation” (p. 26).

Kennedy and Heckler (1972) reasoned that this framework would reflect a view of healthy forward movement, with problems seen as related to difficulties with working through a particular stage of growth, rather than as an indication of psychopathology, as is the case with use of the MMPI. Their sample was categorized as *developed*, for mature development; *developing*, for those progressing steadily towards this; and two groups representing immature development, *underdeveloped* and *maldeveloped*. Kennedy and Heckler's research (1972) produced a similar finding to Greeley's work, in that 75% of the cross-sectional sample studied, had not developed to full maturity.

A significant number of priests in the sample were found to have reached a level of overall personal growth well below what would be expected of them, given their age, the careful selection and the lengthy training they had undergone. Kennedy and Heckler argue that this was probably a reflection of the American male population at large, which they claim, could be seen to demonstrate through divorce, and the enjoyment of pornography, the general underdevelopment of the American male population (Kennedy and Heckler, 1972). Therefore, according to Kennedy and Heckler's reasoning, priests had high rates of immature personal development because they were men, not because they were priests. This observation was not empirically tested, so in Chapter 4 of this thesis, a comparative analysis of personality profiles of priests and non-priest Australian males was conducted. Data suitable for comparative analysis were limited, pointing to the need for further research to establish NEO-FFI population norms in the Australian context.

Kennedy and Heckler's research provides a valuable foundation for the present study, despite being problematic at times due to a lack of adequate evidence for some of their assertions, such as the underdevelopment of American males in general, as well as the differences in assumptions, values and meanings between the cultural contexts of 1972 and 2001. The psychological and spiritual dimensions of the private or personal aspect of priestly experience discussed in the findings are particularly important here. The professional and personal impact of immature development experienced by the *underdeveloped* and *maldeveloped* priests as outlined by Kennedy and Heckler (1972), points to factors that are important for development of hypotheses for both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of this thesis.

Spirituality and faith development

McGovern (2002), Greeley (1972), Harrigan (1999) and Fowler (1996) describe the development of a mature faith as an essential ingredient both for effective spiritual leadership and in attainment of a personal psychological maturity. Fowler's theory of faith development is important in providing a framework for understanding dynamics at work in the identity of priests as holy men in Chapter 4. As well, it provides a deeper dimension for appreciation of the effect on priests of the reluctance of the organization to allow open discussion about points of dissention with the theological and ecclesiological position of the church discussed in Chapter 7.

Kennedy and Heckler (1972) found that the majority of priests in their study were characterized by a general inability to articulate a deep level of religious faith. They found that "What is presumed to be central in their lives is found to be peripheral and frequently superficial" (p. 11). Most *underdeveloped* priests demonstrated a lack of penetrating questioning and working through of belief, necessary to provide for an integrated, deep, authentic theology and faith (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972). Fowler's (1996) model of faith development is the theoretical perspective found to be most useful for this research in order to address the question about what it is that constitutes a mature faith. This model is used as the framework for the discussion about priestly identity as holy men and spiritual leaders in Chapter 4.

Faith development

Fowler's (1996) six stages of faith development articulate the movement from a non-differentiated state of being (level one) through levels of self consciousness that are first determined by identification with externally generated beliefs and values (level 2), towards a more inward reflective state of consciousness that appreciates abstract thought (level 3). For level 3 to be completed, critical examination of previously unexamined beliefs must take place so that the development of a self-directed identity free of previously defining connections is achieved (level 4). Fowler (1996) found that most individuals enter and remain at stage 4, with less than one in ten individuals achieving level 5, and very few reaching level 6. Stage 5 is where the boundaries between self and faith must be relinquished so that the non-differentiated state (paradoxically as in stage 1) characteristic of stage 6 can be fully achieved (Fowler, 1996).

The first stage is called the intuitive-projective phase and is where existential concerns about security and constructions of faith are drawn to symbols of images of power and size (Fowler, 1996, p. 58). Stage 2, the mythic-literal faith is where God is constructed as a consistent, caring and just parent who rewards goodness and punishes badness. In stage 3, the synthetic-conventional faith stage, "God representations can be populated with personal qualities of accepting love, understanding, loyalty and support during times of crisis" (p. 61). Stage 4, Fowler (1996) called the individuative-reflective faith stage where a demythologizing of faith occurs as old doctrines are questioned and rejected. Stage 5, according to Fowler (1996), is the conjunctive faith stage in which one realizes that "truth must be approached from a number of different angles of vision. Faith must learn to maintain the tension between these multiple perspectives" (p. 65).

Universalizing faith (stage 6) is where Fowler (1996) describes how the recognition of polar opposites fundamental to tensions between perspectives in stage 5, is replaced with a non-dual openness "based on the being, love, and regard of God" (p. 67).

A simplistic view of Fowler's process of faith development is that successful completion of the stages could be seen to equate with the self-actualized state of being as described by the POI (Greeley, 1972), the fully developed personality (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972), an integrated personal and priestly identity (Cozzens, 2000), and transcendence of the

intrapsychic conflict (Horney, 1950). The foregoing theoretical constructs are used extensively throughout the thesis, which has at its core an understanding of an ongoing developmental process. It could be argued that, given the symbiotic relationship of an organization and its members (Haslam, 2001; Morgan, 1997), the same processes that are described for priests may also be appropriately applied to the development and transformation of the organization. Further exploration of this topic is outside the scope of this thesis, but indicates the need for further research in order to understand how these processes operate in the Catholic church.

Recent studies (Hoge, 2000; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998) support the necessity of a deep faith as a vital adjunct in support of parish ministry. Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) and Rodgerson and Piedmont (1998) argue persuasively that good personal spiritual discipline reduces stress significantly, and enhances the ability to cope. In a recent survey of priests in the Archdiocese of Chicago (CARA, 2000), priests themselves identified the need for a stronger prayer life as a necessary source of support, as well as citing problems of loneliness and poor communications. The present study will analyze spiritual practice and growth of faith in Chapter 4, and address the question of the impact of personality factors on the coping resources of priests.

Personality factors and wellbeing

While some writers emphasize the effect of unconscious psychological forces in the experience of clergy (Cozzens, 2000; Haslam, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995), personality theorists stress the impact of character traits on the personal experience of priesthood and practice of ministry (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998). Both personality constructs and age cohorts will be used as covariates throughout this thesis in order to detect any significant differences between priests ordained prior to the Second Vatican Council and those ordained after the Council.

The Big Five personality traits - Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness - have been found to relate significantly with psychological authenticity (Sheldon *et al.*, 1997), subjective well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998;

Sheldon *et al.*, 1997), and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). The NEO-FFI has been found to be a useful tool for personality measures and religious research (Piedmont, 1999).

The Big Five traits (capitalized throughout this thesis) refer to personality tendencies in the following ways (as described by Costa & McCrae, (1992): Neuroticism, contrasts adjustment or emotional stability with maladjustment or neuroticism and the general tendency to experience negative affects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt and disgust. Extraversion refers to the quantity and intensity of interpersonal relations, with high Extraversion relating to a preference for large groups and gatherings, liking stimulation, and a cheerful disposition. Openness applies to a tendency to be experientially open to inner and outer worlds, to novel ideas and unconventional values. Agreeableness pertains to interpersonal tendencies that are sympathetic to others and eager to help, and a belief that others will be equally helpful in return, and Conscientiousness concerns control of impulses, and the ability to resist temptations, purposefulness, strength of will and determination (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Piedmont (1999) found the Five Factor Model (FFM) useful in consolidating work in clergy assessment and selection, capturing images of God that can be integrated with mainstream psychological theories, understanding the personological meanings behind religious constructs, and determining the degree to which religious variables provide explanations of phenomena outside existing constructs (Piedmont, 1999). The predictive ability of the NEO-FFI in relation to coping ability and subjective wellbeing (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is particularly useful for this thesis in identification of clergy who may be vulnerable to depression or dissatisfaction with ministry.

CONCLUSION

Four major themes were identified in this chapter. First, ambiguities in the identity and role of clergy brought about through structural changes in the organization following release of documents from the Second Vatican Council, particularly *Lumen Gentium*, which narrowed the distance between the status of clergy and laity. Second, cultural changes that challenged the institutional hierarchical structure of the church and some of its theological and ecclesiological positions, predominantly the teachings on sexual morality. Third, relationships of priests with the organization, diocesan authorities and parishioners, as well as intimacy with colleagues and friends, and the effect of unconscious dynamics in these relationships on satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing. Fourth, the impetus towards self-actualization of clergy, and theoretical perspectives that support understanding of the unconscious, psychodynamic and personality factors impacting on the spiritual and psychological dimensions of priestly life.

Hypotheses developed from the above themes will be explained in Chapter 3, together with the methodology for this research.

3

METHOD

Overview

Chapter 3 begins with an introduction to the research design, and proceeds with quantitative and qualitative data gathering methodology, and the formulation of primary hypotheses arising from the research, literature and discussion of theoretical perspectives in Chapters 1 and 2. This is followed by operationalization of variables used to test secondary hypotheses arising from the primary hypotheses. Finally, the relevant data analytic techniques employed throughout the discussions in Chapters 4-7 are detailed. Statistical support for these techniques is included with the results obtained in the analysis section of each chapter.

BACKGROUND

As the discussion in Chapter 1 showed, the four main topics for discussion in this thesis are not mutually exclusive and considerable overlap is inevitable. The structure of the chapters is designed to move the exploration from the macro level of cultural and social change, through the impact this transformation has on organizational structures, to the effect on professional lives of clergy, and finally to the personal dimension of priestly life as currently experienced by clergy.

Each of the four major themes identified in Chapter 1 were addressed using either quantitative or qualitative material collected using survey methodology and a grounded theory approach. Where sufficient data were available, both techniques were used in analysis of the topics. It was decided to integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods when results of semi-structured interviews (detailed below) showed that there were some topics of importance for clergy that were either not sufficiently addressed in the survey, or not touched on at all. These issues included the question of homosexually oriented priests reported in recent research and literature to be an increasing phenomenon in the priesthood generally (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a; Sipe, 1995; Wills, 2000), obligatory celibacy, ordination requirements, and tensions between polarities of theological and ecclesiological positions.

DATA SOURCES

Quantitative data

CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys of priests in parish ministry

Analysis of the data collected during the Catholic Church Life Surveys (CCLS) of priests in parish ministry in 1996 and 2001 provides the foundation for an extensive quantitative framework. A team of researchers appointed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), to conduct surveys in 1991, 1996, and 2001, developed the questionnaire and conducted the surveys.

The author of this thesis was not involved in questionnaire design, sampling, data gathering, coding, data entry or cleaning of the data. This thesis forms part of an ongoing process of research commissioned by the ACBC that includes the partial funding of three

PhD. Scholarships focused on different aspects of Catholicism. The author of this thesis was presented with a complete cleaned data set that was used in the analysis.

The data for the CCLS 1996 survey were collected in a national random sample of 281 parishes. (286 parishes were selected in the sample; 281 actually took part in the survey.) The sample was stratified by diocese (28 strata) and urban/rural (2). Responses to Questionnaire W, the questionnaire for priests, were received from 264, or 94%, of the participating parishes. Often both the parish priest and an assistant priest in the same parish replied, so that there were a total of 353 responses. These came from 254 parish priests, 86 assistant priests and four pastoral administrators, all of whom were female religious. (Nine priests did not state whether they were parish priests or assistant priests). (R. Dixon, personal communication, March 11, 2004)

For the 2001 survey, the population of parishes in which priests could be invited to complete the CCLS questionnaire was all parishes *not selected in the national random sample* (that is, 1118 parishes). A random sample of 628 parishes was selected from this population. A response of 383 was obtained from a mail out of 800 questionnaires (47.87%)(R. Dixon, personal communication, March 11, 2004).

Even if the sample is unbiased, 383 cases give a confidence interval, at 95%, of greater than 9 percentage points on any question. While it is preferable to have a response rate that is greater than 50%, many psychological and sociological studies report on much lower levels of response. Swenson's (1998) results were calculated from a response rate of 41.3% for evangelicals and 34% for priests.

The CCLS 2001 survey contained a coping scale adapted from Billings and Moos (1980) that operationalized two classifications of coping strategies: emotion focused and problem focused. The scale included a list of items descriptive of three categories of coping methods: avoidant, active behavioural and active cognitive. It was intended to provide information on coping methods used by priests in order to evaluate support structures for both the personal and professional aspects of ministry. Apart from limited analysis in Chapter 7, this scale was not employed extensively throughout this research.

The inclusion of the NEO-FFI personality instrument in the CCLS 2001 survey produced a rich body of data for analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 7 of the thesis. The NEO-FFI contains a subset of 60 questions factored from the full set of 180 questions in the NEO-PI (Costa and McCrae, 1992). To construct the NEO-FFI, Costa and McCrae (1992) extracted five principle components, (Neuroticism [N], Extraversion [E], Openness [O], Agreeableness [A] and Conscientiousness [C]) then rotated the components. When correlated with these factors, the NEO-FFI scales showed correlations ranging from 0.75 for Conscientiousness to 0.89 for Neuroticism (p. 53). Internal consistencies for the NEO-FFI scale were calculated using co-efficient alpha and data from a sample not used in item selection. Results showed slightly smaller values (0.86 [N], 0.77 [E], 0.73 [O], 0.68 [A], 0.81 [C]) than those corresponding with the NEO-PI-R domain scales, but according to Costa and McCrae (1992), all are acceptable (p. 53).

NCLS

Quantitative data from the 1996 and 2001 National Church Life Surveys (NCLS) provided information on the effect of revelations of clergy sexual abuse on attenders' confidence in their priests (Chapter 5), leadership style, and attitude towards priests' helpfulness in problems with daily life (Chapter 7). In 1996, approximately 324,000 attender survey forms were collected for the NCLS survey from 6,900 Australian congregations in 20 religious denominations (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001, p.135). In 2001, a national random sample of 261 parishes, stratified by diocese (28 strata), was selected to participate in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS). 255 parishes actually took part. The parish priests of all these parishes were asked to complete an NCLS Leader Questionnaire (Version A or B) and approximately 435,000 completed forms were collected.

Qualitative data

CCLS 2001

Qualitative data were collected from two sources: first, from responses to two open-ended questions at the end of the CCLS 2001 survey; and second, from semi-structured interviews with a subset of active and resigned priests. Ethics committee approval was

obtained after absolute confidentiality regarding the identities of participants was assured and built in to the survey design (Appendix B). No information that could potentially identify the location or the identity of respondents was included in the questionnaire. Out of the total of 383 respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey, 128 (33.24%) wrote detailed answers to two open ended questions; first, what do you think are the most important steps forward that the church, or priests, or other members of Christ's Faithful, should take in this area of parish ministry? And second, what do you think are the most important things to be done (and by whom) to support the personal (human and spiritual) wellbeing of priests, their professional (pastoral and intellectual) competence, and their practice of ministry among the people of God?

A grounded theory approach was used to categorize the resulting material that fell into four broad categories: structural strategies, pastoral strategies, problems in pastoral ministry and support for the personal wellbeing of priests. The categories were developed from a systematic coding of keywords from paragraphs as delineated by the handwritten responses to the two questions (Glaser, 1992). It was not appropriate to sort the data according to whether the responses were applied to question 1 or question 2 as the breadth of the questions meant that particular issues were commented on interchangeably between the two. Table 3.1 gives details of the issues covered, with numbers of responses ranked for each category.

Table 3.1 Categories of priest comments to open-ended questions (CCLS, 2001).

	<i>n</i>
Structural strategies	
Change the way bishops are appointed	6
Reform the church (even to the Vatican)	6
Divide diocese into smaller units	4
Appoint weekend priests and contract priests	1
Form an archdiocesan synod	1
Pastoral strategies	38
Review ordination requirements	24
Encourage more involvement of laity	19
Emphasize Gospel teachings and faith development	10
Keep 3 rd right of reconciliation	5
Broaden the vision of catholic schools	5
Greater emphasis on community development	5
Change priests' living arrangements	1
Attend to problems of divisions within the church	1
Elicit loyalty to the pope and his bishops	1
Tend to poor and needy	
The Vatican should produce a document of priesthood in line with documents on bishops and laity	1
Change the way priests are assigned	1
Promote evangelism	1
Hold more masses	1
Problems in practice of ministry	
Overwork	11
Too much administrative work	11
Difficulty with divisions over church teachings	9
High and unrealistic expectations of priest by parishioners	6
Isolation	3
Difficulties with authority of parish priest (assistant priest respondents)	2
Lack of support for newly ordained priests	1
Support wellbeing of priests through:	
Support, encouragement and pastoral care from bishops	47
Training, programs, education, formation, regular reviews	35
More interaction with fellow priests	10
More time out	10
Spiritual mentoring	8

Source: CCLS, 2001.

Analysis: Jane Power.

As Table 3.1 shows, the topics most frequently commented on by the respondents were a request for greater support, encouragement and pastoral care from bishops ($n = 47$), the view that ordination requirements should be revised ($n = 38$), the need for more training, programs, education, formation and regular reviews ($n = 35$), clergy encouragement of laity involvement in all areas of parish life ($n = 24$), and an increased emphasis on Gospel teaching and faith development ($n = 19$). All of these topics are analyzed extensively in the thesis (Chapters 4, 6 and 7) using quantitative data supported by the rich body of qualitative data provided by the comments in Table 3.1.

Semi-structured interviews

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted and tape-recorded; four with resigned priests, and ten with priests active in parish ministry. The active priests were drawn from different local government areas over a wide spread of Melbourne from a list provided by a priest with responsibility for running a program for priests. The priests' ages ranged from the early thirties to seventy-six, and although all were parish priests, they had a considerable range of parish experience between them. With the exception of one priest (who had an assistant priest), all had sole responsibility for a parish or a number of parishes.

An introductory letter (Appendix D) was sent to five potential participants at a time, as it was intended to conduct the interviews until no new material emerged in the course of the interviews. To satisfy requirements of the Australian Catholic University (ACU) code of ethics, consent forms (Appendix E) signed by the participant and the researcher were obtained before individual interviews were conducted. The resigned priests were men who offered their willingness to participate after learning of the project by word of mouth.

After giving the priest a brief overview of the topics the researcher was interested in, the interview continued in a casual conversational style, with the priest largely free to determine the issues he preferred to discuss. Prompting questions were used when necessary to explore topics of interest. The sessions were all tape-recorded, and notes

were taken during the interviews. An abbreviated record of each interview was then compiled.

The topics covered included the four main themes of the thesis as identified in Chapter 1 with questions about clergy satisfaction with priestly life, difficulties in ministry, spirituality, support, formation and reasons why priests resign (Appendix F). Some new themes that were not included in the CCLS surveys emerged and were integrated into the thesis, particularly in relation to sexuality and formation and the tension for priests holding dissenting views from those of the organization. Although pertaining to limited numbers, this material provided valuable information that indicates a need for further research.

PRIMARY HYPOTHESES

Four primary hypotheses for quantitative analysis were formulated to investigate themes arising from the discussion of literature and previous research discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

- (1) *Satisfaction with priestly ministry will be positively associated with a strong commitment to the priesthood and personality profiles with average to low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness* (Chapter 4).
- (2) *A positive association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and a priest's ability to balance the tensions within role ambiguity* (Chapter 5).
- (3) *Satisfaction with priestly ministry will be associated with holding attitudes that are congruent with church teaching and feeling supported by bishops and diocesan authorities* (Chapter 6).
- (4) *Personal wellbeing and satisfaction with priestly ministry will have a positive association with harmonious relationships with parishioners, colleagues, and friends* (Chapter 7).

ANALYSIS

In each of the following chapters secondary hypotheses were formulated in order to operationalize variables for analysis. Analytic techniques varied according to different variable construction and specific details were included in the analysis section of each chapter. The secondary hypotheses were tested, and the variables operationalized as follows.

Chapter 4: Changing identity and role

Secondary hypothesis 1, *a negative association will be found between a strong sense of vocation to the priesthood and often thinking of leaving ministry* was analyzed using standard multiple regression. Two 5-point likert scale variables: 'I entered ministry with a strong sense of vocation' and 'I still have a strong sense of vocation' were analyzed as dependent variables in two analyses using the NEO-FFI personality factors (N, E, O, A and C) as the independent variables (Table 4.1).

Secondary hypothesis 2, *a positive association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and a priest's ability to balance the tensions within role ambiguity*, was analyzed first by transforming the data to mean *T* scores of respondents (Costa & McCrae, 1992); Table 4.4). Second, obtaining percentages of respondents in *T* score ranges *very low*, *low*, *average*, *high* and *very high* (Costa & McCrae, 1992); Table 4.5). Third, a non-parametric 'goodness of fit' chi-square test was performed using three categories (*low*, *average* and *high*) for the five domains of the NEO-FFI (N, E, O, A and C; Table 4.6). Fourth, a Pearson correlation of the five factors (sig. 2 tailed) was performed to explore associations between the five factors (Table 4.7). Three cross-tabulation analyses were then conducted between N and C, N and E, and E and C (Tables 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10). Finally, comparative analysis was conducted on the survey sample and a sample of employed Australian males with calculation of mean *T* scores for each group (Table 4.12).

Secondary hypothesis 3, *depression will be negatively associated with Extraversion and Conscientiousness* was analyzed using standard multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable was a 6-point likert scale ‘the extent to which I am invaded by a sadness I can’t explain’, and the independent variables were the five factors of the NEO-FFI (N, E, O, A and C).

Secondary hypothesis 4, *a positive association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and priests’ rating of their effectiveness in ministry* was analyzed using standard multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable was a 7-point likert scale ‘how would you rate your effectiveness as a priest?’ and the independent variables were the five factors of the NEO-FFI (N, E, O, A and C; Table 4.13).

Secondary hypothesis 5, *a positive association for Neuroticism and a negative association for Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness will be found between negative feelings and lack of emotional investment and enthusiasm for work*, was analyzed with twelve multiple regression analyses. The dependent variables were 6-point likert scales: ‘the extent to which I feel used up and spent’, ‘the extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change of job’, ‘the extent to which I feel guilt about what is not happening in this parish or with attenders’, ‘the extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter’, ‘the extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (e.g. aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds)’, ‘the extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain’, ‘the extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me’, ‘the extent to which I feel supported in my work’, ‘the extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with attenders’, ‘the extent to which my humor has a cynical, biting tone’, ‘the extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the parish’, and ‘the extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy and look forward to it regularly)’ (CCLS, 2001, pp. 9 -11); Tables 4.14 and 4.15).

Chapter 5: Priests as moral authority

Secondary hypothesis 1: *a significant association will be found between a negative view of obligatory celibacy and frequency of thinking of resigning*, was analyzed by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables were: ‘think of resigning’ (with three categories: *never, sometimes, often to constantly*) and ‘attitude to celibacy of priest’. The latter variable had five categories of response: *it is of great benefit, should be optional, is not suitable, has had a negative impact and can’t decide* (Table 5.4).

Secondary hypothesis 2: *a significant association will be found between prioritizing the removal of the obligatory celibacy over other proposed pastoral strategies and frequency of thinking of resigning* was tested. A new variable, ‘priorities’, was created by selecting the pastoral strategy rated by respondents as their first priority. The eight categories of priorities were: ‘encourage Australian Catholics to pray for vocations, and renew the family piety that nurtures them’, ‘concentrate on building vital parishes and communities that will be a source of vocations’, ‘remove the obligation to celibacy so that those who do not have this calling may enter the priesthood’, ‘admit more men to the permanent diaconate’, ‘ordain a member of the parish community, with minimal training, solely to preside at Eucharist in that community’, ‘select and prepare suitable lay ministers to carry out pastoral functions permitted by Canon law’, ‘re-admit to active ministry suitable candidates from among those who have resigned from the ministry’, and ‘recruit priests from overseas’ (CCLS, 2001, p.15). Non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis with the variables, priorities, and think of resigning (with three categories: *never, sometimes, often to constantly*) was performed (Table 5.5).

Secondary hypothesis 3: *holding the pastoral strategy of removal of the obligation of celibacy as a first priority will be associated with higher percentages of priests in the age cohorts 36-45, 46-55, and 55-66, than with the age cohorts 25-35, and 66+* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. A new variable, ‘strategy groups’, was created by grouping together strategies with a specific emphasis on increasing the number of ministers. The new category then became *increase the number*

of ministers. Included in this new category were the old categories: *admit more men to the diaconate, ordain a member for presiding at Eucharist, prepare lay ministers, and recruit priests from overseas.* This was done to minimize the probability of type 1 error caused by too many cells (43%) having expected counts of <5 when the variable, ‘priorities’, was used. The new variable, ‘strategy groups’, was then cross-tabulated with a variable, ‘age cohorts’, with five categories, 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+ (Table 5.6) to establish non-parametric Chi-square for the relationship.

Secondary hypothesis 4: *frequently thinking of resigning will be more strongly associated with priests in the age cohorts 36-45, 46-55, and 55-66, and less strongly associated with the age cohorts 25-35, and 66+* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables were: ‘thinking of resigning’, with three categories: *never, sometimes, often to constantly* and ‘age cohorts’ with five categories 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+ (Table 5.8).

Secondary hypothesis 5: *attitude to celibacy will be associated with NEO-FFI personality factors* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square in five cross-tabulation analyses. The variables were: ‘attitude to celibacy’ with five categories of response: *it is of great benefit, should be optional, is not suitable, has had a negative impact and can’t decide* and the five NEO-FFI variables (N, E, O, A and C) with three categories: *low, average and high* (Table 5.10).

Secondary hypothesis 6: *an association will be found between age cohorts and Openness* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis with ‘age cohorts’ with five categories 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+, and ‘Openness’ with three categories: *low, average and high* (Table 5.11).

Chapter 6: Priests and their relationships with the church and bishops

In order to test secondary hypothesis 1, *an association will be found between disagreement with church teaching and wishing to leave ministry*, standard multiple regression was performed. The dependent variable was ‘frequency of thinking about

leaving’ (a 7-point likert scale), and the independent variables were: ‘do you accept the teaching that women cannot be ordained as priests?’ and ‘do you accept the practice whereby divorced Catholics who have remarried without annulment (of their previous marriage) are refused communion?’ (both 4-point likert type scales; Table 6.1).

Secondary hypothesis 2: *a trend to a more conservative outlook will be found in younger priests* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-squares for three cross-tabulation analyses. The variable for all three analyses was ‘age cohorts’ with five categories 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+ and first: ‘attitude of clergy to church leaders’ pursuit of Christian unity’ with three categories (*no more compromises, modify structures even to the role of the pope and remove rules preventing communion*; Table 6.3). Second: ‘clergy acceptance of teaching that women cannot be ordained’ with four categories (*no, accept with great difficulty, accept with some difficulty and accept with no difficulty*; Table 6.4). Third: ‘clergy acceptance of refusal of communion to divorced and remarried without annulment of their previous marriage’ with four categories (*no, accept with great difficulty, accept with some difficulty, and accept with no difficulty*; Table 6.5).

Secondary hypothesis 3: *a positive association will be found between experiencing difficulty in the relationship with diocesan authorities and frequency of thinking of resigning* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables were: ‘I find it difficult dealing with diocesan authorities’ with five categories (*strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, unsure and agree*), and ‘think of resigning’ with three categories (*never, sometimes and constantly*; Table 6.6).

Secondary hypothesis 4: *an association will be found between not being close to mother when growing up and negative feelings towards the bishop* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables used were: ‘difficulty with bishops’ with two categories (*wrote negative comments about bishops and did not write negative comments about bishops*), and ‘closeness to mother’ with three categories (*not close, neutral and close*). A non-significant association was found so no table was included to illustrate this result.

Secondary hypothesis 5: *an association will be found between not being close to father when growing up and negative feelings towards the bishop* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables used were: ‘difficulty with bishops’ with two categories (*wrote negative comments about bishops* and *did not write negative comments about bishops*), and ‘closeness to father’ with three categories (*not close*, *neutral* and *close*; Table 6.7).

Chapter 7: Priests’ relationships with parishioners, friends and colleagues

Secondary hypothesis 1: *Negative priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of the priest by laity will be found to have a positive association with lack of interest in work* was tested. First, two simple structure components for measuring the relationship between priests and parishioners were produced from a list of seven variables. The first component, a new variable named ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’, contained the variables: ‘I am now less patient with people in my parish than I used to be’, ‘fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience’, ‘I am spending less and less time with attenders’, and ‘I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work’. The second component, a new variable named ‘non-acceptance of priest by laity’, included the variables: ‘the parish and I disagree on my role as a priest’, ‘I’m not the right person for the parish’, and ‘I do not feel accepted here by attenders’.

Second, a single simple component factor named ‘interest in work’ was created using principal components analysis. ‘Interest in work’ contained the variables: ‘extent of enthusiasm for work’, ‘extent of emotional investment in work’ and ‘extent of feeling supported in work’. Third, standard multiple regression analysis was performed with ‘lack of interest in work’ as the dependent variable. The independent variables were ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ and ‘non-acceptance of priest by laity’ (Table 7.7).

Secondary hypothesis 2: *An association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and priest/parishioner relationships* was tested using six standard multiple regression

analyses. The six dependent variables were: ‘the extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience’, ‘I’m not the right person for the parish’, ‘the extent to which I spend less and less time with attenders’, ‘I do not feel accepted here by attenders’, ‘the extent to which I am less patient with people’, and ‘the extent to which I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work’. The independent variables were the five domains of the NEO-FFI: ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extroversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ (Table 7.8).

Secondary hypothesis 3: *a negative association will be found with Neuroticism, and a positive association with Extraversion and Agreeableness will be found with the two factors: priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of the priest by laity* was tested using hierarchical multiple regression. The first analysis used ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ as the dependant variable, and ‘Neuroticism’ as the independent variable in step 1 (as ‘Neuroticism’ was found to correlate consistently at $>.3$ with all dependent variables in Table 7.8). In step 2, ‘Extroversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ were added (as these also had significant correlations in Table 7.8), and in Step 3, ‘Openness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ were added so that all factors of the NEO-FFI were included in the analysis (Table 7.9). This analysis was repeated using ‘non-acceptance of priests by laity’ as the dependent variable, and the factors of the NEO-FFI as independent variables (Table 7.10).

Secondary hypothesis 4: *the category of the most significant support person for priests will be found to have an association with frequency of thinking of leaving* was tested by calculating the non-parametric Chi-square using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables were: ‘clergy support person’ with five categories (*another priest, a woman religious, a layman, a laywoman and no-one*), and ‘thinking of resigning’ with three categories (*never, sometimes and constantly*; Table 7.14).

Secondary hypothesis 5: *priests who experienced formation prior to the Second Vatican Council will be less likely to have close, intimate relationships with others, particularly with laywomen* was tested by calculating the non-parametric Chi-square using cross-

tabulation analysis. The variables were: ‘age’ with two categories (*under 60 and 60 and over*) and ‘choice of support person’ with five categories (*another priest, a woman religious, a layman, a laywoman and no-one*; Table 7.15).

Secondary hypothesis 6: *a negative association will be found between time spent with colleagues and a feeling of sadness* was tested using a bivariate Pearson’s correlation. The variables were: ‘the extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain’ and the ‘number of times per month an evening or a few hours is spent with a small group of priest colleagues (not for work)’; Table 7.18).

Secondary hypothesis 7: *NEO-FFI personality factors will contribute to the difference between priests who have close relationships with laywomen and those who have close relationships with religious women* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-squares using five cross-tabulation analyses. The variables were ‘support person’ with five categories (*another priest, a woman religious, a layman, a laywoman and no-one*) and the five factors of the NEO-FFI with three categories (*low, average and high*; Table 7.19).

Secondary hypothesis 8: *a positive association will be found between both Agreeableness and Openness and agreement with the view that friendships with women are important for clergy psychological and emotional health and development* was tested by calculating non-parametric Chi-squares using five cross-tabulation analyses. The variables were ‘the view that friendships with women are important for clergy psychological and emotional health’ with three categories (*disagree, neutral and agree*) and the five factors of the NEO-FFI with three categories (*low, average and high*; Table 7.20).

CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed research methodology, data collection, hypotheses formulation and data analytic techniques used to test hypotheses. The next chapter will begin the exploration of the effect of cultural and social change on the identity and role of priests, and examine these effects on three key areas of priestly identity.

CHANGING IDENTITY AND ROLE OF PRIESTS

Overview

This chapter begins with a discussion of theoretical perspectives that seek to provide insight into the development of priestly identity. This is followed by an exploration of priests as religious and spiritual leaders, a primary aspect of priestly identity under challenge in the current climate of rapid social and cultural change. Finally, analysis of the NEO-FFI personality instrument explores the question, “How well equipped psychologically and emotionally are priests in order to cope with ambiguities in identity and role and maintain a sense of satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing?”

The primary hypothesis tested in this chapter is: *satisfaction with priestly ministry and personal wellbeing will be positively associated with a strong commitment to the priesthood and personality profiles with average to low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness*. The NEO-FFI instrument included in the CCLS 2001 survey will be employed in the analysis.

PRIESTLY IDENTITY AND ROLE

Background

The perception of the role of priests in our culture, and within the Catholic organization itself, by laity and clergy, is undergoing considerable transformation, particularly in Western countries. This transformation has impacted profoundly on the priesthood, creating a crisis of identity for priests. The way this crisis is met will determine whether the traditional priesthood survives and, if so, what new forms of priestly identity will emerge. As Pope John Paul II commented, “An analysis of the situation in Europe today shows, together with comforting signs of vitality and revival, a persistent *crisis of vocations* and the painful phenomena of *defections*. The causes of this painful phenomena are multiple, and it will be necessary to face up to them with vigor ...” (Pope John Paul II, cited in McGovern, 2002, p.9).

Writers such as Mol (1976) and Erikson (1959) who have tried to come to grips with the concept of human identity have found that it is difficult to pinpoint operationally, as it may be located symbolically in a “great variety of forms rather than merely in territory or hierarchy” (Mol, 1976, p.2). For priests, there is a complex multiplicity of locations for identity, including the personal, familial, cultural, professional and organizational aspects of identity. The personal, group and social aspects of priestly identity are inextricably interwoven, and sit within a multifaceted dialectical and ephemeral context of change.

The focus of this chapter is on the distinctive aspects of the personal and group identity of priests, and the changed perceptions and valuing of fundamental aspects of this identity by both priests and laity. Structural changes, such as the reintroduction of the diaconate, rise of parish councils, and increased global centralization in the church have significant implications for the lives of priests. On the societal level, challenges to traditional patriarchal family structures, the sexual revolution and feminism - all of which confront the church organization with its deeply entrenched masculine hierarchy, and authoritarian culture - create a climate where aspects of priestly identity are becoming increasingly ambiguous. For instance, McGovern (2002) argues that “the increased emphasis on the ideas of freedom and democracy in the general cultural environment has created a climate

of opinion which critically questions religious authority and ultimately rejects it, especially in the area of moral norms” (p.13).

A useful perspective for beginning an investigation of the impact of change on priestly identity is the Social Identity Approach, which argues that the psychology of the individual is a product of group life, and that organizations have the capacity to actually transform the psychology of the individual. In his work *Psychology in Organizations*, Haslam (2001) refers to the development of a sense of self that is determined both by personal identity and by a social identity that is formed through the sharing of values, beliefs and goals with other members of a group. This development is especially true in the case of priests, particularly as many priests currently in parish ministry entered seminaries at a very young age, where the formation process was able to exert significant influence on their psychology and identity throughout their maturation. For example, the following comments by an interview respondent illustrate the youth and length of training that many priests currently in parish ministry underwent. The respondent said that he knew at 11 years of age that he wanted to become a priest and at 15 he went to the seminary where he was trained for 8 years: “Seminarians were put on a pedestal, and had a protective fence placed around them”.

Although priestly formation has changed over time, particularly since Vatican II, the organization has been for most, both a secondary and tertiary socialization agent. Social identity theory would suggest that this socialization process means that the church is not a separate entity ‘out there’, but an intrinsic part of priests’ psychological make-up and self-concept (Haslam, 2001). What a priest does, and who he is, are inseparable. Therefore, changes and transformations within the organization, and changing perceptions of the church within society, produce a concurrent transformation in the self-identity of clergy.

Sacred identity

Pope John Paul II emphasized the special nature of a priest’s calling recently “... I intend to strengthen your faith in the identity of Christ and in your own identity as *other Christs*. Take holy pride in being *called*, and be especially humble before so great a dignity, in the

awareness of your human weakness” (Pope John Paul II, cited by McGovern, 2002, p. 68). According to McGovern (2002), the pope stresses the notion that priests’ lives will be authentic insofar as they reflect Christ. This exhortation to become Christ-like implies that priests must become more than merely human, they must transcend their human frailties, they must somehow overcome the limitations of their personalities, their upbringing, their society and culture. To be a member of the priesthood carries an enormous burden of responsibility. More than 50 years ago, Catherine de Hueck (cited in Kennedy & Heckler, 1972) succinctly illustrated the point that priests were set apart from the rest of humanity through their calling:

For a priest is a miracle of God’s love to us; a man who, through his sacrament of ordination becomes another Christ with powers that beggar human imagination ... nothing can be greater in this world of ours than a priest. Nothing but God himself.

A priest is a holy man because he walks before the face of the All Holy.

A priest understands all things.

A priest forgives all things.

A priest is a man who lives to serve.

A priest is a man who has crucified himself so that he too may be lifted up and draws all things to Christ.

A priest is a symbol of the Word made Flesh.

A priest is the naked sword of God’s justice.

A priest is the hand of God’s mercy.

A priest is the reflection of God’s love. He teaches God to us ... he brings God to us ... he represents God to us.

(Catherine de Heuck, cited by Kennedy & Heckler, 1972, p.5).

To be Christ-like then, is the characteristic that defines the person and is essential to the development of holiness through which ministerial and pastoral functions are performed. This holiness is the fundamental religious legitimation of a priestly vocation, and the core of what it is to be a priest; it points to the sacredness of their being, their self-sacrifice, and the primacy of their role as exemplars of Catholic belief and conduct. Also fundamental to priestly identity is that ordination includes a commitment to celibacy and a promise of obedience, and intention to embody and express these in ministry as valued aspects of priestly life (McGovern, 2002).

Integration of identity

In his book *The Changing Face of The Priesthood*, Donald Cozzens (2000) emphasized the potential for deep inner conflict inherent in the nature of the demands in the notion of who a priest is, and identified the need for a high level of adult maturity in order to meet these demands. A striving to achieve the ideal of priestly identity is the struggle of a priest with those aspects of himself that are incongruent with that identity.

Psychoanalytic theory would suggest that where correspondence between self-concept and the ideal self is low, the resulting inner struggle has the potential to create anxiety, which can lead to the emergence of neurotic traits. As Karen Horney (1950) noted over 50 years ago:

Among the drives towards actualizing the idealized self is the need for perfection, which aims at molding the whole personality into the idealized self ... the neurotic aims not only at retouching, but at remodeling himself into his special kind of perfection prescribed by the specific features of his idealized image. He tries to achieve this goal by a complicated system of shoulds and taboos (Horney, 1950, p. 25).

The seeds for development of neuroticism lie in childhood, where impossible expectations by parents who are too anxious and neurotic themselves to provide an environment favorable to growth and autonomy, create the basis for the rift between the actual empirical self and the idealized self. This rift or ‘intrapsychic conflict’ is reflected in an increased tendency to experience negative affect, such as fear, anger, sadness, guilt and low self esteem (Horney, 1950).

Inherent in what a priest is in terms of identity, is also what he is not, what he can and cannot be according to who he empirically is. The proscribed behaviors (Horney’s shoulds) and taboos associated with being a priest are considerable and, according to Horney’s (1950) psychoanalytic theory, the degree to which he identifies with this ideal, and the degree to which his self-concept is aligned with it, will contribute to the level of neurosis experienced within his work and personal life. This ‘intrapsychic conflict’ is largely unconscious, so most individuals are unaware of it. The finding that 56% of survey respondents have Neuroticism levels in the *high* to *very high* ranges of the NEO-

FFI personality inventory (CCLS, 2001) is evidence that many priests experience the stress and negative effects associated with this conflict.

Role can contribute to Neuroticism levels according to research by Sheldon *et al.* (1997), who found that within-subject variations in the big five personality factors were predictable from variations in the degree of psychological authenticity felt in different roles. “Roles and situations are assumed to differentially afford support for authentic self-expression and self-organized behaviors and some roles may foster false self-representations, or departures from how one might ideally choose to be” (Sheldon *et al.*, 1997, p.1380). According to Sheldon *et al.*, discrepant functioning, and the demand to mold oneself in line with role-related pressures creates difficulties that impact on adjustment and well-being. So the priesthood, with its role-related demands of transcendence of human frailty, has the potential to exacerbate suffering in individuals with a dispositional high level of neuroticism.

Harrigan (1999) suggested a model of growth that does not imply such intense intra-psychic conflict, but still includes an ongoing dialectic between the actual self and the ideal self. According to Meures (cited in Harrigan, 1999) this dialectic is intrinsic to the attainment of self-transcendence which, in order to achieve the holiness aspired to in the vocation, is an important element in the identity of a priest:

The actual self is the self insofar as it is transcended, that is, the organisation of the interdependent forces which de facto, consciously, or unconsciously, either facilitates or resists growth towards self-transcendence. It is, therefore, within the actual self that unconscious components of the person that are in contradiction with self-transcendence, are to be found. Thus, there is established a dialect between the self-as-transcending (ideal self) and the self as transcended (actual self). This dialect is seen in a different way from the conflict models of psychoanalytic personality theories (Meures (1987) cited by Harrigan, 1999, p. 10).

Concurrent with growth towards self-transcendence is the growth towards the ‘holiness’ implied by ordination. The symbiotic nature of faith growth and psychological and emotional growth is captured in Fowler’s six stage theory of faith development (Fowler,

1996) which will be looked at in the next section. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the first (intuitive-projective) stage which, it could be argued, is the stage at which the development of neuroticism is most likely to occur. Stage one is the beginning of self-consciousness; standing on one's two feet, being aware of being seen and evaluated by others, and Fowler (1996) argues that being attentive to standards of how things are supposed to be makes the child especially sensitive to the twin polarities of pride and shame.

Where defenses like splitting and dissociation have been necessitated by parental or other abuse or neglect, either God is likely to undergo splitting as well, or the child constructs images of the 'bad self' as being the deserving recipient of the inevitable - and deserved - punishment of a demanding but justifiably angry God. Where inadequate mirroring in the previous stage has resulted in an empty or incoherent sense of self, or where conditions of worth and esteem are such that the child must suppress his or her processing of truth and experience, we often see the forming of a 'false-self'. In faith terms this can correlate with constructions of God along the lines of a task master deity who requires performance and perfection, or shame and guilt about failures, for one to qualify for grace and approval (Fowler, 1996, p. 59).

Therefore, the development of a personal identity deeply rooted in a mature and deepening faith as well as integration of the group or priestly identity requires a social and organizational context that will nurture and support such growth. As suggested by the foregoing discussion, priestly identity can be characterized by two main emphases. First, as described by McGovern (2002), the priesthood as ontological sacramental reality, and second, the functional conception of priesthood, as demonstrated in ministry; or put simply, who he is and what he does.

Priest as holy man

Background

An intimate bond exists between the spiritual life of priests and their exercise of ministry. Greeley (1972) said "I take it that the priest is a man of conviction, a man of faith" (p.12), and Harrigan (1999) found that the group of men he studied for his work on male celibates revealed a prior intimacy with God that was alive and personal, rather than an abstracted theory. McGovern (2002) suggested that the priest develops his spiritual life

as an intrinsic part of his ecclesiastical functions, rather than something added to, or different from these functions. "... His spirituality should support the different aspects of his priestly consecration, and his exercise of the ministry has to become his way of approaching holiness to which he, like all Christians, is called" (p.128).

According to a theory of faith development put forward by Fowler (1996), an intimate bond also exists between the spiritual life and faith growth of priests and their attainment of psychological maturity. The attainment of the state of 'holiness' aspired to by the clerical state requires transition through six stages of faith development which occur concurrently with development of a mature identity. The six stages of development outlined by Fowler are: intuitive-projective, mythic-literal, synthetic-conventional, individuating-reflective, conjunctive, and universalizing (Fowler, 1996).

Primal faith is characterized by the development of trust formed through consistent experiences of separation and self-differentiation that occur during infant development. "Infants only gradually achieve self/object differentiation in the era of primal faith. Their experiences of mutuality, of consistent and undistorted mirroring, and of informal rituals that convey meaning and dependability do much to confirm children's sense of being 'at home' in their life spaces" (Fowler, 1996, p. 57). It could be argued that this trust is fundamental to religious faith.

In Stage 1, the intuitive-projective faith (early childhood), Fowler (1996) claims that "Experiences of power and powerlessness orient children to a frequently deep existential concern about questions of security, safety, and the power of those upon whom they rely for protection. Due to naïve cognitive egocentrism, children do not differentiate their perspectives from those of others" (p. 58). Constructions of faith are drawn to symbols and images of visible power and size, and from psychodynamic perspectives this stage begins with the time of first self-consciousness.

Stage 2, the mythic-literal faith (middle childhood and beyond) is where the young person constructs the world in a new 'linearity' and predictability where conscious

operational thinking makes possible more stable forms of conscious interpretation and shaping of experience and meanings. More logical modes of thinking ‘seal over’ the images and intuitive forms of knowing which characterized the previous stage. “God is constructed on the model of a consistent, caring, but just ruler or parent. Goodness is rewarded, badness is punished” (Fowler, 1996, p. 60).

Beginnings of reflection, and appreciation of abstract concepts herald stage 3, the synthetic-conventional faith (adolescence and beyond). Here emergence of mutual interpersonal perspective taking occurs and “... identity and personal interiority - one’s own and others’ - become absorbing concerns. Personality, both as style and substance, becomes a conscious issue and “God representations can be populated with personal qualities of accepting love, understanding, loyalty, and support during times of crisis” (Fowler, 1996, p. 61). According to Schoenherr (2002), Fowler found that many adults are permanently arrested at this stage, which is marked by conformism to the opinions and authority of others (p. 73).

Fowler (1996) claimed that for Stage 4, for individuated-reflective faith (young adulthood and beyond) to emerge, two important movements must occur together or in sequence: first, he claimed that in the previous stage the tacit system of beliefs, values and commitments must be critically examined, and second, the self, previously constituted and sustained by its roles and relationships, must struggle with the question of identity and worth apart from its previously defining connections.

This means that persons must take into themselves much of the authority they previously invested in others for determining and sanctioning their goals and values. It means that definitions of the self that are dependent upon roles and relationships with others and with groups must now be re-grounded in terms of a new quality of responsibility that the self takes for defining itself and orchestrating its roles and relations (Fowler, 1996, pp. 62-63)

Often called a demythologizing of faith due to the rejection of old doctrines and myths, this stage, according to Schoenherr (2002), allows individuals to construct their own limited personal worldview. “Fowler found that the majority of adults, however, enter

and remain in this stage, which brings a realization of the relativity of one's inherited worldview along with rejection of the external authority supporting it" (Schoenherr, 2002, p.73). It could be argued that development to this stage would bring priests to a critical stage in relation to the church, doctrine and consequently their vocation.

A self-generated belief system remaining congruent with the organization would mean greater commitment to ministry and the priesthood. Conversely, embracing of beliefs and values that are out of step with the organization would mean greater tension between the priest and his ministry. Thus, the impetus for psychological and emotional growth has the potential to destabilize the institution, while at the same time having the potential to bring about a healthy organization resting on a foundation of individuals strongly committed to it through mature faith development.

According to Fowler, Stage 5, conjunctive faith (early mid-life and beyond) is only attained by about one in ten adults (Schoenherr, 2002). Successful transition to conjunctive faith requires that the clarity about "boundaries of self and faith that the individuating-reflective stage worked so hard to achieve must be relinquished" (Fowler, 1996, p. 64). "In the conjunctive stage, one begins to make peace with the realization that truth must be approached from a number of different directions and angles of vision. Faith must learn to maintain the tensions between these multiple perspectives." Fowler (1996) claimed that until recently, only the Jungian tradition among analytic perspectives provided much help in the transition to the conjunctive stage. "Over impressed with autonomous individualism and with the rejection of the neuroses associated with conventional religion, humanistic psychologies tended to run out at this point of transition" (Fowler, 1996, p. 65). Fowler argues further that transition to the conjunctive stage requires methods of meditation and therapy that nurture a safe relaxation of the defenses that separate the conscious from the unconscious.

There must be a context of love and grace that makes it safe to bring the deepest insults of body and soul from previous experience into the sunlight of presence that can dissolve the strain of bypassed shame, even as it is being named, raged over, and grieved. Such psychotherapy cannot do its work ... without acknowledging the spiritual nature of its task, and

without reliance upon a spirit of love and acceptance, of healing and forgiveness, beyond the powers of humans alone (Fowler, 1996, p. 66).

Paradoxically, as in the earliest phases of infancy, awareness of the non-differentiation of self and other characterizes Stage 6, universalizing faith (mid-life and beyond). The embrace of polar opposites that are fundamental to the conjunctive phase is replaced with a spirituality that avoids “polarizing the world between the saved and the damned”. Psychodynamically, the self in the universalizing stage moves beyond ego defensiveness, and “exhibits an openness based on the being, love, and regard of God” (Fowler, 1996, p. 67). This highest stage of faith development is reached by very few, and then rarely in people under the age of 60 (Schoenherr, 2002, p. 73).

It is difficult to find a clear definition of what it means to be ‘called’, but an understanding of the notion is assumed in much of the literature on priestly life and ministry. The idea of a ‘calling’ is evocative of a ‘specialness’ which is pointed to by McGovern (2002): “looking to find the answer to priestly identity, we see that the history of our priesthood begins, as in the case of the apostles, with a divine call ... to be called by Christ means to be loved by Christ. It is a sign of special predilection, a call to participate in Christ’s friendship at the deepest level” (p.70).

Recent studies (Hoge, 2000; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998) point to the necessity of a deep faith as a vital adjunct in support of parish ministry. Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) and Rodgerson and Piedmont (1998) argue persuasively that good personal spiritual discipline reduces stress significantly, and enhances the ability to cope. Priests themselves identified the need for a stronger prayer life as a necessary source of support, as well as citing problems of loneliness and poor communication in a recent Survey of Priests in the Archdiocese of Chicago (CARA, 2000). Two questions will be examined in the following analysis: first, what is the current spiritual practice of priest respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey and second, is there a significant association between strength of a sense of calling to the priestly vocation and dispositional factors?

Spiritual practice

More than 30 years ago Kennedy and Heckler (1972) found that the majority of priests in their study were characterized by a general inability to articulate a deep level of religious faith. They found that “What is presumed to be central in their lives is found to be peripheral and frequently superficial” (p.11). Most *underdeveloped* priests demonstrated a lack of penetrating questioning and working through of belief necessary to provide for an integrated, deep, authentic theology and faith (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972). Kaldor and Bullpit (2001) suggested that the construction of an active faith life is through a range of spiritual disciplines, and claim that their study showed that in a context of urgent and demanding pressures in ministry, these disciplines can be all too easily forgotten.

Comments by respondents in the CCLS 2001 survey did not focus particularly on spiritual development and practice. Few priests mentioned their faith or prayer life, but the following respondent comment would lend support to Kaldor and Bullpit’s statement (above):

Signs of stress and difficulties with coping with an overworked presbyterate and the temptation to give more are sometimes at the cost of the priest’s spiritual life (faith).

Interview respondents were asked directly how they nurtured and supported their spiritual life. It was interesting that none had a formal spiritual director, but instead pointed to the importance of friendships with other priests and as would be expected, the importance of daily religious disciplines:

(A priest) needs intellectual, pastoral and spiritual development, and all three are interwoven. Daily Mass would be a special focus. Quiet contemplation on people, and prayer about people. Formal office of the church is very important also, although some might find it hard to maintain this on a daily basis.

It is important to spend time alone. Reading of scriptures, psalms, divine office. Prayer. Walking with God.

Reading theology, psychology, literature, and poetry. Walking and running. Attending courses twice a year.

Reading, study, prayer, the company of like minds (Interview 2002).

I don't have a spiritual director, but one particular friend, who is a priest and I roam around all sorts of topics, spiritual and otherwise. There is really valuable spiritual direction and exploration, but in a conversational sense.

Reading, meditation, and prayer. I meditate each day and find that helpful. Spiritual reading ... I try to keep in touch with theology. I'm interested in doing a course in Dublin that touches on the scripture and church history, moral theology that touches on aspects of our life. I'll find out what the academic world are saying about these things. Professional and spiritual development.

ANALYSIS

Responses to the CCLS 2001 survey indicated that 60% of priests prayed, meditated or read the bible most days, 25% did so a few times a week, and 15% reported that they performed spiritual disciplines from once a week to hardly ever (CCLS, 2001). For 57% of priests, this amount of time was more than the time spent in prayer, meditation and reading the scriptures 5 years ago, a surprising result given the increased pressures of ministry over that period. How satisfied priests are with this amount of spiritual practice - and what this means in terms of ministry - is unclear, as is the level of personal and spiritual growth that has taken place through the current disciplines and practices.

Personal and spiritual growth were not directly addressed in the CCLS 2001 survey, but responses to a question: Over the past twelve months, do you feel you have grown in the depth of your commitment to your faith? suggested that a majority of priests experienced growth in this commitment. Results showed that 8% of priests experienced no real growth, 40% experienced some growth, and 52% had experienced much growth. Of those experiencing much growth, 38% was attributed to the parish or other groups, and 15% was attributed to the private activity of the respondents (CCLS, 2001), which could reasonably be assumed to relate to personal prayer, reading of scriptures and/or meditation. More research is needed to explore the relationship of both the types of spiritual practice and the amount of time spent engaged in them, as well as the experience of personal and spiritual growth as a result of spiritual practices.

Disposition, strength of vocation to priesthood and satisfaction with ministry

In order to test the hypothesis: *A negative association will be found between a strong sense of vocation to the priesthood and often thinking of leaving ministry* standard multiple regression analysis was performed. The dependent variable was ‘frequency of thinking of leaving ministry’ and the independent variables were ‘I entered ministry with a strong sense of vocation’ and ‘I still have a strong sense of vocation’. Results supported the hypothesis, $F(2, 367) = 63.21, p < .001, R^2 = .26$. The standardized Beta values showed that the variable ‘I still have a strong sense of vocation’ is the only variable of the two independent variables to make a significant and unique contribution to the variation in the dependent variable ($-.52, p < .001$), with the variable ‘I entered ministry with a strong sense of vocation’ making a non-significant contribution (.03, $p > .05$).

In order to investigate the question of whether dispositional factors play a part in a strong sense of calling, two standard multiple regression analyses were performed. The dependent variables were: ‘I entered ministry with a strong sense of vocation’ in the first analysis, and ‘I still have a strong sense of vocation’ in the second analysis. The independent variables for both analyses were the five NEO-FFI factors: ‘Neuroticism’ (N), ‘Extraversion’ (E), ‘Openness’ (O), ‘Agreeableness’ (A) and ‘Conscientiousness’ (C); (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Strong sense of vocation and NEO-FFI factors.

	N	E	O	A	C
Entered ministry with a strong sense of vocation					
Pearson’s correlation	-.11*	.20***	.03	.07	.28***
Standardized Beta	.03	.10	-.01	-.04	.26***
Still have a strong sense of vocation					
Pearson’s correlation	-.29***	.33***	-.03	.23***	.27***
Standardized Beta	-.13**	.22***	-.10*	.10*	.09

n = 377; *** = < .001, ** = < .01, * = < .05

Source: CCLS 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 4.1 showed that there is a significant association between dispositional factors and both variables: ‘a strong sense of vocation on entering ministry’ ($F[5,371] = 7.03, p < .$

001) and 'still having a strong sense of vocation' ($F [5,371] = 14.46, p < .001$). Although 'N' and 'E' showed small significant correlations with the first dependent variable, only 'C' showed both a small significant correlation (.28) and made a unique and significant contribution (.26, $p < .001$) to the dependent variable. This supports the finding from analysis of the hypothesis (above) that still having a strong sense of vocation is the more important of the two variables, with all independent variables except 'O' having a small to medium significant correlation with the dependent variable. However, the standardized Beta values showed that 'E' made the largest significant and unique contribution (.22) to the variation in the variable 'I still have a strong sense of vocation', followed 'N' (-.13), then 'O' and 'A' which both made less significant unique contributions (-.10).

Therefore, 'E', and to a lesser degree, 'N', are significantly associated with still having a strong sense of vocation, which is in turn significantly associated with satisfaction with ministry. It could be argued then, that it is not so much the initial sense of vocational calling that is important in a wish to continue in parish ministry, but the current experience of that calling. Whether the sense of calling is affected by the deepening of spiritual practice and discipline cannot be explored with the available data for this research, but is an indication of a need for future research.

Priest as minister

Social identity theory, as discussed above, suggests that a priest's sense of identity will be influenced by the degree to which he identifies with the Church as an organization, and the extent to which he internalizes his membership of it as an aspect of his self- image (Haslam, 2001). Fundamental to this discussion is the assumption that priestly identity is primarily about ministry, with an emphasis on preaching the Gospel, administration of the sacramental aspects of religious life, and leading the People of God (McGovern, 2002). It could be suggested then, that satisfaction with the priesthood is dependent upon a context in which priests are able to competently and appropriately express themselves as spiritual teachers, preachers and religious leaders.

Role

Both the 1996 and 2001 survey of priests in parish ministry included a list of ministerial duties, and priests were asked to circle up to two options for first, what they thought their main role(s) should be, and second, what they experienced in practice as their actual main role(s) (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Comparison between preferred main role and actual main role of priests.

Role	Should be main role (Percent)	Actual main role (Percent)
Faith and spiritual leadership emphasis		
Teaching Christian faith	22	15
Converting others to faith	2	0
Conducting worship/administering sacraments	29	28
Prayer/ spiritual role model	13	5
Pastoral emphasis		
Visiting, counselling and helping people	31	30
Supervising pastoral work	22	20
Administration		
Parish administration	2	32
Other		
Tackling social injustice	3	0
Providing visions and goals for the future	11	4
<i>n = 901</i>		

Source: 1996 and 2001 CCLS Surveys of Priests in Parish Ministry (Analysis: Jane Power).

NB: Cumulative totals are not relevant as priests were asked to circle up to two roles for each question.

Table 4.2 showed that the role priority of ministry for parish clergy was split between two emphases: sacramental and pastoral. The first comprised teaching the Christian faith, converting others to faith, conducting worship, administration of the sacraments, and in prayer and being a spiritual role model. The second comprised visiting, counselling and helping people, and supervising pastoral work. Table 4.2 shows clearly that although the pastoral emphasis fits priests' expectations in both their preferred and actual time spent in this role, less time than priests would like is spent in teaching the Christian faith and in

providing prayer and spiritual leadership. The effect of this lack of congruity on the role of priests in the spiritual development of their parishioners will be discussed further.

Most significant however is the finding that 32% of priests report that administration has become one of their main roles (a higher percentage than any other role listed) although only 2% agree with this situation. Administrative tasks have become increasingly burdensome as a result of structural changes in the organization, where due to diminishing numbers of priests, one priest may have responsibility for a number of parishes. This responsibility requires priests to participate fully in administration and running the parishes unless they are to become powerless sacramental functionaries. However, the size of parishes means that administration is becoming overwhelming, and is a source of deep dissatisfaction for many, who feel deprived of the opportunity to minister in the way they wish. Comments on the CCLS 2001 survey illustrate some of this dissatisfaction:

Even with support, it takes me many hours a week to deal with all of the administrative tasks, meetings and required follow-up ... and I'm dedicated and systematic. God help those who aren't!

We need constant revision of the role of the priest, making provision for him to exercise his ministry free from administrative constraints and constant meetings.

Free Parish priests and assistant priests from the deluge of useless paperwork

I feel strongly that too much of the administration side of the parish is left to the priest. A priest needs to be freed up so that he can carry out his pastoral work, he was ordained for this and it is a pity that most priests spend too much time sitting in an office.

Take away the administrative work the priest has to do, and let us get back to visiting people and being with people.

Relieve priests of the ultimate responsibility for parish buildings, maintenance, schools, so that they can be pastors to people, and take away the things that cause stress and pressure.

Priests should only do what pertains to priestly ministry (facilitator of parish community, celebrant of liturgies, spiritual guidance). All else

should be the responsibility of the parishioners. Save us from administration please!!!

I think there should be less administration in parishes for priests, while secretaries are of great benefit, there is still an inordinate amount of administration to do. I am good at administration work but it taxes the priest's energy and time.

Parishes bog their priests down in way too much administration. Priests become corporate administrators instead of proclaimers of the Gospel.

These statements poignantly articulate the tension between the pressure to fulfil a leadership position that entails a burgeoning amount of administrative work, and trying to express the pastoral and ministerial function intrinsic to the organizational and self-identity of the priest. Many respondents called for greater participation by the laity as one way of relieving priests of this burden (CCLS, 1996, and 2001). If greater participation by the laity extends to the ordination of married men, then the possibility of further erosion of the traditional identity of priests is inevitable.

Effects of Lumen Gentium

De-legitimation of clergy sacredness and distinctiveness has emerged since Vatican II, with changes to liturgy and re-emphasis on the call of all Christians to ministry (*Lumen Gentium* (Flannery, 1977)). This encouragement provides impetus for increased lay participation in liturgy and decisions about key areas of parish life, and also raises the issue of ordination requirements, which was ranked the second most frequent topic in respondent comments on the CCLS 2001 survey. The following examples of comments by priests are just a few of the many received in the survey:

Parishioners are, in my experience, very caring for their priests, but still incredibly demanding in what they expect of us. The workload is often crippling and bad for a priest's health and welfare. We must look at ordaining local men (and women!) for Eucharist and perhaps readmitting men who have left the ministry.

Ordain married men.

Ordain proven, educated men, married or single who are already leaders in their fields or work part-time. Change the disciplinary requirements for ordination ... long overdue. Just do it.

Why not canvass inactive married men for the priesthood and fill the parishes that are vacant. What would be wrong with the existence of celibate and married clergy in this time of need, for the continuance of the church?

We must look at ordaining local men (and women) for Eucharist and perhaps readmitting men who have left ministry.

The void between the priest and people is too vast, married clergy, women priests, weekend priests, career priests (10 year contract), would put priesthood in a more possible range.

Change the laws (criteria) for entry to the priesthood.

A willingness from the Vatican downwards, for an enlarged base for potential priests by including for possible selection as candidates for the priesthood, suitable persons who have resigned from priesthood, suitable married laymen and suitable married and single women.

I believe the Anglicans have a better system than ours. As my mate said years ago 'they may be wrong on some things but they are not wrong on everything'. Allow ordination for males and females. Celibacy respected for those that choose that way of life. Allow marriage before or after ordination for others.

Make celibacy optional for priests. Allow priests to marry if they wish. Undo the harm of *Humanae Vitae*.

I believe that we could maintain celibacy (for those who wish it - so there is no threat to tradition). PP's should nominate good men (married or not) intelligent and personable, who would be willing to study at night, scripture, sacramental theology and pastoral theology. These could be ordained quite soon and would guarantee to continue their study and look after the parish on a roster basis each weekend. They could continue their normal work so that there would not be a huge financial strain on the parish. So we could have a married clergy without losing a celibate clergy for those who wish that. Each parish could have up to 6 or 8 married priests so that their duties were not onerous. When they retired from work they could give more time to the parish. In the meantime, pastoral associates would run the parish from day to day.

Make celibacy optional. Open the theological investigations of women's priesthood or other form of liturgical and pastoral leadership and decision-making.

Currently, there is no possibility of a change to ordination criteria, with obligatory celibacy being restated by Pope John II as recently as 1992 (Sipe, 1995). This will be discussed further in the celibacy section in Chapter 5.

The powers bestowed on priests at ordination ensure continuation of their unique sacramental role, but some blurring of this has occurred through what some have described as the increased clericalization of the laity in order to get them more involved in the work of the church. McGovern (2002) argues that these practices promote a functionalistic concept of ministry, rather than a recognition of the sacramental reality of an ordained priest. “The process of laity empowerment has been understood largely as a conferring of different ministries on them, tasks which previously were often carried out by the clergy” (p.13).

Religious and spiritual leadership

Greater awareness and education of the laity, particularly in the area of theology, challenges the primacy of priestly identity as spiritual leaders. The expectations of this often more highly educated laity, adds pressure on clergy to continue to focus on their own faith development and spiritual growth in order to maintain this core aspect of their role. This role is clearly set out in the Documents of Vatican II ‘Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests’ which states, “the first task of priests ... is the proclamation of God to all” (Muggeridge, 2000, p. 8). Although 92% of clergy respondents in 2001 reported that they had experienced from *some* to *much* growth of faith commitment in the past year, most of this was through their own (unspecified) private activity or through the work of the parish, rather than through ongoing spiritual development programs, or participation in formation and training (CCLS, 1996, 2001). If priests are to preach credible homilies, and translate the Gospel teachings with inspiration and relevance to the increasingly complex lives of their parishioners, ongoing spiritual formation is essential.

Analysis of data from the CCLS 1996 Survey shows a lack of participation by priests in programs designed to broaden their education and potentially enrich their ability to nurture the faith and spiritual growth of their church communities. In 1996, only 31% of priests had done two semesters or more of formal study during the last 10 years, and only

28% had undertaken a live-in renewal program lasting 2 months or more during that same period (CCLS, 1996).

For Catholic attenders surveyed in 2001, *much growth* in faith was experienced by a mere 39% of respondents, with only 17% of that growth attributed to the parish (NCLS, 2001). This supports the finding in Table 4.2 that discrepancies between the preferred and actual time spent in teaching the Christian faith, providing prayer and being a spiritual role model, is affecting a central aspect of ministry, and suggests that priests are having declining influence on the spiritual development of their parishioners.

A similar experience was reported in a study by a team at Duke University in the United States, where 70% of Christian clergy indicated that the difficulty of reaching people with the Gospel is one of the primary problems faced by pastors in today's world. It was argued that, even though leadership is a basic pastoral task, effective pastors urgently need training for preaching if they are to fulfil the most salient aspect of their calling in the current complex world (J. Carroll et al., 2002).

Priests are concerned about this situation, and many survey participants emphasized a need for priests to have more opportunity for further education, and spiritual development (CCLS, 1996, 2001):

The language of the church is often difficult to translate into language that is understandable and has resonance with laity. Particularly with regard to ethical issues which are often very emotive. It requires rigorous academic ability, and there are very few authorities in the church that can do that well.

Bridge the gap between lived challenges and the scriptures; learn to make and take time to read more widely in science, theology, and sport. ie. Broaden our perspectives and look at life in wonder – not just through a narrow theological lens, but also through people's lives, experiences and challenges.

The priest needs spare time to upgrade his knowledge and update his abilities. Some dioceses have ongoing education for clergy every year, which is relevant and helpful.

Compulsory updating of programs every 5 years and more professional development every year. Get rid of those that are incapable of doing the job – better no priest than a negative one!

We need some encouragement to do post graduate studies, a sabbatical, personal and spiritual courses.

Promotion of ongoing formation as essential to priestly ministry.

To convince the clergy they need ongoing formation, supervision, spiritual direction so as to become more fully rounded men is one of the greatest needs in our church.

(We need) more reverent liturgies, more popular devotions, more spiritual leadership in prayer, asceticism and true holiness. More intense spiritual development of priests in seminaries, and more intense liberal arts education in solid catholic university setting after full seminary training and ordination (Respondent, 2001).

(We need) opportunities to pursue and deepen the spiritual journey, e.g., training in meditation, contemplation, spiritual direction ... Ongoing opportunities for professional development (sabbatical, study leave, seminars) ought to be constant. Encouragement for, and supervision of spiritual direction and professional supervision ought to be a priority.

Much depends on the attitude of the priest. His personal development depends on an acknowledgement that there is no growth unless he takes certain steps. I would emphasize: Deeper prayer life and fidelity to the prayer of the church. Physical well-being – regular check-ups. Sabbatical every 10 years (bishop responsibility for this). Attendance at deanery and diocesan in-service days to improve professional competence.

Priests must be given regular access (time off and finance) to attend renewal programs. In fact, they must be required to undertake such programs.

The above comments echo those of teachers responding to semi-structured interviews in a study exploring the relationships and quality of partnerships between teachers and clergy conducted by Tinsey in 1998. Respondents in that research commented that many clergy were out of date because they had not done any recent study or spiritual courses, and therefore “do not have their finger on the pulse of where people are at or how to reach them, largely because they are out of touch with themselves” (Tinsey, 1998, p.48). Consequently, Tinsey (1998) concludes that priests are inadequate spiritually, and are

unable to help others (laity) in this day and age. In the NCLS 1996 survey, attenders were asked to rate the degree of helpfulness of homilies at Mass. Results supported Tinsey's assertion and identified the strengths and weaknesses in the preaching of their parish priest (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Attenders' assessment of homilies/sermons (percentages).

Statement	Never/ Rarely	Occasio- nally	Usually/ Always	Total
<i>"The homilies/sermons at Mass in my parish ..."</i>				
Are helpful in understanding church teaching/sacraments	6	22	72	100
Strengthen my awareness of God's love for me	7	24	69	100
Inspire me to try to live a more Christian life	8	23	69	100
Clearly explain scripture and apply it to life	9	27	64	100
Are helpful to the faith of older people	9	27	64	100
Strengthen my love for God	10	26	64	100
Are helpful for family life	10	31	59	100
Shed light on moral issues	14	31	55	100
Are helpful on issues of personal everyday life	15	31	54	100
Help me understand issues in the news in the light of faith	15	33	52	100
Promote awareness and action on justice in society	15	34	51	100
Are interesting and helpful for youth (aged 12-17)	39	35	26	100
Evaluative comments				
Sound as if they have been well prepared	6	16	78	100
Don't hold my attention or interest	41	32	27	100
Just repeat the scripture reading in different words	48	32	20	100
Are too long	47	37	16	100
Concentrate too much on parish finances	64	24	12	100

n = 3,121

Source: NCLS, 1996.

The strengths in homilies identified by attenders (Table 4.3) were those that pertained to the fundamental religious aspects of Catholicism; understanding church teaching, scripture, strengthening awareness of God's love, strengthening parishioners' love for God, and in inspiring them to live a more Christian life. Homilies were not strong in the translation of church teaching into relevance for an increasingly complex society, and the application of faith in daily life and work. Of particular concern is the finding that 74%

of parishioners said that the homilies at Mass were *never, rarely, or only occasionally* interesting and helpful to youth, 46% find that homilies are *never, rarely, or only occasionally* helpful on issues of personal everyday life, 48% find that homilies are *never, rarely, or only occasionally* helpful for understanding issues in the light of faith, and 49% find that homilies are *never, rarely, or only occasionally* helpful for promoting awareness and action on justice in society. Without this relevance and application, religious belief becomes mere dogma, alienated from the lived reality of parishioners. As 87% of the respondents attend Mass at least once a week, and 77% were educated to the level of diploma/associate diploma level, the results in Table 4.3 indicate a clear need for priests to continue with their faith development through more formal study (NCLS, 1996).

Trying to live up to lay perceptions of what constitutes an ideal priest compounds the drive within clergy to achieve congruence with an internal ideal self. A study by LaRussa conducted in 1980 (Yura, 1990, p. 51) found that after people's demand on their time, attempting to fulfill parishioners' expectations, was the second most difficult area in ministry. This was also highlighted in the qualitative material from the 2001 survey:

It can be very stressful. The laity is demanding more and more. You have to be on hand all the time. You have to be strong sometimes and say 'I'm sorry but I'm only human'.

In the conduct of worship, administration of the sacraments and pastoral work, priestly identity as ministers remains largely intact, and perhaps explains the survey finding that 81% of priests rate themselves as very effective in their current ministry (CCLS, 2001). However, criteria for evaluating effectiveness were not specified, so the rating is somewhat vague; it is more an idiosyncratic evaluation of the way a priest feels about what he does, rather than a measure of outcome.

SUMMARY

Priests risk losing further ground as leaders of faith and spiritual development, unless both organizational review and clergy participation in training and education programs bring identity and role into congruence in this area. Appropriate leave arrangements, and greater support by diocesan authorities for ongoing training and formation of priests,

would go partway to assisting priests maintain their identity as spiritual leaders. However, with the current aging of the priest population and consequent decline in years left in active ministry, it seems possible that many would lack the motivation for participation in ongoing development programs.

PRIEST AS SELF-ACTUALIZING

Background

Given the challenges to the traditional perception of the church and of clergy, and the consequent deconstruction of aspects of traditional priestly identity, how well equipped psychologically and emotionally are priests in order to cope with ambiguities in identity and role and maintain a sense of satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing?

Few comprehensive psychological studies of priests have been undertaken since a major study on priests in the United States was conducted by Andrew Greeley in 1969 using the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI; (Greeley, 1972). 'Self-actualization' was the principle of this instrument, and Greeley found that active priests fell between normal and non-self-actualized groups on most scale measures. Kennedy and Heckler's research conducted at the same time as Greeley's (1972) produced a similar finding with 75% of the cross-sectional sample studied, not developed to full maturity (p. 52). Kennedy and Heckler's (1972) results showed that a significant number of priests in the sample were found to have reached a level of overall personal growth well below what would be expected of them, given their age, the careful selection and the lengthy training they had undergone.

Previous psychological studies (from 1931 to 1972) of priests and seminarians had shown that religious life attracted more than its share of introverted individuals with feelings of inferiority (Moore (1936), cited in Kennedy & Heckler, 1972), and concluded that pre-psychotic individuals were frequently attracted to the priesthood. Personality studies, particularly using the popular Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), consistently found that religious samples scored higher on several scales indicative of

maladjustment. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Kennedy and Heckler (1972) pointed out that although the MMPI is useful for detecting personality problems, emotional problems and psychopathology, it has limited use in identification of positive personality traits.

The NEO-FFI was employed in analysis of the CCLS 2001 survey of priests, in order to test the hypothesis that *a positive association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and a priest's ability to balance the tensions within role ambiguity*. Rodgerson and Piedmont (1998), and Costa and McCrae (1992) found the five factors of the NEO-FFI to be predictive of coping ability and subjective wellbeing, and to be an appropriate psychological measure in religious research without the addition of specific religious constructs (Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998).

ANALYSIS

Mean priest raw scores were calculated for the five factors of the NEO-FFI: Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C) (Table 4.4). The raw scores were then transformed into *T* scores, so that comparison between the priest population and the general male population could be made (Costa, 1992, p.12). Costa found it useful to summarize results in terms of five levels. These levels are *very low* (*T* = 34 and lower), *low* (*T* = 35-44), *average* (*T* = 45-55), *high* (*T* = 56-65), and *very high* (*T* = 66 and higher) (Costa, 1992, p.13).

Table 4.4 NEO-FFI Raw scores to *T* scores of priests.

Domain	Priests (Mean raw score)	Priests (Mean <i>T</i> score)
Neuroticism	24	59
Extraversion	33	60
Openness	25	46
Agreeableness	31	48
Conscientiousness	37	55

n = 374

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey of Priests in Parish Ministry. Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 4.4 shows that overall for Neuroticism and Extraversion, priests fall into the *high* range, and for Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, priests are in the *average* range. Table 4.5 shows the percentage of priests falling into each range of the five domains compared with Costa's approximate overall percentage distribution of individuals who had completed the NEO-PI-R (shown in brackets).

Table 4.5 Percentage of priests in *T* score ranges for domains of the Neo-FFI.

(Costa's approximate distribution)	Very low (7%)	Low (24%)	Average (38%)	High (24%)	Very High (7%)	Total
Neuroticism	0	7	36	37	20	100
Extraversion	1	6	29	37	27	100
Conscientiousness	4	12	36	36	12	100
Agreeableness	11	27	37	21	4	100
Openness	9	28	45	16	2	100

n = 381

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey of Priests in Parish Ministry. Analysis: Jane Power.

It can be seen in Table 4.5 that the distribution of the priest sample differs markedly in several cells from Costa's approximate distribution from a general population of males. 'Neuroticism' shows lower percentages than would be expected with a normal distribution in the *very low* and *low* categories, and conversely, much higher percentages than expected in the *high* and *very high* categories.

The finding of *high* 'Neuroticism' in priests concurs with worldwide studies of Catholic clergy as well as clergy in other denominations throughout the years since Kennedy and Heckler's (1972) research. A study of Anglican clergy in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales using the Eysenck Personality Profiler (EPP) found that their clergy sample were higher on four of the seven personality traits for Neuroticism than the norm for men in

general. These were anxiety, guilt, low self-esteem and dependency, suggesting that there is a general trend towards high Neuroticism in men who are attracted to ministry (Francis, Jones, Jackson, & Robbins, 2001).

High 'N' scores relate to susceptibility to psychological distress. Costa (1992) suggests “perhaps because disruptive emotions interfere with adaptation, men and women high in Neuroticism are also prone to have irrational ideas, to be less able to control their impulses, and to cope more poorly than others with stress” (p. 14). *High 'N'* scores are also found to lead to diminished job satisfaction due to the generally negative nature of high N individuals (Judge et al., 2002). The implications of high Neuroticism will be looked at in more detail later.

On the other hand, Extraversion showed that lower percentages than expected with a normal distribution were found in the *very low* and *low* categories, and higher percentages than expected were found in the *high* and *very high* categories. Extraverts have been found to experience more positive emotions, enjoy being with people and are energetic and optimistic (Costa, 1992), which generalizes to job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002). Again, because Extraversion is an important factor because of its strong association with wellbeing, and because 60% of priests have profiles that reflect high ranges of ‘E’, this will be discussed further.

A similar but slightly less extreme pattern to ‘N’ and ‘E’ (above) was found in ‘Conscientiousness’, with lower than expected percentages in the *very low* and *low* categories, and higher than expected percentages in the *high* and *very high* categories. According to Costa (1992), high scorers on Conscientiousness tend to be purposeful, strong-willed, and determined, and experience high academic and occupational achievement. On the negative side, *high 'C'* may lead to annoying fastidiousness, compulsive neatness or workaholic behavior. Costa (1992) suggests that low scorers on Conscientiousness are not necessarily lacking in moral principles, but may be less focused on achievement, more hedonistic and more interested in sex (Costa, 1992, p. 16). A positive association between Conscientiousness and job satisfaction was established by

DeNeve and Cooper (1998) in a meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective wellbeing.

‘Agreeableness’ came closest to reflecting the approximate normal distribution found by Costa, with only slight deviation from this norm on *very low* and *low* (3 higher on both), and *high* and *very high* (2 and 3 lower, respectively). Agreeableness, like Extraversion, is primarily a dimension of interpersonal tendencies. Theoretically, a higher level of intimacy should lead to greater levels of wellbeing (Judge *et al.*, 2002) and, consequently, Judge suggests, wishing to be in co-operative harmony with others should equate with job satisfaction. Priests’ ‘A’ profiles are very similar to the general population.

Openness to experience is related to scientific and artistic creativity, curiosity about inner and outer worlds, and a preference for variety. Individuals with high Openness are more willing to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values than those with low Openness (Costa, 1992), and DeNeve and Cooper (1998) suggests that “Openness to experience is a double edged sword that predisposes individuals to feel both the good and the bad more deeply” (p. 199). This makes its directional influence on subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction unclear (Judge *et al.*, 2002). Percentages of priests in the *very low*, *low* and *average* ranges were higher (2, 4 and 7 points, respectively) than expected with Costa’s approximate normal distribution, and lower in the *high* and *very high* categories (8 and 5 points, respectively).

Comparison between the distributions of priests *T* scores and Costa’s approximate distribution for the five variables ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extraversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ was also analyzed using non-parametric tests to find ‘goodness of fit’ Chi-square. As Table 4.5 showed that percentages in several categories were below the level that would limit the probability of type 1 error, Costa’s five categories were collapsed into three: *low average* and *high* with *very low* included in *low* and *very high* included in *high*. The analysis showed a significant Chi-square value and lack of fit between the overall observed and expected *N* for each variable (Table 4.6).

Neuroticism $\chi^2(2, n = 360) = 143.95, p < .001$, Extraversion $\chi^2(2, n = 360) = 196.55, p < .001$, Openness $\chi^2(2, n = 360) = 29.44, p < .001$, Agreeableness $\chi^2(2, n = 360) = 8.322, p < .001$, Conscientiousness $\chi^2(2, n = 360) = 21.67, p < .001$.

Table 4.6 Non-parametric ‘goodness of fit’ Chi-square test: Comparison of priests’ distribution and Costa’s approximate distribution.

		Observed <i>N</i>	Expected <i>N</i>	Residual	Mean Min = 1 Max = 5	<i>SD</i>
Neuroticism	Low	25	111.6	-86.6	3.99	1.25
	Average	131	136.8	-5.8		
	High	204	111.6	92.4		
	Total	360				
Extraversion	Low	26	111.6	-85.6	4.13	1.25
	Average	105	136.8	-31.8		
	High	229	111.6	117.4		
	Total	360				
Openness	Low	134	111.6	22.4	2.61	1.43
	Average	162	136.8	25.2		
	High	64	111.6	-47.6		
	Total	360				
Agreeableness	Low	134	111.6	22.4	2.76	1.57
	Average	135	136.8	-1.8		
	High	91	111.6	-20.6		
	Total	360				
Conscientiousness	Low	52	111.6	-59.6	3.70	1.44
	Average	130	136.8	-6.8		
	High	178	111.6	66.4		
	Total	360				

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Residuals in Table 4.6 showed that the largest differences between the observed and expected *N*’s were *high* ‘E’ (117), ‘N’ (92) and ‘C’ (66), respectively, with the differences being dispersed among the *low* categories, rather than the *average* categories for all three variables. ‘O’ showed a smaller than expected *N* in the *high* category, and

‘A’ showed the most congruent ‘goodness of fit’ over the three categories. Therefore, the priests in the current survey are higher on ‘N’, ‘E’ and ‘C’ than the population norms for these factors, and like the population norms for ‘A’.

Implications of correlations between factors

In order to explore associations between the five factors of the NEO-FFI, Pearson’s correlation was performed (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Pearson correlation between NEO-FFI factors (sig. 2 tailed).

	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Neuroticism	1				
Extraversion	-.44**	1			
Openness	-.02	.19**	1		
Agreeableness	-.32**	.32**	.09	1	
Conscientiousness	-.41**	.48**	.11*	.33**	1

n = 380 ** = < .01, * = < .05

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

Results in Table 4.7 showed significant negative correlations between ‘N’ and ‘E’ (-.44), ‘A’ (-.32), and ‘C’ (-.41), all of which have been found to associate with a sense of wellbeing and experience of job satisfaction (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). This means that priests who are *high* or *very high* on ‘N’ would be unlikely to be *high* or *very high* on ‘E’, ‘A’, or ‘C’; factors that could potentially mitigate the negative effects of *high* or *very high* ‘N’ in their profiles. Research has shown that Neuroticism is the strongest (negative) correlate of job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002), so these results have significant implications in terms of formation and training, and structural supports for priests.

DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found with single degree of freedom contrasts between the five factors, that Neuroticism and Conscientiousness correlated (negatively) most

strongly with subjective wellbeing (p. 17). Cross-tabulation of ‘Neuroticism’ with ‘Conscientiousness’ was performed in order to determine percentages of priests found in the *high* ‘N’ ranges who are also in the *low* ‘C’ ranges. According to Costa (1992), high Neuroticism is associated with negative affect, low self-esteem, and depression, and the inability to resist impulses and temptations. As mentioned earlier (p.29), some evidence suggests that low Conscientiousness has been associated with individuals who are more hedonistic and interested in sex (Costa, 1992, p. 16). Therefore it could be argued that priests with *high* ‘N’ and *low* ‘C’ would be vulnerable to a range of problems, including stress and burnout, depression, substance abuse and inappropriate sexual behavior.

Table 4.8 Cross-tabulation of Neuroticism with Conscientiousness.

	Low C	Average C	High C	Total
Low N				
Count	0	7	19	26
Expected	4.1	9.3	12.6	26.0
Percent	0.0	26.9	73.1	100.0
Average N				
Count	8	47	76	131
Expected	20.9	46.7	63.4	131.0
Percent	6.1	35.9	58.0	100.0
High N				
Count	51	78	84	213
Expected	34.0	76.0	103.0	213.0
Percent	23.9	36.6	39.4	100.0

n = 370

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

Due to very small numbers in the cells for Costa’s *very low* and *very high* ranges, these were collapsed into the *low* and *high* ranges, and together with *average* created three ranges for each of the factors for cross tabulation. A significant correlation (as with Table 4.7) was found between ‘N’ and ‘C’, $\chi^2(4, n = 370) = 30.569, p < .001$. Table 4.8 showed that 24% of the respondents who are in the *high* range for ‘N’ also fall into the *low* range for ‘C’, with higher counts than would be expected under the null hypothesis in the *high* ‘N’ *low* ‘C’ cell. Conversely, lower than expected counts were found in the *high* range for ‘N’ with the *high* range for ‘C’. For those in the *average* range for ‘N’, lower than expected counts were found in the *low* ‘C’ cell, and higher than expected counts were found in the *high* ‘C’ cell. That 24% of priests (1% of the total sample) in the *high*

range for 'N' are also in the *low* 'C' range points to a need for further research to explore the effect on the lives and coping ability of priests with this particular combination of factors in their personality profiles.

The combination of high Neuroticism and high Extraversion has also been linked with the potential for acting out in undesirable ways (Ryckman, 2000, p. 371). Eysenck found that extraverts tend to be undersocialized because they find it more difficult (due to lower cortical arousal) to learn social rules. He claimed that introverts tend to be oversocialized because their chronically high cortical arousal facilitates learning, and they tend to feel guilt and anxiety at the thought of violating rules. However, Eysenck suggested that high levels of Extraversion in combination with high levels of Neuroticism, can facilitate the development of antisocial responses and criminality. Extreme extraverts who are also high on Neuroticism tend to express primarily the "impulsivity, rather than the sociability component of Extraversion" (Ryckman, 2000, p. 371). Ryckman (2000) claims that research has shown that less control of impulses (N) combined with less inhibition (E) can be problematic (p.371).

As high percentages of respondents who participated in the survey for this research were found to have *high* or *very high* T- scores for both 'N' (57%) and 'E' (64%) (Table 4.5), analysis was performed to ascertain numbers who are *high* or *very high* on both Neuroticism and Extraversion, and therefore may be at high risk for expressing uninhibited, impulsive or antisocial behaviour. Because we are interested in extremes in this instance, Costa's five categories: *very low*, *low*, *average*, *high*, and *very high* were used for the variables 'Neuroticism' and 'Extraversion' even though a number of cells have a zero or very low frequency (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Frequencies of priests' Neuroticism ranges with Extraversion ranges.

	Very low E		Low E		Average E		High E		Very high E		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very low N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low N	0	0	0	0	6	22	8	30	13	48	27	100
Average N	0	0	2	1	32	24	49	36	53	39	136	100
High N	0	0	10	7	42	30	62	44	27	19	141	100
Very high N	4	5	12	16	30	40	20	27	9	12	75	100

n = 379

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 4.9 shows that 12% of the respondents with *very high* 'N' scores were also in the *very high* range for 'E'. This result is relatively insignificant as only 9 of 379 respondents fall into this category, which is only .02% of the total sample. Thirty-one percent (or 1% of the total) of those who are *high or very high* on 'N' are also in the *very high* 'E' cell. More research is needed to determine the combination of levels of both the factors to accurately predict those who have a predisposition to overriding the sociability inherent in 'E' with the impulsivity of extreme 'E' and high 'N'.

Medium positive significant correlations were found on 'E' with 'A' (.32) and 'C' (.48), and a small significant correlation was found on 'E' with 'O' (.19) (Table 4.9). Table 4.8 showed that percentages of priests in the *high* and *very high* ranges for 'E' were 60% and 'C' were 49%, suggesting that many priests will have personality profiles that are high on both of these traits. As Conscientiousness and Extraversion have been found to closely follow Neuroticism as a correlate of job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002), priests in the high ranges for 'E' or 'C', and particularly priests in the high ranges for both factors, are likely to be very satisfied in their job.

Cross-tabulation analysis using the variables 'Extraversion' and 'Conscientiousness' and three ranges, *low*, *average* and *high* was performed in order to ascertain percentages of priests who are in the *high* ranges on both factors (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Cross-tabulation of Extraversion with Conscientiousness.

	Low C	Average C	High C	Total
Low E				
Count	14	9	4	27
Expected	4.3	9.7	13.1	27.0
Percent	51.9	33.3	14.8	100.0
Average E				
Count	19	53	36	108
Expected	17.0	38.7	52.2	108.0
Percent	33.3	49.1	33.3	100.0
High E				
Count	25	70	138	233
Expected	36.7	83.6	112.7	233.0
Percent	10.7	30.0	59.2	100.0

$n = 368$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

A significant correlation (as with Table 4.9) was found between ‘E’ and ‘C’, $C^2(4, n = 381) = 50.802, p < .001$. Table 4.10 showed that for those priests with *high* ‘E’, a higher count than would be expected under the null hypothesis was found in the *high* ‘C’ cell, and lower than expected (under the null hypothesis) counts were found in the *high* ‘E’ *low* ‘C’ cell, and the *average* ‘C’ and ‘E’ cell. Not surprisingly, higher than expected counts were found in the *low* ‘E’ and ‘C’ cell, with lower than expected counts in the *low* ‘E’ *high* ‘C’ cell. Table 4.10 supports the suggestion that many priests are both extraverted and conscientious with 59% of the respondents found in the *high* range for both ‘E’ and ‘C’. This cell was the largest discrepant cell count according to what would have been expected under the null hypothesis.

Implications of Neuroticism scores on clergy job satisfaction and wellbeing

According to Horney’s (1950) psychoanalytic view of personality development, a high *T* score on the Neuroticism factor could be seen to indicate the potential for intrapsychic conflict through lack of fit between the self-concept and the ideal self. Table 4.5 shows that 57% of priests are in the *high* to *very high* range for ‘Neuroticism’, leading to the possibility that many priests consciously or unconsciously struggle with who they actually are and who they think they should be in both their personal and their priestly identity. Consequently, it could be argued that many have an increased tendency to experience negative affect such as sadness, anger, and guilt (Costa & McCrae, 1992),

suffer from poor self-esteem (Fickova, 1999), and to cope more poorly with stress than those with *average* or *low* ‘Neuroticism’ scores (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Fickova (1999) studied 242 14–17 year old adolescents, using analysis of relationships between personality dimensions (NEO-FFI, STAI) and self-esteem indicators, Rosenberg’s Self esteem scale; the Self-Concept Clarity Scale (developed by Campbell *et al.*, 1996, as found in Fickova (1999)); the State Self Esteem Scale (developed by Heatherton & Polivy, 1991, as found in Fickova (1999)). High scores in self-esteem indicators were found with significantly higher Extraversion and Conscientiousness, while low self-esteem correlated significantly with high Neuroticism, high state and high trait anxiety (Fickova, 1999). Piedmont (1999) found that the five personality traits of the NEO-FFI remain stable over the adult life-span; 80% unchanging over 25 years, and 60% estimated to remain constant over 50 years. However, a more recent study by Srivastava, John, Gosling, and Potter (2003) found some increase in the scores for Conscientiousness during a person’s 20s, and some increase in the scores for Agreeableness in one’s 30s. The scores for Neuroticism declined for women with age, but not for men, so the same connection between Neuroticism and self-esteem as Fickova’s sample can reasonably be assumed for the subjects of this research.

Although using a different instrument (the Personal Orientation Inventory [POI]), and conducting his study over 30 years ago, Greeley (1972) found that the emotional problems distinctive to the priests in his study, were the “inability to be sensitive to one’s own needs and feelings and particularly the capacity to accept one’s own aggressive impulses” (p. 68), suggestive of high Neuroticism levels. That many priests have difficulty coping adequately with negative affect was supported almost 20 years later in a study by Swinburne (1991), where priests were found to be higher than the norm on four of the six facets of the NEO-PI-R associated with the Neuroticism domain (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 Priests and Neuroticism facet scores compared with non-clerical norms.

NEO-FFI Facet	Mean		SD		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Priests	Norms	Priests	Norms		
N1 (Anxiety)	15.3	13.3	5.3	4.8	4.22	.001
N2 (Hostility)	10.5	10.8	4.4	4.4	-0.83	N/S
N3 (Depression)	14.8	11.9	5.4	4.7	6.20	.001
N4 (Self-consciousness)	15.4	13.5	4.5	4.1	4.84	.001
N5 (Impulsiveness)	15.7	15.2	4.4	4.4	1.26	N/S
N6 (Vulnerability)	11.1	9.6	3.8	3.7	4.34	.001

n = 201

Source: Adapted from Swinburne, 1991, p.86.

Table 4.11 shows that priests were significantly higher than the norm on the Neuroticism facets for depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability and anxiety (respectively), and not significantly different from the norm on the facets of hostility and impulsiveness.

Standard multiple regression analysis produced a positive correlation (.49) between the dependent variable ‘The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain’ and the independent variable ‘Neuroticism’ (CCLS, 2001), lending support to the high *T* scores of clergy in comparison to the norm in N3 (depression).

Neuroticism is the factor of the NEO-FFI shown clearly by Swinburne (1991) to be associated with the potential for stress and burnout. This finding is supported by multiple regression analysis of the CCLS 2001 survey, where Neuroticism was the only NEO-FFI factor that correlated highly (.52) with stress and was also found to correlate marginally (.26) with levels of frequency of thinking about leaving. Neuroticism shows the largest associations with Maslach Burnout Inventory scales for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, respectively (Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998). Analysis of variance using ‘frequency of thinking of leaving’ as the dependent variable, and ‘stressed in vocation as a priest’ as the independent variable resulted in a significant positive association, $F(6, 366) = 14.76, p < .001$, again emphasizing the vulnerability of priests with *high* ‘Neuroticism’ scores (Swinburne, 1991).

An extensive search was made for data on the NEO-FFI personality inventory for Australian males for comparison with the priest data. This search included consultation with the distributor of the inventory. No published data could be located. However, one Australian researcher was able to provide the author with some unpublished data. Analysis showed that priests' personality profiles differed considerably from the general population, quite markedly in some respects. A computer generated random sample of 120 priests' NEO-FFI *T* scores were compared with Australian males who were employed for at least 8 hours per week. These males had an age range that was roughly comparable to the age range of the priests (26 to 88). Numbers of cases in the age categories were very different for each group; the non-priest group had an even spread of approximately 25% of cases in each of four age group categories (<30, 30<40, 40<50, >50), while the priest group had a spread of age groups of approximately 2% in the <30 group, 7% in the 30<40 group, 17% in the 40<50 group, and 74% in the >50 group.

However, as the NEO-FFI personality traits have been found to have stability over the adult life span (80% over 25 years, and 60% over 50 years; (Piedmont, 1999) it is arguable that comparison between the two groups is still valid. Table 4.12 is a particularly important comparison as both sample populations are Australian males, unlike the population norms developed in the United States which were used to categorize NEO-FFI results in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 (Costa, 1992).

Table 4.12 Comparison of NEO-FFI T scores for priests and other (non-priest) Australian males employed for at least 8 hours per week.

Sample	N	E	O	A	C
Priests	59	60	46	48	55
Other Males	53	51	48	44	45

n = 120 (both groups).

Source: Priests: CCLS, 2001. Other males: Unpublished ACU psychology survey (2001) B. Fallon (Personal communication).

Employed Australian males are in the *average* range for 'N', 'E', 'O' and 'C', and just under average for 'A'. Priests are *high* for 'N' and 'E', and just under *high* on 'C'. They are higher than employed males on 'N' (by 6 *T* score points), 'E' (by 7 *T* score points),

‘A’ (by 4 *T* score points) and ‘C’ (by a large 10 *T* score points), all of which have implications for job satisfaction and wellbeing. Research has shown that ‘C’ is strongly correlated with life satisfaction and happiness, and ‘C’, ‘E’ and ‘A’ are all strong predictors of positive affect.

‘N’ has been found to be the strongest predictor of negative affect and life satisfaction, and equally with ‘E’ (positively), strongly (negatively) predicting happiness (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998, p. 213). Table 4.12 supports the differences found in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 (comparisons between priests’ distribution and Costa’s approximate distribution) with priests being higher than comparative population samples on the three most significant factors of the NEO-FFI in this discussion, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Conscientiousness.

Implications of Extraversion and Conscientiousness scores on clergy job satisfaction and wellbeing

High Extraversion and Conscientiousness have been shown to associate positively with self-esteem (Fickova, 1999), as well as happiness (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998) and job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002). As 60% of priests were found to be in the *high* and *very high* ranges for ‘E’ (Table 4.5), many priests have the capacity to experience positive feelings such as friendliness and cheerfulness, as well as being assertive, gregarious and generally preferring to be with people (Costa, 1992).

Standard multiple regression analysis using the dependent variable ‘the extent to which I am invaded by a sadness I can’t explain’ (depression) with ‘Neuroticism’ as the independent variable resulted in a Pearson’s correlation of .49, $F(1, 376) = 124.31, p < .001, R^2 = .25$. Further standard multiple regression analysis was performed in order to compare ‘E’ and ‘C’ with this result, and test the hypothesis: *Depression will be negatively associated with Extraversion and Conscientiousness*. The dependent variable was again ‘the extent to which I am invaded by a sadness I can’t explain’, and the independent variables were ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Conscientiousness’.

The hypothesis was supported by the analysis, $F(2, 375) = 20.69, p < .001$, and showed significant (but smaller than for N) negative correlations ($p < .001$) between the dependent variable and 'E' (-.29) and 'C' (-.25). As the R^2 for the analysis was only .10, it can be seen that although a significant negative association between depression and 'E' and 'C' was found, 'N' is still the factor more strongly associated with feeling sad. A greater capacity to feel positive affect could reasonably be predicted to equate with job satisfaction. Research by Judge *et al.* (2002) supported the hypothesis "Greater job satisfaction is related to lower Neuroticism and its variants as well as to higher Extraversion and related traits" (p. 538). Conscientiousness was found to correlate negatively with lack of enthusiasm for work (Table 4.13), or conversely, Conscientiousness correlates positively with enthusiasm for work, which supports findings by Judge *et al.* (2002) that high Conscientiousness had positive effects in terms of job satisfaction.

As priests with personality factors in the *high* ranges for 'E' and 'C' are well represented in the sample for this research, many priests have good psychological resources for coping with the current crisis and increasing demands of ministry. Those with high Extraversion scores are predisposed to optimism and enjoyment in the high levels of interaction with parishioners that ministry entails, and those who demonstrate high Conscientiousness have the capacity to be well organized and competent in carrying out an increasingly complex and demanding array of tasks in the current climate.

Personality and perception of effectiveness, and enthusiasm for work

In order to gain insight into how priests feel about themselves and the work that they do, standard multiple regression was performed to test the hypothesis that, *a positive association will be found between low Neuroticism and average to high Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and priests' rating of their effectiveness in ministry.* The dependent variable was the question: 'how would you rate your effectiveness as a priest' and the independent variables were the five factors of the NEO-FFI personality inventory. The analysis showed a significant association between the

dependent and independent variables, $F(5,370) = 20.414$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .22$ (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 NEO-FFI and priests rating of their effectiveness.

	Pearson's Correlation	Standardized Beta
Extraversion	.37***	.18***
Neuroticism	-.34***	-.17***
Conscientiousness	.33***	.12*
Openness	.20***	.14**
Agreeableness	.26***	.10*

$n = 376$ *** = $< .001$, ** = $< .01$, * = $< .05$

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

All five factors showed a significant association with the dependent variable; 'N' negatively, and 'E', 'C', 'O' and 'A' positively. All were shown to make a unique and significant contribution to explaining the variation in priests' rating of their effectiveness, with 'E' (18%) and 'N' (17%) once again the most important factors. As discussed (p.15), the rating for effectiveness is somewhat arbitrary as no criteria were specified on the survey (CCLS, 2001). The rating is more an idiosyncratic evaluation of the way a priest feels about what he does, rather than a measure of outcome, but is relevant for this discussion in that personality factors can be seen to be important in self evaluation.

Currently, 56% of priests report from moderate to high stress in their professional life, and 23% think about leaving, some occasionally, and some constantly (CCLS, 2001). In order to investigate the association between personality factors and stress in ministry, twelve multiple regression analyses were performed to test the hypothesis, *a positive association for Neuroticism and a negative association for Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness will be found between negative feelings and lack of emotional investment and enthusiasm for work.*

The following variables were used as dependent variables and the five factors of the NEO-FFI personality inventory were the independent variables.

1. The extent to which I feel used up and spent
2. The extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change of job
3. The extent to which I feel guilt about what is not happening in this parish or with attenders
4. The extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter
5. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (e.g. aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds)
6. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can't explain
7. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me
8. The extent to which I feel supported in my work
9. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with attenders
10. The extent to which my humor has a cynical, biting tone
11. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the parish
12. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy and look forward to it regularly (CCLS, 2001, pp. 9 -11)).

Table 4.14 Pearson's correlation of NEO-FFI personality factors and stress in priests.

Stress variable	N	E	O	A	C
Feeling used up and spent	.44***	-.38***	-.0	-.23***	-.34***
Just biding time until a change or retirement	.24***	-.32***	-.05	-.25***	-.24***
Feeling guilty about what is not happening in the parish or with attenders	.43***	-.34***	-.07	-.23***	-.37***
Blaming others for problems encountered	.33***	-.11*	.03	-.27***	-.17***
Suffering from physical complaints	.31***	-.12*	-.04	-.15***	-.11*
Invaded by unexplained sadness	.49***	-.28***	.07	-.22***	-.25***
Frustration in completing tasks	.38***	-.26***	-.04	-.26***	-.25***
Feeling unsupported in work	.30***	-.21***	-.10*	-.15**	-.10*
Inflexible with attenders	.25***	-.22***	-.04	-.33***	-.22***
Humor has a cynical, biting tone	.31***	-.28***	-.03	-.40***	-.18***
Lack of emotional investment in work	.15**	-.27***	-.07	-.24***	-.22***
Lack of enthusiasm for work	.40***	-.38***	-.08*	-.25***	-.36***

$n = 372$, *** = <. 001, ** = <. 01, * = <. 05

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis is supported by the analysis for the predicted outcomes of a positive association for Neuroticism, and negative associations for Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Table 4.14). Non-significant associations were found on all variables for Openness, which would support the suggestion by Judge *et al.* (2002), that there is difficulty measuring the directional influence of Openness on affective reactions such as subjective well-being and job satisfaction (p. 4). While 'E' and 'A' were found to have some significant Beta co-efficients, Table 4.15 showed that 'N' was clearly the most important personality factor in explaining the variation in the dependent variables.

Table 4.15 Standardized Beta Coefficients for NEO-FFI personality factors and stress in priests.

Stress variable	N	E	O	A	C	R Square
Feeling used up and spent	.30***	-.19***	.03	-.03	-.12*	.25
Just biding time until a change or retirement	.07	-.21***	.00	-.14*	-.07	.13
Feeling guilty about what is not happening in the parish or with attenders	.30***	-.10	-.02	-.04	-.20***	.24
Blaming others for problems encountered	.30***	.08	.04	-.20***	-.03	.15
Suffering from physical complaints	.31***	.03	-.04	-.10	.03	.10
Invaded by unexplained sadness	.44***	-.10	.10*	-.05	-.02	.27
Frustration in completing tasks	.30***	-.07	-.00	-.12*	-.10	.17
Feeling unsupported in work	.25***	-.14*	.13**	-.06	.10	.12
Inflexible with attenders	.13*	-.06	-.00	-.25***	-.05	.14
Humor has a cynical, biting tone	.18***	-.14*	.02	-.32***	.07	.21
Lack of emotional investment in work	-.01	-.20**	-.01	-.20**	-.01	.10
Lack of enthusiasm for work	.24***	-.17**	-.02	-.07	-.15**	.24

n = 372 *** = <. 001, ** = <. 01, * = <. 05

Source: CCLS, 2001. Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 4.15 showed that in comparison to the other four factors, ‘N’ makes the largest significant unique contribution to the variation in 10 of the 12 dependent variables. Except for the variables ‘just biding time’ and ‘lack of emotional investment in work’, ‘N’ explains between 13% and 44% of the variance in all of the variables pertaining to negative feelings and lack of enthusiasm for work.

Both the view that levels of the five factors of the NEO-FFI remain stable over time, and the view that important social and contextual environments influence trait levels, have recently been found to share some important cross modulations and convergences (Sheldon *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, the finding of *high* ‘N’ levels in priests’ personality profiles highlights once again how important it is for church authorities to recognize that

individuals within the clergy have particular needs for support of ongoing personal development and for coping with stress within the professional domain.

SUMMARY

Analysis of the personality profiles of priests showed that the mean score of Catholic clergy are high on the factors of Neuroticism and Extraversion, which indicates a polarity within the sample, of psychological resources and ability to cope with current ambiguities in identity and role. Those priests with Neuroticism *T* scores in the *high* ranges are vulnerable to psychological and emotional distress, and are more likely to experience negative affect, poor self-esteem, high levels of stress, and lack of satisfaction in work, than those with Neuroticism *T* scores in the *average to low* ranges. Conversely, those priests with Extraversion *T* scores in the high ranges have strong psychological resources for coping with the complexities and demands of parish ministry, particularly if their profile is also in the *high* (rather than the *very high*) range for C. Interpretation of C should be undertaken with caution when *T* scores are in the *very high* range as the negative aspects such as compulsive neatness, annoying fastidiousness or workaholic behavior could be in operation.

The NEO-FFI factor Neuroticism has been shown in many studies, including the current research and those by DeNeve and Cooper (1998), and Judge *et al.* (2002), to be the most significant correlate, as well as the most significant and unique contributor to dependent variables relating to personal wellbeing and work satisfaction. As the mean of priests *T* scores is in the high range, this has the most important implication in terms of informing policies on selection, formation and training of priests, and organizational support structures for diocesan priests.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that although priests' sacramental status in their professional life remains relatively secure, their identity as religious and spiritual leaders is experiencing significant challenge. Investigation shows priests are managing to continue pastoral ministry roles at close to the level they would like, but increasing demands of administrative duties due to structural changes in the church, have hampered priests' own faith and spiritual development, and consequently reduced the satisfaction of laity with the level of spiritual guidance provided by the parish. As a result, greater participation in liturgy and decision-making in parish life, by more highly educated, often theologically competent lay people, strengthen challenges to the distinctive role of priests as religious and spiritual leaders.

Results showed that the psychological profiles of priests in parish ministry indicate that 57% have high Neuroticism scores, and are consequently vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress. This points to a need for sound organizational and structural supports, and networks of close and supportive relationships with others, a topic to be investigated further in this research. Those priests found to have higher than average scores in the factors of Extraversion and Conscientiousness have a greater capacity for coping with the complexities and demands of parish ministry today. Their preference for frequent interaction with others, and keen sense of commitment, duty and responsibility, provide strong psychological resources that potentially mitigate pressures in the current situation of identity and role ambiguity.

NB: It is not the intention of this research into the personality profiles of priests to support the view that personality or character flaws in individuals are solely responsible for the problems experienced currently by clergy and the organization generally. The importance of the research is in examining the degree to which psychological factors, in combination with structural factors, contribute to the personal wellbeing and professional satisfaction of priests.

The primary identity of priests - that of sacred religious and spiritual leaders - was examined in this chapter, as well as their psychological, spiritual and emotional capacity to cope with ambiguities in identity and role. Results of the analyses discussed in this chapter support the primary hypothesis proposed, as satisfaction with priestly ministry was found to be associated with a strong commitment to the vocation and personality profiles that are average to low on Neuroticism, and average to high on Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

In Chapter 5 the identity of priests as celibate moral authority will be looked at in the light of changing attitudes of both priests and laity on the question of celibacy.

PRIEST AS MORAL AUTHORITY*Overview*

In this chapter, the identity of priests as celibate, virtuous and chaste moral authority (as described by McGovern (2002)) is explored. It could be argued that media revelations of clergy sexual abuse over the last decade, which reached saturation point between 2000 and 2003, raised questions about the celibate male culture that is the context of priesthood. The effect of these revelations on perceptions of priests and the organization by laity is examined first, and this is followed by quantitative and qualitative analysis of data focused on the attitude of priests to obligatory celibacy and the effect of this attitude on satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing. Finally, the important question of heterosexuality as a fundamental feature of priestly identity is discussed with reference to research and literature and supporting qualitative data.

The primary hypothesis tested in this chapter is *satisfaction with ministry will be associated with acceptance of church pastoral strategies, age cohorts and NEO-FFI personality factors.*

PRIEST AS OBEDIENT AND CELIBATE MORAL ROLE MODEL

Background

As well as incongruities between role enactment and the identity of priests as religious and spiritual leaders, difficulties with the attainment of a celibate state were found to be experienced both with priests' lack of acceptance of celibacy in principle, and a consequent lack of obedience to it in practice (CCLS, 2001; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995). Constant media reports of instances of clergy sexual abuse have undermined the concept of priests as moral authority, and evidence of numbers of priests with an orientation towards homosexuality challenges what has been found to be the myth of a celibate heterosexual model of priesthood (Crittenden, 2002; Douez, 2002; Gallagher, 2002), further hastening the deconstruction of distinctive aspects of traditional priestly identity.

The effect of the recent and sustained media focus on the numerous cases of clergy sexual abuse is that public perception of priests as trusted moral role models has been eroded. This erosion of trust has potentially serious implications for the maintenance of numbers of church attenders, particularly as 83% of practising Catholics believe that it is the role of the church and by implication, church leaders, to encourage moral values (CCLS, 1996). It is arguable that the media saturation of this vexatious issue has created a swing from a naïve idealization of priests to an equally naïve and distorted negative view (Dowd, 2001; Porter, 2003; Zwart, 2003b). Polarities of opinion on the issue were evidenced in the responses of attenders to clergy sexual abuse statements in both 1996 and 2001 NCLS surveys (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Attenders' responses to statements about clergy sexual abuse (percentages) .

Statement	Disagree	Agree	Unsure	No response	Total
The cases of sexual abuse by priests Has seriously damaged my confidence in the church.	36.0	36.5	11.0	16.5	100
The response of church authorities to these incidents has been inadequate and shows a complete failure of responsibility.	18.7	44.6	17.2	19.5	100
The Church now seems to be taking appropriate steps to meet its responsibility in these cases.	12.0	43.5	25.2	19.3	100
My respect for priests and religious has greatly declined as a result of these offenses	52.0	16.6	11.5	19.9	100

n = 6,368

Source: NCLS, 1996.

Those parishioners who reported that their confidence in the church had been seriously damaged (36%), were almost evenly split with those who said it wasn't (36.5%). Forty-five percent of the respondents giving an opinion on the adequacy of the response of church authorities to the problem believed that response to be inadequate, although 44% agree that the church now seems to be taking appropriate steps to meet its responsibility in sex abuse cases. A small majority (52%) had no less respect for priests and religious as a result.

Although it is only speculation, it is possible that the extremely high rates of *unsure* and *no response* to the statements in Table 5.1 demonstrate how difficult these questions are for church faithful to evaluate both in terms of their confidence in the church as an organization, and their respect for clergy, so caution is needed in interpreting these results. Those who had not made up their minds, or did not respond at all, represent at least one-third, and in the question of whether the church is meeting its responsibility, nearly 45% of respondents agreed.

It is also important to note some potentially limiting problems with the questions in Table 5.1 (which apply in part to the questions in Table 5.2). The first statement defines the degree of damage in confidence as *serious*, which leaves no scope for people who have experienced lesser degrees of damage. Also *confidence in the church* is ambiguous and unclear. Does it mean confidence in the church leaders? Church authorities? Church doctrine? The second statement contains the words *and shows a complete failure of responsibility* that creates a second and separate issue, that is, the response of church authorities could have been inadequate, but may not necessarily show a complete failure of responsibility. In the last statement, once again the words '*greatly declined*' are too strong. There may be those for who respect for priests and religious has somewhat declined or declined a little.

Due to significant differences in the questions asked in the CCLS 2001 survey, direct comparison between the two surveys was not possible, but it can be seen that the response of church authorities to clergy sexual abuse was still rated by attenders as inadequate (57%; Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Attenders' responses to statements about clergy sexual abuse (percentages).

Statement	Disagree	Agree	No Response	Total
The cases of sexual abuse by priests has seriously damaged my confidence in Church authorities.	35.1	49.0	15.8	100
The response of church authorities to clergy sexual abuse is still inadequate. (Full question below)*	17.9	57.8	24.4	100
My confidence in priests in general has not decreased even though some have committed offences	13.7	65.4	20.9	100

n = 15,663

Source: NCLS, 2001

* *Despite procedures that have been set up, the response of Church authorities to clergy sexual abuse is still inadequate: reluctant and legalistic in acknowledging claims; overemphasizing 'damage control' and insufficiently concerned for victims; minimizing offences and leaving offenders in their positions.*

Of major concern for the status and authority of the organization is the response of 49% of attenders who say that the cases of sexual abuse by priests have seriously damaged their confidence in church authorities (Table 5.2). Interestingly, a high proportion (65%) of respondents reported that their confidence in priests in general had not decreased even though some had committed offences, up from the 52% in 1996 who had not lost respect for priests and religious as a result of these offences (Table 5.1). Again though, the question is problematic because of the inclusion of the words '*not decreased*'. It would involve a degree of mental gymnastics to understand accurately and respond to the *disagree* and *strongly disagree* responses (i.e. 'I disagree that my confidence in priests in general has not decreased' means the same as 'my confidence has decreased'). While these results showed considerable lay support for clergy, a continuing decline in confidence in church authorities is evident. Although the percentage of attenders who disagreed that their confidence in the church had been damaged by the sexual abuse issue remained static between the two surveys (37%), the percentage who agreed that their confidence had been damaged rose from 36% in 1996 to 49% in 2001 (note: the category *unsure* was not included in the 2001 survey).

The questions asked in both CCLS surveys investigated only the opinion of attenders, and did not give priests themselves the opportunity to comment on their experience. The effect on clergy, both in their sense of trust in their fellow priests and their attitude to the handling of the problem by church authorities, are significant questions left unanswered by the quantitative data. It would have provided important information, to ask whether both priests and laity were happy with the level of internal, organizational reflection on the source of the problem. As Cozzens (2000) points out:

We need to determine if the systemic structure of the clerical culture and world is unwittingly attracting individuals at risk for misconduct with minors, and we need to determine if the priesthood's systemic structure itself encourages and fosters healthy spiritual and emotional growth in its members (p. 113).

Cozzens (2000) indicated that there is reluctance by authorities in the US Catholic church to encourage thoughtful discussion about "the causes of the problem, its meaning, or implications" (Cozzens, 2000, p. 113). Some evidence that this is also the case in

Australia is in the fact that no questions regarding this issue were asked of priests in either of the CCLS surveys. As one survey respondent commented, “I am surprised the church survey did not address issues of sexuality. The church doesn’t want to deal with this issue in my opinion”.

The CCLS 2001 data were collected prior to the media saturation of the issue of clergy sexual abuse that began in May 2002 and continued almost daily for months, so it would not be unreasonable to assume further damage to the perception by attenders of the church, its authority, and consequently, its priests. It is evident that while 64% of parishioners who regularly attend Mass find their priests inspiring leaders who involve the parish (CCLS, 2001), erosion of the unconditional acceptance of church teachings and loss of faith in church authorities through the sex abuse issue has impacted negatively on lay perceptions of the moral authority of priests.

It is clear that a decline in generalized public confidence in church authorities, and a level of lack of trust in priests has occurred. The effects of the most recent media focus on clergy sex abuse since May 2002, where up to 6% of Boston Catholic priests and religious have been involved in acts of pedophilia with children from the diocese (Bishop Kenny, ABC, Foreign Correspondent, June 19th, 2002) and in Australia (Crittenden, 2002) have yet to be measured. Although the Australian bishops have gone a considerable way towards rebuilding public confidence according to Crittenden (2002), it could be suggested that more needs to be done in order to prevent further erosion of the lay perception of priests as trusted celibate moral authority, and preclude further erosion of fundamental priestly identity.

Priest as celibate

Further to the necessity to embody a sacred identity is the exhortation for priests to maintain a high level of morality and integrity and live these in a way that is both instructional for, and an example to, the laity.

The priesthood calls for a special integrity of life and service and such integrity is supremely suited to our priestly identity. Priestly identity

incorporates both great dignity and the availability proportionate to it. It involves humble readiness to accept the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to transmit to others the fruits of love and peace, to impart to them that sure faith from which derives a profound understanding of human existence and makes possible the application of moral law in the lives of individuals and in the human situation (Flannery, 1977, p.350).

Nowhere else in the lives of priests is this integrity as important as it is in relation to the requirement of celibacy. Writers such as Stark and Finke (2000) and Cozzens (2000) see celibacy and sacredness as central aspects of traditional priestly identity, with ordination setting them apart from the lay population through commitment to a greater religious piety and moral self-discipline. The ‘specialness’ of celibate clerical ministry was illustrated by Pope John II when he said in 1992 that celibacy “is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the father (cf. *Matthew* 19:11; *Corinthians* 7:7) in order more easily to devote themselves to God alone with undivided heart (cf. *I Corinthians* 7:32-34) in virginity or celibacy” (Sipe, 1995, p.58). Canon law states that “clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven...” (Canon 277 1, as cited by Sipe, 1995).

Celibacy as an obligation for ordination to the priesthood originally came into being between the ninth and twelfth centuries, and has been the subject of considerable debate of varying intensity ever since (Kerkhofs, 1995). Evidence of discontent among clergy with obligatory celibacy is provided by numerous studies since the 1960s (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a; Kennedy & Heckler, 1972; Kerkhofs, 1995; Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995). Debates about celibacy largely focus on the question of mandatory celibacy as requisite to ordination, rather than on the ideal of celibate intimacy or celibate love (Sipe, 1995).

Potvin and Suziedelis (1969) commented that “No issue has generated as much debate in recent times as mandatory celibacy for the clergy” (p.76). Their survey found that approximately half the seminarians in their study, 64 % of religious theologians and 72 % of diocesan theologians agreed with a statement that priests, if they so desired, should be allowed to marry (Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969, p.77).

For at least the last 30 years many seminarians and priests have not seen obligatory celibacy as a meaningful reflection of their dedication to Christ. Even in 1969, many opposed it as a “required perpetual vow” (Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969, P. 76). Therefore, with such a level of strong resistance to, or lack of support for the requirement, it is arguable that many would not have the necessary commitment to focus on the difficult task of attainment of a state of celibacy. Perhaps this is what Tierney (1975) meant when he wrote in his booklet:

If you are celibate because the Church says you must be, then I believe, sooner or later, you will collide with the Church over this matter and eventually become very unhappy. But, on the other hand, if you are celibate for reasons of a freely chosen nature and because you desire to dedicate yourself totally to the Lord, then inner peace and joy will, at length, support your sexuality (p.45).

Cozzens (2000) argued that the successful attainment of a celibate lifestyle goes hand in hand with successful negotiation of overall developmental processes, and as such is an expression of a mature personal identity integrated well with a priestly identity. If the argument is accepted, that a commitment to a life of celibacy requires first, sexual maturity that results from a clear masculine sexual identity, and second, assimilation of celibacy as part of a religious identity, (Cozzens, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002; Sipe, 1995) then the high level of psychological and emotional maturity required can be more fully appreciated.

The first requirement, of attaining a clear masculine sexual identity through adequate psychosexual development, is achieved for laymen through expression of the power to attract and be genitally potent with females, and in producing offspring. It is where much of a man’s self image and concept of himself as a male resides, and is proof to himself and others of his masculinity (Becker, 1987). The priesthood, in its requirement of celibacy, thus denies not only the physical expression of sexuality, but also the means by which a male would normally internalize a sense of himself as ‘male’. Coupled with this dilemma is the necessity for seminarians and priests to develop and express characteristics that have traditionally been viewed as feminine qualities, such as

sensitivity, compassion, non-competitiveness and aestheticism (Becker, 1987, p. 66), and at the same time develop a deep inner sense of their masculinity.

Becker (1987) acknowledges that the view that aesthetic qualities largely belong to the feminine is limited and stereotypical, but claims that “in the face of culture’s definition of manhood, the celibate must have the confidence to believe in himself” so that he can deal adequately with these cultural preconceptions (p.66). While it is true that the non-clerical male in Australian society is faced with a similar task in order to integrate a healthy masculine identity, the limitations of the structures and discipline of seminaries and priestly life require a particular focus in order to complete the psychosexual development necessary for a successful commitment to celibacy. Becker (1987) argues that to maintain his celibate state and not be tempted to demonstrate his masculinity through sexual activity, a priest “...must have a deep inner sense that he is adequate, masculine, potent” (p.66).

The second requirement of assimilation of celibacy as part of a religious identity, entails a wholehearted embracing and acceptance of the “gift of celibacy” as divine charism (Sipe, 1995). It requires, according to Cozzens (2000), that celibacy become an expression of intimacy with and love of God, paradoxically deepened through a capacity for honest, non-genital close relationships with both men and women. This allows for transcendence of the very human desires for romantic and sexual relationships, and is experienced as “graced moments of union with God, others, and indeed, all of creation” (p. 35). McGovern describes the supernatural dimension of the charism of celibacy:

The priest who lives for Christ and from Christ usually has no difficulty living out his charism. He is not immune to the normal temptations of the flesh but, as a result of his ascetical training, the daily cultivation of his spiritual life, and the distancing of himself from anything which could constitute a danger to his chastity, he will encounter joy in his vocation and experience a deep spiritual paternity in bringing supernatural life to souls (McGovern, 2002, p.115).

Such requirements present a considerable challenge to seminaries and formation programs to provide a context sufficiently informed and sensitive to the needs of

candidates to nurture appropriate psychological development and emotional maturation. Sufficient training would require a balance between the two emphases outlined above, integration of a masculine identity and a mature spirituality. Cozzens (2000) suggests that it has only been in the last decades of the twentieth century that serious attention has been paid to the psychosexual development of seminarians in order for them to lead “meaningful celibate lives” (p. 32). As the median age of priests in Australia is 58 years (CCLS, 2001), nearly half of the priests in parish ministry today would have been ordained before this realization happened.

Evidence that seminary programs were inadequate to meet this challenge is provided by the entrenched, systemic sexual abuse of minors, and inappropriate behavior involving adults described in the media and by writers such as Sipe (1995), Anderson (1998), Harrigan (1999) and Collins (2001). Sipe (1995) comments that “no seminary teaches celibacy/sexuality adequately. Most training programs value and foster naiveté and sexual immaturity. Emotional 13 year-olds support the system and vice versa” (p.46).

Interview material for the current research would tend to support this view:

The topic of sexuality was hardly ever addressed in the seminary, and then only very superficially.

The difficulty was when we went through the seminary, training (for celibacy) was offered but not to the level it should have been.

Difficulty with finding a clear definition of what celibacy means, and differing interpretations by current writers on the subject, lead to a somewhat confusing array of possibilities. Harrigan (1999) suggests that the obligation of celibacy means a life commitment to chastity through abstaining from genital intimacy (p. 8), while Wills (2000) argues that some priests see it as “an inner dedication to the gospel” (p.195). Furthermore, a significant number think that celibacy simply means “not being married to a woman”, an interpretation that may be (according to Wills) a way of reconciling an active sex life (p.195). Sipe (1995) terms this interpretation as “the presumption of non-marriage, but not the absence of sexual activity” (p.57).

The widespread acceptance of the latter interpretation of the meaning of celibacy has been perpetuated through the maintenance of a distinction between chastity and celibacy. Sipe (1995) quoted (among others) an unnamed prelate to illustrate this point, “Chastity has always been a battleground for me, and I have always tried to fight the good fight ... I have never been anything but happy in my celibate option even when I was losing the current battle for chastity” (p.58). However, it is difficult to see how the idea of a distinction between chastity and celibacy is reconcilable with the Canon law dictate of “perpetual and constant continence” (p. 2).

Sipe (1995) argued that this lack of clarity was a deliberate way of avoiding exposure of non-celibate practice as part of the workings of what was supposed to be a celibate system. “This is why discourse terrifies those who hide behind undefined celibacy as a shield, who maintain duplicity at the price of the perpetuation of imprecision and duplicity at the sacrifice of radical self-honesty” (p.55). Apart from the regrettable incidences of sexual abuse by clergy, evidence that numbers of priests are involved in different forms of sexual activity abounds in recent research. Sipe (1995) and Schoenherr (2002) make the point that some priests engage in active heterosexual and homosexual relations, sexual experimentation and transvestism, and Wills (2000) cites Dr William Masters who found that 98 out of the 100 priests he surveyed were masturbating (p.3).

Whether or not the concept of celibacy includes a prohibition on any form of genital sexual activity whatsoever, it is clear from a doctrinal point of view that masturbation, along with homosexuality, is regarded as morally reprehensible. Wills (2000) quotes the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which states:

By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action (p.188).

Given the lack of an official definition of celibacy, and the fact that the distinction between celibacy and masturbation is unclear, the above discussion points to a situation where priests either perform creative feats of interpretive gymnastics in order to justify or

rationalize what could be seen as non-celibate behavior, or perpetuate an overall culture of denial, repression or outright deceit.

For this research, an operational definition of celibacy arrived at by Sipe (1995) will be used. After exploration of different facets of celibacy, beginning with celibacy as 'natural phenomenon', then as 'the state of non-marriage', 'the ideal', 'the charism', 'the law', 'the culture' and finally 'the practice', Sipe (1995) arrived at the following definition (pp. 57 - 61):

Celibacy is a freely chosen dynamic state, usually vowed, that involves an honest and sustained attempt to live without direct sexual gratification in order to serve others productively for a spiritual motive (p.61).

Explanations for the level of disagreement with the commitment to celibacy by priests are many; philosophical/theological disagreement with the policy, personal difficulties living out the requirement, loneliness, blaming celibacy for the decrease in numbers of seminarians, and the view that celibacy underlies problems of clergy sexual abuse of minors. Some clergy object to the requirement of celibacy on the grounds that it is a potent means of control of both the body and behavior of individuals. Laidler (1989) writes

I presume most Catholic Priests think about celibacy a fair bit. The metaphor of 'having someone by the balls' is strong in the language because having strong control over someone's sexual expression is so powerful a form of control over a person's life that one can hardly ignore it. Catholic priests impose celibacy on one another, and the language they use to talk about the imposition speaks of increasing availability to, and of being intimate with *all* people. I found I was doing just the opposite: I was seeking more and more to protect myself from people generally, and seeking intimacy more in individual relationships (Laidler, 1989, p. 102).

Others referred to their personal struggle with celibacy and problems of loneliness and isolation, two problems which have been found to be necessary conditions in priest resignations (Hoge, 2001).

Celibacy means loneliness ... (I) Went into a black hole for 12 years after ordination.

The issue is how do you live that (celibacy) and act that out? There are many men in priesthood who are living in a relationship either with a woman or a man. It seems celibacy does not work.

The above statements suggest that the identity of an obedient celibate role model is not the lived experience of many priests, although accurate data are not available. Sipe (1995) makes the claim that according to his operational definition (p. 6), only 50% of priests are practising celibacy, and 50% are actively engaged in sexual relationships. Of the 50% of priests who were practising celibacy at any one time, only 2% were firmly entrenched in an irreversible state of successfully integrated celibacy, 8% were consolidated in the practice of celibacy to a state approaching the ideal, and 40% were temporarily celibate. The latter group moved in and out of patterns of sexual activity based on various factors such as opportunity, levels of stress, or curiosity, from which some clergy, after completion of adolescent stages of psychosexual development, returned to a state of celibate adjustment (Sipe, 1995, pp. 66-70).

Comparative analysis of clergy attitudes to optional celibacy showed that American priests were much more conservative than their Australian counterparts (Table 5.3), a point that will be discussed later. If a more relaxed attitude to celibacy includes a greater tendency to live a non-celibate life, then it is possible that even fewer priests in Australia practise celibacy, than Sipe's (1995) estimates. As would be expected from the foregoing discussion of attitudes to celibacy, many respondents in the current research want to see changes to ordination requirements that would allow for married priests:

Celibacy is now a handicap to church vitality. Why? Because we are now prepared to preserve an elitist group within the church (celibate clergy) at the expense of access to Eucharist by the faithful.

Lobby Rome to change mandatory celibacy for priests ... ordain married men.

Celibacy needs to change ... it should be optional. Given the opportunity I would like to have married.

Harrigan's (1999) study makes the point that there is a growing awareness in the Church that intimacy is an issue far wider than for just clergy celibates with psychosexual

disorders. Harrigan (1999) outlines program initiatives recently designed to assist male celibates in their experience of relationships, demonstrating that there is a recognition by church authorities that more work needs to be done to satisfactorily address this area of priestly life.

Concern about the sexual behavior of priests by Church authorities is evidenced by the commissioning of several reports since the early 1990s, including the report *Towards Healing* that was released in December 2000, as a response to the growing crisis of child sexual abuse. The report emphasized the seriousness of sexual abuse and outlined initiatives to ensure preventative strategies. Other Church initiatives were *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Ethical Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia* (1997), and the establishment in 1996 of a treatment program for church personnel with psychosexual disorders called *Encompass* (Harrigan, 1999).

These programs follow a philosophy of directing responsibility and treatment at individual clergy, rather than also seriously addressing the structural origins and supports that maintain problematic sexual behavior of clergy. This attitude is consistent with the argument put forward by Wills (2000), that the church promotes the stance that celibacy is the result of strong sacred and ritual purity supported by moral strength of will, and therefore maintained solely by the moral integrity of the individual priest.

The document *Towards Healing* (2000) outlines processes to be adopted in response to reports of sexual abuse, preventative strategies, and unambiguous communication systems to ensure that offenders are not simply transferred from one parish to another, as happened in the past. The report was the outcome of a review of the December 1996 version of *Towards Healing* that was intended as a catalyst for community debate in order to establish public criteria for Church leaders to address the issues of abuse within the Church. McGillion (2003) argued that while practical, educational and procedural details are outlined in depth in the document, no mention is made of the possibility of a philosophical or psychological review of structural factors, which could lead to changes

in formation and training programs, and a broadening of understanding and information about human sexuality generally.

The Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and Centacare Catholic Community Services commissioned a report in 1997, *Towards Understanding: A study of factors specific to the catholic church which might lead to sexual abuse by priests and religious: Final Report to the National Committee for Professional Standards, ACSWC*. This report is said to have been seminal to the development of the processes and procedures outlined in the latest version of *Towards Healing* (McGillion, 2003). It criticizes, as major contributors to the inappropriate sexual behavior of some clergy, the misogynist cultural context of the Church in general, and seminaries in the formation and training of candidates.

It was not possible to access a copy of this report in order to verify comments on the contents as outlined by McGillion (2003), who alleges that the report found that a direct consequence of the cultural attitude that fails to treat men and women as equals in the Church, is the ready victimization of women through sexual offence. “It seems probable that the enshrining of power, position and superiority in a male priesthood through the structures and culture of the church contributes to a climate in which sexual offences against women can more readily occur” (p. 32). McGillion (2003) claimed that no evidence was found to suggest that the incidence of sexual abuse by priests and religious brothers was any higher than it is for males generally. But in the case of clergy, unlike the general community, boys are more likely to be victims than girls. McGillion (2003) suggests that this is due to the overwhelming male environments of ministry, rather than irregular psychopathology (p. 32). This will be discussed further in relation to pedophilia and ephebophilia in the next section.

McGillion (2003) argues further that celibacy was ruled out as a factor in predisposing clergy to sexual abuse, although it was conceded that many priests “regard it as a package, rather than as a considered choice” leading to the commitment to celibacy becoming disassociated from actual behavior (McGillion, 2003, p. 32). According to

McGillion (2003), the arresting of human psycho-sexual and psychological development that accompanied entry to the seminary or religious life directly from secondary school, and the consequent separation of seminarians from a range of social interaction also contributed to emotional immaturity, and to abuse among some priests. Similarly, the all-male environment of seminaries and community living arrangements for religious brothers was criticized as “conducive to a homo-erotic sexual development which does not deal with sexuality in general, or the feminine in particular” (p. 33).

The *Towards Understanding* report underlines many of the points previously discussed, and if accurately reported by McGillion (2003), raises serious questions about the whole celibate clerical system. Doubts about celibacy, and outright non-acceptance by many clergy of the value of obligatory celibacy as a requisite to ordination, add to the potentially destabilizing effect of the continuation of it, on the credibility of the organization and priests. In view of this non-acceptance, Harrigan’s (1999) suggestions for assisting male celibates to establish and integrate intimate celibate relationships into their lives, while providing valuable insights and suggestions for development of program initiatives, may prove ineffectual. It could therefore be argued that with the current level of lack of support for the maintenance of celibacy as a valued and central aspect of priestly identity, the necessary motivation for application of the kind of focus necessary for a successful outcome of such programs is lacking.

ANALYSIS

Priests’ attitudes to celibacy

As the foregoing discussion suggests, for many clergy the maintenance of celibacy is no longer a valued feature of priestly identity. Analysis of data from the CCLS surveys shows that in Australia, there is minimal support for obligatory celibacy by both clergy and laity. Most believe that it would not be detrimental to the church if the obligation of celibacy were removed (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Attitude of priests to celibacy.

Statement	<i>n</i>	Percent
Celibacy is of great benefit to the church	88	24
The church would be equally well served if celibacy were not required, but optional.	202	55
Celibacy is not suited to today's circumstances	31	8
Celibacy has overall had a negative impact	28	8
I can't decide	21	5
Total	370	100

Source: CCLS, 2001.

Table 5.3 shows that 55% of priests believe that optional rather than obligatory celibacy would serve the church equally well, with a further 16% stating that it is not suitable today, or that it has had a negative impact. Only 24% state that obligatory celibacy has been of great benefit to the church.

Clergy attitude to celibacy was reflected in attender responses with only 34% ($n = 12,761$) agreeing with the statement that celibacy has been of great benefit to the church (CCLS, 1996 & 2001). As the lay respondents to the CCLS surveys were predominantly people who attended Mass on a weekly basis, they would be expected to be more likely to be conservative in matters of church policy, than a general sample of Catholic laity. Therefore, if sampling had included the overall Catholic population, the percentage in support of the maintenance of celibacy may have been even lower. Hoge and Wenger (2002a) cite a nationwide USA Gallup poll of Catholic laity by D'Antonio *et al.*, which showed that 71% of Catholics there favored optional, rather than obligatory, celibacy for priests (p.2).

Hoge and Wenger's (2002a) own study showed that 53% of diocesan priests preferred optional to obligatory celibacy for clergy (p.2). This result suggests that diocesan priests in the USA are more orthodox than their Australian counterparts, where 71% (CCLS, 2001) state some disagreement with the requirement of obligatory celibacy (Table 5.3).

The question of obligatory or optional celibacy can be seen as another example of the tension between the orthodox and liberal positions about doctrinal and pastoral issues generally, a tension that has become more polarized post-Vatican II (Collins, 1986; Muggeridge, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002). The hierarchy currently holds strictly to an orthodox position, particularly with regard to celibacy (Schoenherr, 2002). Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest that clergy, who hold a traditional view of the importance of obligatory celibacy, would be less likely to be discontented with their vocational choice, than those who are more liberal in orientation.

It has been argued by several writers (Wills, 2000, Schoenherr, 2002, Hoge, 2001) in the USA that the lack of support for the requirement of celibacy can explain a large part of the decline in numbers of priests throughout the 1970s and '80s. During this time, in a climate of greater sexual freedom generally throughout Western societies, many priests left the priesthood to marry. This raises the question about whether obligatory celibacy is a significant factor impacting on a priest's decision to resign, particularly in relation to other pastoral strategies pertaining to ministry. In order to address this question, the following hypothesis was tested: *a significant association will be found between a negative view of obligatory celibacy, and frequency of thinking of resigning*. Non-parametric Chi-square was calculated using cross-tabulation analysis. The variables 'think of resigning' (with three categories: *never*, *sometimes* and *often to constantly*) and 'attitude to celibacy of priest' (with five categories, *celibacy should be optional*, *celibacy is of great benefit to the church*, *celibacy is not suitable today*, *celibacy has a negative impact*, and *can't decide*) were used (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Cross-tabulation of ‘attitude to celibacy’ and ‘frequency of thinking of resigning’.

		Think of Resigning			Total
		Never	Sometimes	Often to constantly	
Celibacy should be optional, not obligatory	Count	79	103	19	201
	Expected count	94	89	18	201
	Percentage	39	51	10	100
Celibacy is of great benefit to the church	Count	60	18	4	82
	Expected count	38	36	8	82
	Percentage	73	22	5	100
Celibacy is not suitable today	Count	12	15	4	31
	Expected count	14	14	3	31
	Percentage	39	48	13	100
Celibacy has had a negative impact	Count	5	19	4	28
	Expected count	13	12	3	28
	Percentage	18	68	14	100
Can't decide	Count	13	6	2	21
	Expected count	10	9	2	21
	Percentage	62	29	9	100

$n = 363$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis is supported by the analysis, which produced a significant association between a lack of support for celibacy and thinking of resigning ($\chi^2 [8, n = 363] = 40.344, p < .001$). Important features of Table 5.4 are first, the highest number of priests in the sample (201) believe that celibacy should be optional, not obligatory, and are under-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in *never* think of resigning (39%). Consequently they are over-represented in the cells of *sometimes* to *often to constantly* think of resigning, with a combined percentage of 61%.

Second, priests who believe that celibacy is of great benefit to the church are over-represented in *never* think of resigning (73%). And third, priests who believe that celibacy has had a negative impact are under-represented in *never* think of resigning (18%). An interesting result is that those who couldn't decide on the question of celibacy are over-represented in *never* think of resigning.

The pattern whereby disagreement with the policy of obligatory celibacy was reflected in thinking of resigning from *sometimes* to *constantly* remained consistent throughout the table. Those who believe celibacy is not suitable today, hold the least radical view on celibacy, and are spread throughout the cells in Table 5.4 more or less as expected under the null hypothesis.

In order to test the hypothesis *a significant association will be found between prioritizing the removal of celibacy over other pastoral strategies and frequency of thinking of resigning* the following analysis was performed. First, by selecting the strategy rated by respondents as their first priority, from a list of eight proposed pastoral strategies, a new variable ‘priorities’ was created. The eight priorities were: encourage Australian Catholics to pray for vocations, and renew the family piety that nurtures them; concentrate on building vital parishes and communities that will be a source of vocations; remove the obligation to celibacy so that those who do not have this calling may enter the priesthood; admit more men to the permanent diaconate; ordain a member of the parish community, with minimal training, solely to preside at Eucharist in that community; select and prepare suitable lay ministers to carry out pastoral functions permitted by Canon law; re-admit to active ministry suitable candidates from among those who have resigned from the ministry; and recruit priests from overseas (CCLS, 2001, p.15).

Non-parametric Chi-square was calculated with cross-tabulation using the new variable ‘priorities’ and the variable ‘think of resigning’. This resulted in 29% of cells having counts of less than 5, increasing the probability of type 1 error (Pallant, 2001). The category *admit more men to the permanent diaconate* (which had a frequency of only 2) was eliminated from the variable ‘priorities’. The cross-tabulation analysis was then repeated using the new variable containing the seven remaining pastoral priorities (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Cross-tabulation of priests' highest priority of pastoral strategy and frequency of thinking of resigning.

		Think of Resigning			
		Never	Sometimes	Often to constantly	Total
Build vital parishes	Count	61	66	1	128
	Expected count	61	56	11	128
	Percentage	48	52	0.8	100
Pray for vocations	Count	51	19	6	76
	Expected count	36	34	6	76
	Percentage	67	25	8	100
Remove celibacy obligation	Count	21	30	15	66
	Expected count	31	29	6	66
	Percentage	32	45	23	100
Readmit resigned priests	Count	12	22	3	37
	Expected count	18	16	3	37
	Percentage	32	60	8	100
Prepare lay ministers	Count	13	14	2	29
	Expected count	14	13	2	29
	Percentage	45	48	7	100
Ordain member for Eucharist	Count	4	8	3	15
	Expected count	7	7	1	15
	Percentage	27	53	20	100
Recruit priests from overseas	Count	11	2	1	14
	Expected count	7	6	1	14
	Percentage	79	14	7	100

n = 365

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis was supported by the analysis with a significant association found between preference for a particular pastoral strategy and frequency of thinking of resigning (C^2 [12, *n* = 365] 55.965, p < .001). The first two priorities, *concentrate on building vital parishes and communities which will be a source of vocations* and *encourage Australian Catholics to pray for vocations, and renew the family piety which nurtures them* are both strategies that would seem to fit into the goals of ministry generally. Neither would require specific changes to current pastoral strategy, so it is not surprising that these options have the highest numbers of priests in active ministry (128 and 76, respectively) giving them number one priority rating. *Building vital parishes* and

praying for vocations are not options that challenge the status quo and are therefore the most conservative, so it is understandable that numbers of respondents who favor them are over-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in *never* think of resigning.

The priority of *removal of the obligation of celibacy* was the third highest ranking (66) and *readmittance of resigned priests* fourth (37). Both of these priorities were under-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in *never* think of resigning.

Other results of particular note are first that priests who rate as their highest priority *remove the obligation of celibacy* are more likely than those prioritizing any other strategy, to think about resigning *constantly*. Second, priests who rate as their highest priority *build vital parishes* are less likely than those prioritizing any other strategy, to be found in *constantly* think about resigning.

The above priorities are the most polarized positions of all pastoral options in Table 5.5, with results showing that only 0.8% of priests who rank *build vital parishes* as their first priority *constantly* think of resigning, while 23% of those who rank *remove the obligation of celibacy* as their first priority *constantly* think of resigning. As an option, *build vital parishes* requires no change to current strategy, so could be seen as the orthodox alternative, while *removing the obligation of celibacy* would require a complete reversal of current doctrine, so is the liberal view. It is significant that those priests who can be seen to be holding to the more orthodox positions, particularly *build vital parishes* and *pray for vocations*, are the least likely to be dissatisfied with ministry in the current organizational context.

Priests ranking *readmit to active ministry suitable candidates from among those who have resigned from the ministry* as the first priority, also have a high percentage (60% *sometimes*, and 8% *constantly*) in ‘think of resigning’. This is a very similar result to *removal of the obligation of celibacy*, and could be seen as requiring the same reversal of doctrine if the readmittance includes priests who either left ministry to marry, or who have since married.

One of the limitations of the previous analysis is that the results only pertain to priests currently in parish ministry. The need for further research to determine percentages of priests who actually left because of dissatisfaction with the obligation of celibacy between the 1996 and 2001 survey is indicated.

Age cohorts, obligatory celibacy and frequency of thinking of resigning

It was found in Tables 5.4 and 5.5, that holding liberal views on the current pastoral strategies of obligatory celibacy and non-acceptance of married priests was associated with higher percentages of frequency of thinking about leaving. The question of whether the most conservative views on celibacy are held by priests ordained prior to the Second Vatican Council or those most recently ordained as reported by Hoge and Wenger (2002a) is raised. In order to explore this question, the hypothesis: *an association will be found between holding the pastoral strategy of removal of the obligation of celibacy as a first priority and age cohorts 36-45, 46-55, and 56-66, than with the age cohorts 25-35, and 66+ was tested.*

Non-parametric Chi-square was calculated with cross-tabulation analysis using the variable 'age cohorts' and the variable 'priorities'. This resulted in $\chi^2(12, n = 366) = 26.118, p = .015$, but due to 15 cells (43%) having expected count <5, the probability of type 1 error was too high for this result to be interpreted as support for the hypothesis (G. Francis, 1998, p. 2). To overcome this problem, a new variable 'strategy groups' was created by grouping together the strategies with a specific emphasis on increasing the number of ministers. These were: *admit more men to the diaconate, ordain a member for presiding at Eucharist, prepare lay ministers and recruit priests from overseas.* The new category then became *increase number of ministers.* *Readmittance of resigned priests* was not included in the new category, as it is a strategy which would not only lead to an increase in the number of ministers, but would also require a change in the requirement of obligatory celibacy. The variable 'strategy groups' comprises the pastoral strategy that was selected by respondents as their first priority.

Table 5.6 is a cross-tabulation table using the new variable ‘strategy groups’ with the variable ‘age cohorts’. This time the analysis clearly supported the hypothesis (C^2 [16, $n = 368$] = 28.588, $p < .05$), showing a significant association between preference for a particular pastoral strategy and age cohorts.

Table 5.6 Cross-tabulation of age cohorts and pastoral strategy groups.

Strategies		Pray for vocations	Build vital parishes	Increase number of ministers	Readmit resigned priests	Remove celibacy obligation	Total
Age Cohorts							
25-35							
	Count	5	9	1	0	4	19
	Expected count	4	7	3	2	3	19
	Percentage	26	47	5	0	21	100
36-45							
	Count	9	19	5	4	8	45
	Expected count	10	15	7	4	8	45
	Percentage	20	42	11	9	18	100
46-55							
	Count	18	21	15	7	28	89
	Expected count	19	31	15	9	16	89
	Percentage	20	24	17	8	32	100
56-65							
	Count	24	43	21	18	17	122
	Expected count	27	42	20	12	22	122
	Percentage	19	35	17	15	14	100
66+							
	Count	24	34	18	7	9	91
	Expected count	20	32	15	9	17	91
	Percentage	26	37	20	8	10	100

$n = 365$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

However, the pattern of responses only partly supported the hypothesis. The 66+ age cohort was under-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in the *remove the obligation of celibacy* strategy as hypothesized, but the 25-35 age cohort digressed from the hypothesis in that it was over-represented in this strategy. However, as the cell count for the 25-35 age cohort with remove celibacy obligation is <5, this result cannot be regarded as reliable, and no conclusive interpretation can be made with the youngest age group. The 46-55 age cohort was over-represented in the strategy of *remove the obligation of celibacy*, and under-represented in *build vital parishes*, the two most polarized positions, which suggested that a cohort effect as a result of the Second Vatican Council was in operation as proposed.

Hoge and Wenger (2002a) also found important differences between five age group categories looked at in relation to attitude to celibacy (p. 4), and responses of priests in their survey provide a useful comparison for this discussion (Table 5.7). Two statements put to priests (for their agreement) by Hoge and Wenger were; first, celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests. Second, priests who have resigned from the priesthood should be invited to re-apply for permission to function as priests again, whether they are married or single (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a, p.5).

Table 5.7 Optional celibacy and re-admittance of resigned priests.

Statement:		Celibacy should be a matter of choice			Readmit both married and single resigned priests	
Age Groups	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	
25-35	49	33		49	23	
36-45	159	41		159	34	
46-55	257	64		257	53	
56-66	293	73		293	68	
66+	500	48		500	50	

Source: Adapted from Hoge and Wenger (2002a, p.4).

The important feature of Table 5.7 is that as with the Australian results, a clear pattern suggestive of a cohort effect is in evidence, with the youngest and oldest priests more conservative in their attitude to obligatory celibacy and the readmittance of resigned priests. The smallest percentages in favor of optional celibacy and bringing back resigned priests in the American study, were in the youngest age groups, while the highest percentage was found in the 56-65 age group, a slightly older group than the 46-55 cohort which was the highest percentage found in the Australian study.

Hoge and Wenger (2002a) suggested that a cohort effect was in operation, as their 56-65 group would typically have been ordained from 1963–1972 (during and immediately after Vatican II) which means, according to Hoge and Wenger (2002b), that they were

more open to reform and innovation than earlier priests. This view is verified in the finding that the percentage in favor of the two strategies dropped sharply again for American clergy in the over 66 age group (as it did for the Australian group in Table 5.6), a group that would have been ordained pre-Vatican II.

Direct comparison between the two tables is not possible because of significant differences between the two surveys. The questions were constructed slightly differently, leading to possible ambiguity and the Australian survey asked respondents to rank the pastoral strategies, but the American survey simply asked for agreement or disagreement with the statements about pastoral strategies relating to celibacy. Also, Hoge and Wenger's sample included religious priests, and Australian respondents were diocesan priests only. However, this difference would not significantly affect the findings as no systematic differences were found in the age groups between diocesan or religious priests in the American sample (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a, p. 5). What is most important in the comparison between the two surveys is the similarity in the patterns of orthodoxy of the youngest and oldest priests, and the way that the pattern can be seen to reflect the position of the hierarchy at the time of formation and ordination for both Australian and American clergy.

Given the association between age cohorts and preference for pastoral strategies, it was hypothesized that *frequency of thinking about leaving will be more strongly associated with priests in the age cohorts '36-45, 46-55', and '56-66', and less strongly associated with the age cohorts 25-35, and 66+.* Non-parametric Chi-square was calculated with cross-tabulation analysis using the variables 'think of resigning' with three categories: *never, sometimes and often to constantly,* and 'age' in five cohort categories: 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-66, 66+. This is shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Cross-tabulation of 'frequency of thinking of resigning' by 'age' (2001).

Age Groups		Never think of resigning %	Sometimes think of resigning %	Often to constantly think of resigning %	Total
25-35	Count	6	11	3	20
	Expected count	9	9	2	20
	Percentage	30	55	15	100
36-45	Count	8	32	6	46
	Expected count	22	20	4	46
	Percentage	17	70	13	100
46-55	Count	31	49	9	89
	Expected count	42	39	8	89
	Percentage	35	55	10	100
56-66	Count	61	50	11	122
	Expected count	58	54	10	122
	Percentage	50	41	9	100
66+	Count	68	20	3	91
	Expected count	43	40	8	91
	Percentage	75	22	3	100

$n = 368$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The results of Table 5.8 show that there is a significant association between thinking of resigning and age groups ($C^2 [8, n=368] = 52.871, p < .001$), but again, not in the pattern of age cohorts as suggested in the hypothesis. Important features of Table 5.8 are first, the 46-55 age cohort is under-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in *never* think of resigning, which supports the hypothesis. Second, the 66+ age cohort is over-represented in *never* think of resigning, which also supports the hypothesis, but the 25-35 age cohort differs from the expectation of the hypothesis in that it is under-represented in *never* think of resigning. Finally, the two youngest age cohorts are over-represented in *sometimes* and *often to constantly* think of resigning, with the 36-45 age cohort showing the largest discrepancy in proportion to what would be expected under the null hypothesis in *never* think of resigning.

Hoge (2001) claims that the first five years after ordination is a critical time, and that many priests resign due to problems of lack of privacy and feelings of being unsupported, factors unconnected with the current discussion about celibacy. A survey commissioned by Hoge into resignation trends, estimated that between 10% and 15% of priests resign in the first five years after ordination (Hoge, 2002, p. 3). Along with smaller numbers of candidates for seminary training, problems identified by Hoge may go partway to explaining the small numbers in this age group in the current survey.

It is clear from Table 5.8 that the two youngest groups are the most vulnerable to dissatisfaction with ministry, particularly the 36-45 age cohort. As this group would typically have served between 10 and 20 years in active ministry, the question of whether the phenomenon is cohort-related, or a reflection of developmental or life cycle factors, is raised. Mid-life could reasonably be proposed as a time when greater maturity allows for a critical examination of beliefs and values as described in Fowler's (1996) stages of faith development. Fowler suggests that a questioning of beliefs is necessary in order to complete the movement from previous stages of unquestioning acceptance and conformism with opinions and authority outside of self. A more mature stage of development, of a self-constructed world view and identity then ensues (Fowler, 1996). It could be hypothesized that if the personal identity for priests at this stage no longer coincided with the organizational identity, it would be a critical time for deciding whether to remain in the priesthood, or resign. In this instance, a shift away from a belief in the value of obligatory celibacy as required by church doctrine, it could be argued, may lead to a decision to resign.

Further analysis points to life stage factors as being more important than cohort groups in dissatisfaction with ministry. Cross-tabulation analysis was conducted using the same variables as Table 5.8 from the CCLS 1996 survey, 'frequency of thinking of resigning' and 'age cohorts' (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Frequency of thinking of resigning by age (1996).

Age Groups	Never think of resigning %	Sometimes think of resigning %	Often to constantly think of resigning %	Total
25-35	33	40	27	100
36-45	28	52	20	100
46-55	35	47	18	100
56-66	55	38	7	100
66+	88	9	3	100

n = 368

Source: CCLS, 1996; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 5.9 shows that five years earlier (than the CCLS 2001 data in Table 5.2), the highest percentage of those who thought about resigning *sometimes* to *often to constantly* were also in the 36-45 age group. If a cohort effect were in operation, it would be expected that the highest percentage thinking about resigning *sometimes* to *often to constantly* would have been found in the 25-35 age cohort. Table 5.8 showed that a higher percentage of the 36-45 age cohort *sometimes* to *often to constantly* think of resigning, but results in Table 5.6 showed that this group did not have higher than expected numbers holding optional celibacy as a first priority, which suggests that other factors impact more strongly than attitude to celibacy on frequency of thinking about resigning.

Attitude to celibacy and NEO-FFI personality factors

In order to test the hypothesis: *an association will be found between attitude to celibacy and personality factors*, five cross-tabulation analyses using the variable ‘attitude to celibacy’ (with five categories: *celibacy should be optional*, *celibacy is of great benefit to the church*, *celibacy is not suitable today*, *celibacy has had a negative impact*, and *can’t decide*) and the five NEO-FFI personality factors: ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extraversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ were conducted. The outcome of these analyses showed that ‘Openness’ was the only one of the five NEO-FFI factors to

have a significant association with ‘attitude to celibacy’, with the result $\chi^2(8, n = 369) = 37.483, p < .001$, so is the only factor presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Cross-tabulation analysis of ‘attitude to celibacy’ and Openness.

		Openness			Total
		Low (< 24)	Average (24-31)	High (> 31)	
Celibacy should be optional, not obligatory	Count	64	98	40	202
	Expected count	73	92	37	202
	Percentage	32	48	20	100
Celibacy is of great benefit to the church	Count	43	41	3	87
	Expected count	31	40	16	87
	Percentage	50	47	3	100
Celibacy is not suitable today	Count	9	14	8	31
	Expected count	11	14	6	31
	Percentage	29	45	26	100
Celibacy has had a negative impact	Count	5	10	13	28
	Expected count	10	13	5	28
	Percentage	18	36	46	100
Can’t decide	Count	12	6	3	21
	Expected count	7	10	4	21
	Percentage	57	27	14	100

$n = 369$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 5.10 showed that priests who hold the view that *celibacy is of great benefit* to the church are over-represented (than expected under the null hypothesis) in *low* ‘Openness’, and are significantly under-represented in *high* ‘Openness’. In contrast, and at what could be seen as the extreme end of statements about lack of support for celibacy, it was found that priests with the view that celibacy has had a negative impact, were over-represented in the *high* ‘Openness’ group, and under-represented in *low* ‘Openness’. Therefore, priests who hold liberal views about celibacy were more likely to be over-represented in *high* ‘Openness’, than priests who hold an orthodox view, who can be seen in Table 5.10, to be over-represented in the *low* ‘Openness’ category.

Two other important features of Table 5.10 were first, priests who stated that *celibacy should be optional, not obligatory* were under-represented in the *low* ‘Openness’

category, supportive of the conclusion that priests who hold a more liberal view on celibacy tend to have *high* ‘Openness’ in their personality profiles. Second, those respondents in *can’t decide* were over-represented in the *low* ‘Openness’ category. The meaning of this is unclear; however, with the under-representation of respondents with *low* ‘Openness’ in the optional celibacy cell, it could be argued that these people would tend towards orthodoxy in their attitude to celibacy.

Given the establishment of an association between age cohorts and prioritizing removal of the obligation of celibacy (Table 5.6), and also an association between Openness and attitude to optional celibacy (Table 5.10), the question of whether there is an association between Openness and age cohorts is raised. The hypothesis *an association will be found between age cohorts and Openness* was tested. Non-parametric Chi-square was calculated using cross-tabulation analysis with the variables ‘age cohorts’ with five categories (25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-66, 66+) and ‘Openness’ with three categories; *low* (<23), *average* (24-30) and *high* (>31(Costa, 1992).

Table 5.11 Cross-tabulation of ‘levels of Openness’ by age cohorts.

		Low Openness	Average Openness	High Openness	Total
Age Groups					
25-35					
	Count	3	13	4	20
	Expected count	7	9	4	20
	Percentage	15	65	20	100
36-45					
	Count	10	26	11	47
	Expected count	17	21	8	47
	Percentage	21	55	23	100
46-55					
	Count	27	42	20	89
	Expected count	33	40	16	89
	Percentage	30	47	23	100
56-66					
	Count	47	56	21	124
	Expected count	46	56	22	124
	Percentage	38	45	17	100
66+					
	Count	51	32	11	94
	Expected count	35	42	17	94
	Percentage	54	34	12	100

n = 374

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Results in Table 5.11 support the hypothesis and showed a significant association between ‘Openness’ and ‘age cohorts’, $\chi^2(8, n=374) = 23.885, p < .005$. The 66+ age cohort was under-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis) in *high* ‘Openness’, and age cohorts of 36-45 and 46-55 were over-represented in the *high* ‘Openness’ group. No conclusions can be drawn from the 25-35 age cohort which was under-represented in the *low* ‘Openness’ group as the cell count was <5 leading to a high possibility of type 1 error (Pallant, 2001).

Confirmatory standard regression analysis was performed to ascertain the strength and direction of the association between age and Openness. Results confirmed that Openness decreases with increasing age ($F(1,372) = 30.440, p < .001, \text{Beta} = -.28$), as shown in Table 5.11. The significant associations found in the foregoing analyses between ‘age cohorts’, ‘Openness’, ‘attitude to celibacy’ and ‘frequency of thinking of resigning’ is represented in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Associations between Age, Openness, attitude to celibacy and thinking of resigning.

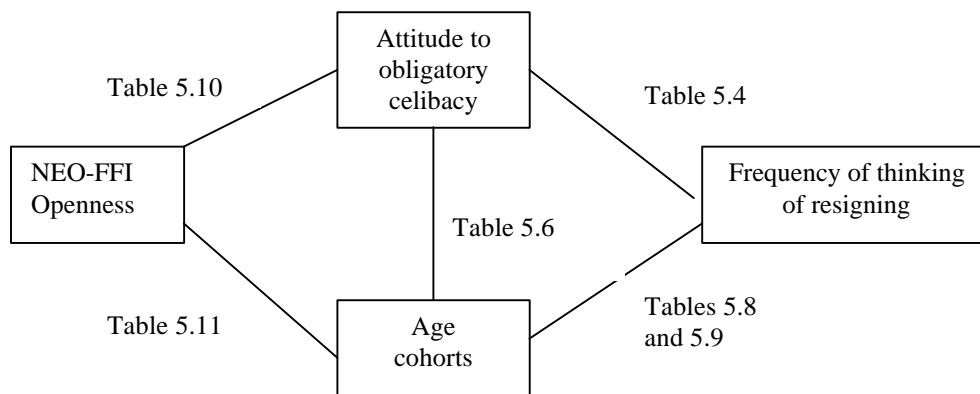


Figure 5.1 shows the following significant associations found in the foregoing analyses: ‘Attitude to obligatory celibacy’ with ‘frequency of thinking of resigning’ (Table 5.4), ‘age cohorts’ with ‘think of resigning’ (Tables 5.8 and 5.9), ‘age cohorts’ with

Openness' (Table 5.11), 'age cohorts' with 'attitude to obligatory celibacy' (Table 5.6), and 'Openness with attitude to celibacy' (Table 5.10).

SUMMARY

Celibacy has been reaffirmed as recently as 1992 by Pope John II, as a fundamental requisite for ordination to the priesthood. As such it is supposed to be as much an integral aspect of current priestly identity as it was since its establishment in the twelfth century. Although supported by both doctrine and canon law, the issue of mandatory celibacy as a requisite for ordination has been debated since its inception (Kerkhofs, 1995), particularly intensely now after media revelations of clergy sexual abuse has brought the issue sharply into public focus. Questions about the nature of celibacy, its effect on the lives of priests, and the level of psychosexual development and training provided by seminaries have been raised.

Recent literature suggests that successful attainment of a celibate lifestyle requires a high level of maturity and well-integrated personal identity, as well as assimilation of celibacy as divine charism and part of the religious aspect of priestly identity (Cozzens, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002). This means achieving a clear masculine sexual identity, and transcendence of human desires for romantic and sexual relationships, through adequate psychosexual development (Becker, 1987). For laymen, sexual potency is expressed in relationship with women and the production of children, both avenues outside the context of the seminarian or the priest. Therefore, in recognition of the unique needs of candidates to the priesthood, seminaries are challenged to create innovative programs in order to nurture appropriate psychological and emotional maturation (Becker, 1987).

It is only in the last decades of the twentieth century that attention has been paid to questions of psychosexual development (Nestor, 1993). Recent research and literature provides ample evidence that seminaries have been seriously lacking in provision of sufficiently informed and sensitive formation programs (Cozzens, 2000; Porter, 2003; Schoenherr, 2002). It is difficult to find a clear definition of what celibacy means, with differing views creating confusion and ambiguity about whether it means the complete

absence of sexual or genital activity in relationship with another or masturbation, to meaning simply ‘not married to a woman’ (Sipe, 1995). It has been suggested by Sipe (1995) that this lack of clarity is a deliberate way of avoiding exposure of non-celibate behavior in what is supposed to be a celibate system.

Explanations for the low level of support for celibacy by both priests and laity range from philosophical/theological arguments to personal difficulties living out the requirement. What is clear from the research is that many priests (from 50%, and up to 98% if masturbation is counted) engage in various forms of non-celibate behavior, which raises serious questions about the whole celibate clerical system, and has the potential to further destabilize the credibility and authority of the organization and priests.

Analysis shows that 71% of respondents have a negative view of the obligation of celibacy (Table 5.1), and that removal of the obligation of celibacy is the third priority and follows directly after pastoral strategies that do not involve a change to current doctrine. Holding the view that removal of the obligation of celibacy is of first priority in proposed pastoral strategies is associated with thinking of resigning from *often to constantly* (Table 5.5). A significant association was found between ‘age cohorts’ and a preference for the removal of the obligation of celibacy (Table 5.6), where the 46-55 age cohort was over-represented (as expected under the null hypothesis).

Interestingly, cross-tabulation of ‘age cohorts’ with ‘frequency of thinking of resigning’ showed that it is not the 46-55 age group but the two youngest groups where the highest percentages of respondents who think about resigning *often to constantly* are found (Table 5.8). The oldest priests were found to be more orthodox in attitude to celibacy and the readmittance of resigned priests than the middle groups, with the youngest groups also showing a tendency to be more orthodox over pastoral strategies generally (Table 5.6). *High* ‘Openness’ on the NEO-FFI scale was found to associate with a liberal attitude to celibacy, and conversely, *low* ‘Openness’ was found to associate with an orthodox attitude (Table 5.10). A significant association was also found between ‘Openness’ and ‘age cohorts’ (Table 5.11).

The question of obligatory or optional celibacy is another example of the tension between a more liberal immediate post-Vatican II position, and the strictly orthodox position that was in place pre-Vatican II, and again currently in operation, that reiterates mandatory celibacy as requisite to ordination. It could be argued that this tension is exacerbated as support for obligatory celibacy for priests within the priesthood, laity and wider society continues to decline, leading to the possibility that education and training programs currently being implemented in seminaries to address celibate psychosexual development will be largely ineffectual.

Alan Watts (1958) summed up the polarized struggle with celibacy for priests:

There is, for example, the common scandal of the saint-sinner, the individual who appears in public as the champion of the spirit, but who is in private, some sort of rake. Very often his case is not so simple as that of the mere hypocrite. He is genuinely attracted to both extremes. Not only does social convention compel him to publish one and suppress the other, but also most often he himself is horribly torn between the two. He veers between moods of intense holiness and of outrageous licentiousness, suffering between times the most appalling pangs of conscience (Watts, 1958, p.116).

PRIEST AS HETEROSEXUAL

Celibate heterosexuality is fundamental to the identity of a priest, heterosexuality is required by doctrine (Flannery, 1977), and celibacy is required by canon law (Harrigan, 1999). However, qualitative data from the CCLS 2001 survey show that many priests are neither heterosexual nor celibate, and evidence that combinations of sexual orientation and expression are found within the clerical sector of the organization has been consistently reported in recent research and literature (Anderson, 1998; Cozzens, 2000; Harrigan, 1999; Hoge, 2002; Schoenherr, 2002).

Research has shown that human sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, has been poorly understood and articulated throughout the Catholic organization, raising questions about the overall sexual maturity of priests (Cozzens, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002;

Sipe, 1995; Wills, 2000). Sexual maturity for this discussion refers to the recognition and acceptance of sexual orientation and the ability to manage sexuality appropriately within an individual ethical framework. Sipe (1995) contends that the institutional church structure is dominated by a level of functioning well below responsible adult recognition of sexual realities and that the isolation of young boys in seminaries in a culture of sexual repression has a significant effect on their development. As a consequence, priestly seminarians can remain locked at an adolescent stage of psychosexual development (pp.12-15).

It would seem that in a context where celibacy is a requirement, sexual orientation would be irrelevant. However, media revelations of decades of clergy abuse of minors has revealed the ways in which an active sexuality is located behind the celibate façade of the priesthood, prompting a variety of responses from the organization and the media. Some of these responses are from a perspective that genuinely seeks to understand and try to find answers (Cozzens, 2000; Gumbleton, 2002) , but some are defensive and point the finger at individuals, rather than at the social and organizational system that produced the problem (Fitzgibbons, Rudegeair, & Diamond, 1996). Carroll (2002) suggests that the conviction within the organization that the Church is the “sinless bride of Christ” and as such is always pure underlies the propensity of church authorities to blame individual priests. Carroll (2002), argues that this distinction between the purity of the Church and the sins of the members sits beneath the hierarchy’s recent condemnation of priests who sexually offend “without examining the religious and institutional sources of such behaviour” (p. 32).

The need to find individual scapegoats for its problems has fuelled misunderstandings within the church that add to the already tenuous position of gay priests. Because many of the cases of sexual abuse are acts of pedophilia and ephebophilia with males, voices both inside and outside the organization have perpetuated the notion of a link between homosexuality and child abuse. Crittenden (2002) suggested that the response of the organization to the sex abuse issue has been inadequate at best, and morally bankrupt at worst, which raised questions of public accountability of both the clergy and the

organization, and created a fertile climate for dialogue both within the organization and in the wider society.

Important questions raised by the discussion above are: first, what are the numbers of priests with a homosexual orientation in Australia? Second, does the ratio of gay priests significantly affect the structure of the organization? And third, what is the effect of the attitude of the organization on gay clergy? The first two questions cannot be accurately answered at present due to a lack of quantitative research. The third question will be examined in the following discussion with reference to how the process of formation impacts on the psychosexual development of gay clergy, and the implications of church teaching on their psychological wellbeing.

Background

According to Rossetti and Coleman (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997), the strict categorization of individuals into a clearly defined dichotomous position of sexual orientation is simplistic and inaccurate. As with gender, Rossetti and Coleman (1997) argue that a continuum exists between an exclusively homosexual orientation and an orientation that can be described as absolute heterosexuality. In between lie myriad possibilities of both psychological and physical sexual expressions, including a lack of fit between the psychological orientation and sexual behavior. For the purposes of this discussion, the term homosexual applies in its broadest sense to the “exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex” (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997), and is referring to orientation and not behavior.

Hoge (2002a) mentions an increasing percentage of priests in the United States who are reportedly homosexual in orientation; Sipe (1995) estimated the proportion to be 30%, and Cozzens (2000) makes the claim that it is true of 50% of priests. Other studies, such as that conducted for the book *‘Gay Priest’*, support these figures with up to 55% of seminarians reporting a homosexual orientation (Wolf, 1989). Cozzens (2000) argues that “beyond these estimates, of course, are priests who remain confused about their orientation and men who have so successfully denied their orientation, that despite predominantly same-sex erotic fantasies, they insist that they are heterosexual” (Cozzens, 2000, p.99).

Archbishop Pell has reportedly accepted that there are small pockets of a homosexual culture within the Catholic Church in Melbourne (Domez, 2002), but actual numbers of gay priests are reported by subjective estimates only. Anecdotal evidence in the qualitative material in the CCLS 2001 survey and from the semi-structured interviews would indicate correspondence in Australia with percentages in the USA:

More than 50% perhaps even 60% in Melbourne would be gay. No accurate figures will be collected, because how can the church accept that its leaders are that?

In the United States, Sipe's estimates of homosexuality in the priesthood have been accepted by reputable people such as Dean Hoge (a sociologist experienced in research on ecclesiastical topics) and Jose Cardinal Sanchez (Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Clergy) (Sipe, 1995, p.77). A study into Catholic priests' attitudes toward celibacy and homosexuality (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a) found that 55% of clergy from 'probably' to 'clearly' identified a homosexual subculture in their diocese or religious institute. This study was not particularly focused on estimating actual numbers of homosexual priests, but was looking at the formation of subcultures of gay priests and seminarians, a phenomena that is described, just like any other subculture within an organization, as having the potential to marginalize, alienate or discriminate against others (Cozzens, 2000).

According to Cozzens (2000), gay men inevitably form circles of gay friends and in an ironic twist on homophobia, these subgroups can then unintentionally influence straight men to feel that they don't fit in. Even though he stresses that homosexual men make very good priests, Cozzens (2000) argues that homosexual subcultures should be discouraged in seminaries and dioceses (p. 101). It could be argued that it is important that accurate data on the reality of the ratios of gay and straight priests in the priesthood are accumulated so that informed debate about such issues can occur. Cozzens (2000) makes the point that the question about whether it matters that the priesthood is or is becoming a gay profession should not be put aside because of the danger of the question itself appearing as another form of homophobia. As Cozzens (2000) states, "The

following questions are fundamental: what are the pastoral implications for the Church at large should it fail to address the issue of homosexuality and the priesthood? ... The issue appears to be one of the major factors changing the face of the priesthood. It deserves compassionate and respectful attention” (pp.107-108)

Investigation into homosexuality within a culture that is strictly defined in a context of heterosexual/celibacy is fraught with difficulties, not the least of which is the self-selective nature of the subject. As has already been pointed out, some men with a homosexual sexual orientation may be able to hide their orientation successfully even from themselves, so until quantitative research provides accurate information, speculation about numbers is provided by qualitative data. This situation is likely to remain for some time, given the obstacles to such research being conducted satisfactorily (Boyea, 2001).

Nevertheless, the current public discussion of the private lives of priests has created the circumstances for open dialogue about homosexuality in the priesthood along with all the other issues of psychosexual development of clergy. As respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey comment:

The increasing number of homosexual priests is dynamite.

The church needs to soften its approach to ‘gays’.

(The) issue of gay/lesbian matters needs raising.

The Vatican must address the issue of gay presbyteries. The people can accept a married couple in a presbytery – (but) they are dismayed by the high ratio of gay pastors and they will not/should not? accept gay partners in a presbytery.

Cozzens (2000) argued that we are now both more aware of homosexuality in the priesthood than past generations, and that it is a growing phenomenon within the organization (p.100). According to recent literature, factors currently contributing to a disproportionate number of gay men amongst Catholic clergy are first, most priests leaving the priesthood in the US do so to marry (Wills, 2000), thereby leaving a dramatically higher ratio of priests in the organization with a homosexual orientation.

Second, a gay subculture has been created through the need for gay priests to have friendship and support from other gay men (Cozzens, 2000, p.100), and third, celibate priesthood is an attractive option for gay men who wish to avoid family and social sanctions for not wanting to marry (Anderson, 1998). It can therefore be argued that the insistence by the Pope on the maintenance of the obligation for celibacy contributes to the structural changes and development of gay subcultures within the priesthood described by Hoge and Wenger (2002a). As Wills (2000) comments, “many observers suspect that John Paul’s real legacy to his church is a gay priesthood” (p.190).

May (1987) posited a more radical notion as explanation for the greater numbers of homosexual men in the priesthood than in the general population. May’s view is that it is because of the intensely male community in which seminarians are developed that a polarization becomes inevitable, with some men developing extremely feminine characteristics; “a man becomes a double sex, no doubt, when there are no women with whom to polarize his masculinity” (May, cited in Cozzens, 2000, p.104). Further development of this perspective is outside the limits of this paper, but is a perspective that has received some attention in current psychological literature on priests.

Attitude of the organization to homosexuality in general and gay clergy in particular

The church’s position on homosexuality is made clear in the Vatican II documents:

Sexual relations between persons of the same sex are necessarily and essentially disordered according to the objective moral order. Sacred scripture condemns them as gravely depraved and even portrays them as the tragic consequences of rejecting God. Of course, the judgment of sacred scripture does not imply that all who suffer from this deformity are by that very fact guilty of personal fault. But it does show that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and may never be approved of in any way whatever. (Flannery, 1977, p.491).

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the importance of the distinction between a homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior stated above is frequently emphasized by other writers on the doctrine (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997, p.8).

Homosexual acts are to be deplored, but homosexual people should be accepted with

respect, compassion and sensitivity according to the catechism, in the understanding that sexual orientation is an aspect of being, a given, rather than freely chosen. Rossetti and Coleman argue that while the psychological genesis of homosexuality remains elusive, homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered “as they are closed to the possibility of giving life, and cannot emerge from a genuine complementarity” (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997, p.8). Cardinal Ratzinger’s deputy reiterated this position recently when he commented that being gay evokes moral concern because it is “a strong temptation towards acts that are always in themselves evil” (Dowd, 2001).

According to a priest who participated in a in a semi-structured interview (2002), consequences in Australia for gay priests who do not accept this teaching are severe:

(The archbishop) wrote to me and stopped my stipend because I was not happy with the church’s teaching on homosexuality. I would not sign a letter that stated that I accepted in conscience that homosexuality is intrinsically an orientation towards evil. Other priest friends have not contacted me. I have been ostracized and had my faculties removed so I cannot perform the sacraments.

Therefore, clergy with a homosexual orientation must accept that they are objectively disordered towards acts that are intrinsically evil, yet somehow balance this with the exhortation to embody and express themselves as sacred representatives of the church.

This situation creates enormous stress for some, as this interview respondent shows:

I have sought to actively minister as a catholic priest, but have been unable to accept the schizoid position of my church’s policy that I need to be happy with being considered, in the light of the church’s doctrine, to be intrinsically disordered towards evil, i.e., to be happy with being sad, mad or bad! What an impossible contradictory situation!

In 2003, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reinforced the doctrine on homosexuality in the ‘Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life’:

Analogously, the *family* needs to be safeguarded and promoted, based on monogamous marriage between a man and a woman, and protected in its unity and stability in the face of modern laws on divorce: in no way can other forms of cohabitation be placed on the same level as marriage, nor can they receive legal recognition as such. (Vatican, 2003)

Results of the CCLS surveys showed that unconditional acceptance of church teaching on homosexuality is not the case for a majority of laity, and uncertain numbers of clergy. Disagreement by the laity with the official church position on the treatment of homosexuals was expressed in 1996, with 62% of respondents in favor of accepting homosexuals as church members on the same basis as heterosexuals (although only 36% believe gay men should be appointed as leaders; CCLS, 1996). This result has remained relatively unchanged in the 2001 survey, with 60% of respondents in favor of accepting homosexuals as members, and 37% in favor of allowing homosexuals to be appointed to leadership positions in 2001 (NCLS, 2001).

These responses are indicative of widespread dissent from the official church position by the most dedicated laity, as 85% of the survey respondents attended Mass at least once a week. If the survey had been conducted over the general population of Catholic lay, it is reasonable to suggest that the percentages in favor of accepting homosexuals on the same basis as heterosexuals would have been much higher. Neither survey explored the concurrence of priests' attitudes with lay attitudes towards the official position of the church, but qualitative data indicates considerable clergy dissent (as would be expected given estimations of the number of gay clergy).

Differing views about the link between homosexuality and child sexual abuse

The doctrinal view, it could be argued, through its emphasis on the intrinsically evil nature of homosexual acts, tacitly supports the notion held by some both inside and outside the hierarchy of the organization, that a homosexual orientation equates with a predisposition to child molestation.

America's Catholic Medical Association (an Opus Dei front) has just written an open letter to the American bishops, which attempts to deflect the blame for the sex abuse scandal on to the liberal reform agenda and homosexuality (Crittenden, 2002, p.4).

Support of this perspective by the hierarchy was evidenced by the endorsement of Dr Rudegeair by Archbishop Hart, and the partial funding by the Melbourne archdiocese of

Rudegeair's visit to Melbourne (Zwartz, 2003a). Rudegeair, Fitzgibbons, and Diamond, (1996) in their letter to the American bishops, equated same sex attraction (SSA) with pedophilia and ephebophilia, "Many have pointed out that solving the problem of sexual abuse by clergy will necessarily involve addressing the problem of SSA among priests" (p.5).

This proposition however, enjoys little support among others researching this issue. Plante, editor of the book *Bless me Father for I have sinned* claims that linking homosexuality and ephebophilia is a myth, "We know that sexual orientation doesn't predict crimes against minors". This same misunderstanding has been linked to celibacy, and Plante suggests that it is media hype that leads people to incorrectly blame celibacy for the problem "If someone can't have sex for whatever reason, they aren't necessarily going to make children the object of their desire" (Plante, cited by Daw, 2002, p.25).

Sipe (1995) and Schoenherr (2002) caution that sexual orientation and the object of sexual desire should not be confused as in the cases of same-sex child abuse, and that these are two separate factors in sexual behavior (Sipe, 1995). Sipe's study showed that one-third of priest abusers (2% of the priest population) could be classified as true pedophiles with a three to one preference for boys, a gender attraction that is reversed in the general population. The reasons for this are unclear; perhaps it is simply a matter of availability. Sipe (1995) cites Hunter who claims that although it may appear that these men are homosexual because they are being sexual with someone of their own sex, most men who sexually abuse children have a heterosexual orientation with adults (Sipe, 1995, p. 28). Schoenherr (2002) also questions whether the celibate priesthood has a higher incidence of pedophilia than similar helping professions with access to children, and claims that there is some evidence that married men are more prone to pedophilia than single men (Schoenherr, 2002, p.188).

According to Sipe (1995), two-thirds of the priest abusers (4% of the priest population), became sexually active with adolescents (ephebophilia) with gender preference more evenly distributed (than with pedophilia) in relation to the general population of sexually

abusing males (Sipe, 1995, p. 27). Ephebophilia is a particular category of sexual abuse with a complex set of underlying risk factors unrelated to sexual orientation. Clergy who abuse minors have been found to have co-morbid disorders such as poor social skills, poor impulse control, major affective disorders, personality disorders, or substance abuse problems (Daw, 2002). As well as personality disorders, Sipe (1995) claimed, after his review of the histories of 473 priests, that psychodynamic, biogenetic, social/situational factors and moral endowment can make people vulnerable to acting out with inappropriate sexual behavior. For instance, Sipe found that 70-80 % of priests in his study, who sexually abused, had themselves been abused as children.

A full discussion of the causes of pedophilia and ephebophilia is outside the parameters of this chapter, but clearly, it could be argued that the reduction of the complexity of clergy sexual abuse to either a celibacy or sexual orientation issue is misguided. Doctrine that describes homosexuality as an orientation towards acts that are intrinsically evil, coupled with misconceptions about the link between a homosexual orientation and pedophilia, is not affirming of gay clergy, many of whom are “nurturing, intelligent, talented and sensitive - qualities especially suited to ministry” (Cozzens, 2000, p.100).

Homosexuality and ordination

Archbishop Bertone (secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) issued a statement that “Men with a homosexual orientation should not be admitted to seminary life”(Dowd, 2001, p.15). This statement runs counter to the catechism exhorting all Catholics to treat people of homosexual orientation with acceptance and respect, and led to speculation that a document banning the ordination of gay men was expected to be released in the near future. Auxiliary bishop Julian Porteous (rector of the Sydney Archdiocese Centre for Priestly Training) and a spokesperson for the Catholic Archdiocese reportedly acknowledged the existence of such a document, but had not yet received any communication from the Vatican (Burke, 2003). In their letter to the Catholic bishops, Rudegeair *et al.* (1996) proposed as one of the strategies for addressing the problem of clergy sexual abuse, that adequate screening systems which would

identify men who cannot live a chaste celibacy and therefore may pose a risk to others, be instituted. Rudegeair's observation that almost all the victims were adolescent males, not prepubescent boys, led him to the conclusion that "the problem of priests with SSA must be addressed" (p.5). His view therefore supported moves to ban the ordination of gay men.

The above attitude is a radical change of heart since the climate of the late 1980s, and represents an example of the swing towards orthodoxy identified by current writers such as Muggeridge (2000) and Collins (1986). Becker (1987) described a consensus among church personnel at the time, that viewed the fundamental question of suitability for Orders as "not whether the candidate is homosexually or heterosexually oriented but whether he is able to embrace celibacy faithfully, whether he manifests a sexuality that is mature and integrated" (Becker, 1987, p.68). A sentiment echoed in 2002 by Interview respondents:

My view is that in a contemporary society we should have no automatic bar to ordination, for anybody. I think I could defend that from the scriptures. What entry requirements do you have? They ought to be applied to single and married men and women, not on a gender basis, or on a married status, but on other factors. Capacity for leadership, emotional maturity and other factors pertaining to personal characteristics are more important than external factors. It's about a person in a role. Will this person be able enact his role? The Catholic Church is the only organization that has difficulty with that.

Yes, I think consideration should be given to include all those who wish to minister, and perform the sacraments.

The question of the ordination of men with a homosexual orientation is one that reveals the extent of the polarity between those within the clergy who follow the orthodox line such as Archbishop Bertone, Cardinal Ratzinger, and Dr Rudegeair and his associates, and those who take a more open view, such as Bishop Gumbleton in the United States, and Bishop Power in Australia. Donovan (2002) reported that Bishop Power called for a rethinking of mandatory celibacy for priests, greater recognition of gays and lesbians, and a bigger role for women in the church. According to Donovan, Bishop Power argued that

since a significant percentage of priests were gay, current church teaching implied a double standard (Donovan, 2002).

A more tempered approach is suggested by Rossetti and Coleman (1997) who recommend that the ability to form stable relationships with people of both sexes “without recourse to genital expression” (p.14) should be mandatory. This should apply regardless of the candidate’s sexual orientation. Given the evidence of Sipe’s that only 2% of clergy have successfully achieved celibacy, and mention by Rossetti and Coleman of the “real possibility of repeated failures in facing one’s sexuality without being genitally active” (p.14), it is arguable that this proposal would only accelerate the decline in numbers of acceptances of seminary candidates.

Bishop Gumbleton (2002) recommended that the question of homosexuality in the priesthood must be dealt with in a way that overcomes what could be described as the seriously homophobic culture of the Church and society. Gumbleton (2002) argued that steps outlined in a pastoral letter *Always our Children* must be taken, and furthermore, every “priest, seminarian, and bishop” must be enabled to “come to a clear awareness of his sexual orientation and a healthy acceptance of it,” but homosexual priests must, as all priests must, “integrate their sexuality within an honest, authentic lifestyle as a celibate person” (p.5).

The need for all to come to acceptance of sexual orientation echoes the statement by the catechism of the Church cited by Rossetti and Coleman (1997) that argued “every man and woman should acknowledge and accept his/her sexual identity”. However, Rosetti and Coleman (1997) found that many men, through fear and shame, have repressed or denied their sexuality in a form of “internalized homophobia”, a dangerous practice that can have serious consequences such as “compulsive sexual behavior and/or ever-deepening depression” (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997, p.12). Therefore, the responsibility is on the seminaries to provide the means for adequate psychosexual development of candidates for the priesthood.

Formation and homosexuality

Evidence that seminary formation and training are inadequate in terms of informing and promoting the healthy psychosexual adjustment necessary for enabling mature celibate, intimate friendships, is provided not only by the regrettable sexual abuse cases, but also by the lived experience of many priests. As an interview respondent commented:

At the moment the larger percentage of men going in (to seminaries) seem to be closeted gays and I doubt they will be helped to integrate this so that they can minister in a healthy way.

A homosexual orientation adds a further complication to what appears to be an already impoverished overall psychosexual developmental context. Because of their separation from women, heterosexual seminarians are within an environment that ‘protects’ them from continual sexual temptation during what is the most vulnerable period of their development. The homosexual candidate does not have the assistance of such a powerful protection, “instead, his social interaction with sexually attractive companions continues, and is even intensified, by the close companionship of so many other males” (Becker, 1987, p.69).

Whether this proximity to sexually attractive companions translates into greater difficulty with integration of celibacy for gay priests is an interesting question. Sipe (1995) found no proportionate increase in sexual behavior of homosexually oriented priests than heterosexually oriented priests, which means that 50% are celibate at any one time. However, as mentioned in the previous section (p. 104) only 2% of priests overall achieve an integrated and stable celibacy, and the rest explore a range of sexual expression at different times in their lives (Sipe, 1995, p.69). These results point to the view that attainment of an established celibate state is a matter of mature psychosexual development for any sexual orientation.

Becker (1987) argued that the heterosexual/celibate culture that is the context for young gay seminarians means that even when there are conferences and lectures around the issue of development of healthy celibacy, that these are always framed as though the students were all heterosexual. This leaves the homosexually oriented candidate with the

problem of translating the material into his own framework, and the possibility of forming inaccurate conclusions (p.69). An interview respondent illustrates this point:

I'm gay, and I didn't think we had anything like enough training for celibacy. In fact the topic of sexuality was hardly ever addressed in the seminary, and then only very superficially. I think there is a huge repressed homosexuality among the clergy and seminarians. Many are bi or homosexual. I had a spiritual director who I went to in my third or fourth year. I told him that I thought I was gay because I was having a sexual relationship with another guy in the seminary. He completely denied it. He told me that having that sort of relationship didn't mean that I was gay, and that it could be just a phase. Another time I brought it up and it was pushed aside by some rationale that it was perfectly natural development and didn't mean anything in particular. He just didn't want to address it. This caused me huge problems after ordination because of church teaching on the matter. I felt I couldn't really express who I was.

It could be argued that such a response from a spiritual director to what is a deeply important personal situation for a young seminarian is less than supportive, given the need for candidates to have the assistance of their leaders as they are confronted with difficult and confusing issues related to all aspects of their growth and development.

Psychological implications for gay priests

Mark Dowd (2001) asks for an explanation for why "...God might want to call to priestly service a number of 'objectively disordered' men that is out of all proportion with the numbers of gays in society" (p.15). Anderson (1998) suggests that some men enter the priesthood consciously or unconsciously to avoid having to deal with the cultural and religious pressure to form a relationship with a woman, and/or to avoid acknowledging a homosexual orientation either to themselves or society. The choice of a vocation thus provides them with a "means of resolving their difficulties" (p.45). As Laidler (1989) said:

Celibacy provides a structural haven for someone like me. For more than a decade I have been increasingly open to talking to people who cared to ask about my sexuality, and for the past five of fifty years I have been quite happy to tell people I am homosexual. But the question is rarely asked of a Catholic priest. Not many single men in their mid-thirties who do not go out with women enjoy that luxury (Laidler, 1989, p. 102).

This avoidance, according to Becker (1987), exacerbates the double-bind experienced by the gay candidate. The homosexual community in secular society encourages acceptance of themselves and open declaration of their orientation, as this would then be seen as identification with and support of their oppressed brothers. The organizational prohibition on open declaration of a homosexual orientation was cited as a major difficulty by Laidler (1989), “ I felt pain alongside many gay people. At times, there was even a sense of my having betrayed the ‘class’ struggle” (Laidler, 1989, p. 103). But Becker (1987) claims that as a celibate and public religious figure in an organization that is even more homophobic than secular society, a gay priest “is not free either to act out sexually, or declare his minority status. He may thus experience his celibacy as a self-denigration ...” (Becker, 1987, p.68). Laidler’s experience bears this out:

Contact with gay friends made me increasingly aware of the Catholic Church’s role in the oppression of homosexual people. I read the nonsense the official Catholic Church spokesmen wrote about people such as myself, and about our ‘unnaturalness’. I sat through the anti-gay jokes at clergy social functions. I felt more and more dishonest about being the official spokesperson of an organization that considered me and millions of others to be ‘intrinsically disordered’. I became more and more angered by nice distinctions: it was ok for me to *be* homosexual because I could not help that; but I could not *think* or *act* sexually because that was the material of sin (Laidler, 1989, p. 103).

This excerpt succinctly captures the intensity of the intrapsychic conflict generated when the movement towards actualization of an ideal self, as determined by the inherent characteristics of one who is ordained to become another Christ (McGovern, 2002, p. 68) becomes possible only through suppression or denial of the truth of one’s own being. According to Horney’s (1950) perspective, actualization equates with self-acceptance, so denial of an intrinsic part of one’s expression equates with non-acceptance of self and therefore exacerbates tendencies towards self-hatred (Horney, 1950). The following from an interview respondent is a poignant example of this conflict:

I have come to a considered position that this fear/shame based situation fails to address the actual richness and complexities of embodied sexuality and spirituality. This external environment creates an almost impossible condition for self-acceptance often leading to depression...self rejection...with correlative isolated loneliness and pain.

Choices for gay priests

The way each gay priest deals with the dilemma of a homosexual orientation requires a choice between many alternatives including first, the choice to acknowledge and accept a homosexual orientation, live celibately and sublimate emotional and sexual needs into prayer and service. Second, the choice to ignore or deny a homosexual orientation; third, the choice to live a double life by gratifying sexual needs in secret; fourth, the choice to acknowledge sexual orientation publicly and fight for changes in church teaching (Anderson, 1998, p.46); or finally, the choice to leave the priesthood. All of these choices present a gay priest with the necessity to compromise an aspect of his authentic, free expression.

The first requires a mature integration of sexuality into the celibate lifestyle in the manner dictated by the priestly vocation. However, according to Sipe (1995), this is possible for only a very small percentage of the priest population, and requires knowledge of oneself at the very deepest level of being, regardless of sexual orientation (p.96). There are only very subtle outward differences between choices one and two, with a strong possibility that ignoring and denying an orientation towards homosexuality could be mistaken for a choice to live celibately.

The third choice (of gratifying sexual needs in private) is one that whilst allowing for healthy sexual expression, maintains the adolescent association with the organization inherent in a priestly vocation. Cozzen's Oedipal framework suggests that ordination is a transition from a biological family to a metaphorical one, with the bishop as sacred father, the Church as mother, and colleagues as brothers (Cozzens, 2000). According to Cozzens (2000), this psychic hierarchy can discourage growth to healthy maturity. Consequently, beliefs and actions that conflict with the family/organizational culture could be seen to encourage secretiveness and hypocrisy in clergy who choose this option.

Consequences for publicly acknowledging homosexual orientation and fighting for changes to church teaching as in the fourth choice have already been discussed. Even

ministering to homosexuals has important ramifications for clergy who do so in public, for instance, the Maida Commission, which was set up to examine the work of Jeannine Gramick and Fr Robert Nugent, and their book *Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church*. Eventually, the Commission silenced them both (Malcolm, 1999).

The final choice, the choice to leave the priesthood, is one that is reluctantly made by those who are unable to find a solution that allows for comfortable integration of who they are with what they do. Qualitative evidence suggests that for these men, faced with a 'Sophie's Choice' of deciding which beloved child to hold onto and which to relinquish - the 'priestly' identity, or the 'gay' identity - considerable suffering ensues and in many cases the stress results in physical symptoms and/or substance abuse.

I think it is fair to say that my health suffered in the final two years of my working as a priest: lots of minor colds and flu...I had had a minor bout of reactive depression about four years previously, and had learnt to recognize the body signs that told me to slow down. I feel if I had not taken the decision when I did another bout would have been on the way. Of more concern to me now, I had taken up smoking again during this time, after stopping for 7 years and am still struggling to break the addiction. My drinking behavior had changed from years ago, and had become what I would call reactive. (Laidler, 1989, p. 105)

Pathological and non-pathological approaches to homosexuality

Inherent in the above choices is the assumption that a homosexual orientation is somewhere along a continuum from 'absolutely not acceptable' to 'fully acceptable'. Some priests who find their homosexual orientation absolutely not acceptable, choose to act on the assumption that the orientation is a pathological illness (as was the belief in the psychiatric profession until the late 1960s) and present themselves for conversion therapy in the hope of a cure. Dr Rudegeair, a Catholic psychiatrist and psychologist who has treated a significant number of priests over a period of 25 years with conversion therapy, includes same-sex attraction as a psychological illness along with pedophilia and ephebophilia. Although citing many predisposing factors that can be overcome in therapy, Rudegeair's argument rests on the assumption that what is required is primarily

development of moral strength so as “not to give in to temptation” (Fitzgibbon, *et al.*, 1996, p. 3), which will solve the problem of sexual abuse of children and adolescents.

While definitive causes of sexual orientation remain elusive, predisposing factors have been debated for decades. Some claim it is a matter of personal choice, or immorality, while others cite environmental factors, genetic encoding, parenting practices, psychological traumas and physiological aspects. Rossetti and Coleman (1997) argue that “if one were able to do an etiological study of homosexually oriented people, one would likely find several different clusters of types. It is probably more accurate to speak of homosexualities than of one homosexuality” (p.10).

Despite Rudegeair (2003) and others who adhere to the philosophy that homosexuality is pathological and can therefore be ‘cured’ through conversion therapy, a viewpoint that a homosexual orientation is non-pathological is put forward by writers such as Cozzens (2000) and Sipe (1995). Cozzens (2000) cites a comprehensive review of the literature on the etiology of homosexuality, where the conclusion is reached that “it appears that in most cases, people do not choose their (sexual) orientation. Rather, they discover it” (Cozzens, 2000, p.104).

The Australian Psychological Society’s (APS) *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients*, supports the non-pathological approach, and requires its members to treat lesbian, gay and bisexual clients with respect. This approach was detailed in the *APS Position Statement on the Use of Therapies that Attempt to Change Sexual Orientation* that states:

With little data about patients it is impossible to evaluate the theories that rationalize the conduct of ‘reparative’ or ‘conversion’ therapies. Firstly, they are at odds with the scientific position of the American Psychiatric Association that has maintained, since 1973, that homosexuality is not a mental disorder...there has been an increasing body of religious thought arguing against traditional, biblical interpretations that condemn homosexuality and which underlie religious types of ‘reparative’ therapy (APS, 2000a, p.1).

Among other directives in the APS guidelines are that psychologists should understand that homosexuality and bisexuality are not indicative of mental illness, they must strive to understand how inaccurate or prejudicial views of homosexuality or bisexuality may affect the client's presentation in treatment and the therapeutic process, and the particular circumstances and challenges facing lesbian, gay and bisexual parents, and recognize that the families of lesbian, gay and bisexual people may include people who are not legally or biologically related (APS Guidelines, 2000b).

These guidelines satisfy the edict in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that homosexual people are to be accepted and treated with sensitivity and respect (Rossetti & Coleman, 1997, p.8), but at the same time negate the doctrinal view that a homosexual orientation is essentially disordered. This inconsistency highlights the fundamental tension between church teaching on homosexuality and an increasing understanding and acceptance of gay people in secular society, a tension which underpins the dilemma for both priests and Catholic laity in coming to grips with this issue.

SUMMARY

Although precise quantitative data are lacking, evidence points to a rising number of homosexual priests and candidates for the priesthood in dioceses and seminaries in Australia and the US. Varied rationalizations for this phenomenon have been proposed, from structural forces to psychological explanations. Clearly, there are difficulties for gay priests, who must integrate a healthy acceptance of their sexual orientation in the cultural homophobia of the organization. The priesthood, while providing a 'safe' haven for men who may wish to avoid acknowledging a homosexual orientation either to themselves or their families and friends, also intensifies the intrapsychic conflict associated with assimilation of both the sacred and profane aspects of self.

This developmental task is not helped by seminary responses that are limited, dismissive or denigrating, responses that do nothing to assist the candidate to attain a mature capacity for celibate intimacy, and thus perpetuate a climate of ignorance and anxiety.

The organization holds a stated position on the intrinsic evil inherent in homosexual acts. It demands that its priests who openly acknowledge their gayness also accept without reservation the fact that they are intrinsically disordered towards acts that are evil. The direction towards orthodoxy further tacitly supports the notion that homosexuality is linked with acts of pedophilia and ephebophilia, increasing the structural denigration of gay priests.

Movement within the hierarchy towards banning ordination of gay men further intensifies the direction towards orthodoxy, and increases the “disparity between increasingly self-respecting homosexuals in the Catholic clergy and a Catholic moral theology that continues to preach contempt for homosexuality” (James Carroll, 2002, p.7). It is arguable that for the health of the organization, and the psychological wellbeing of its clergy, as well as its own credibility and authority, the hierarchy would do better to invoke the catechism of respectful acceptance of homosexuals, rather than persist with constant restatement of a doctrine of condemnation.

In contrast to the dominant organizational view of homosexuality, Bishop Gumbleton (2002) reminded his audience in his presentation given on May 25, 2002 in Lexington, Massachusetts, “that homosexuals are a gift to the Church, and as such, should be welcomed into the community and the priesthood” (Gumbleton, 2002, p.5). Sipe’s (1995) examination of the celibate/sexual development of priests in his psychohistory of priests portrayed in biography and autobiography identified many exemplary priests who were likely to have been homosexual in orientation.

These included such notables as John Henry Cardinal Newman, Gerard Manly Hopkins, Alered, Anselm, Alcuin and Cassian (Sipe, 1995, p.94). Sipe (1995) commented that “if the Catholic Church were to excise from its honored saints all men who had homosexual orientation, the roles (sic) would be decimated. The list of outcasts would include apostles, martyrs, popes, bishops and founders of religious orders. If the church today were to exclude all men of homosexual orientation from its celibate/sexual system, the church as we know it would cease to exist” (Sipe, 1995, p.95).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that a serious challenge to fundamental priestly identity, and in conflict with church doctrine, is the attitude of a considerable percentage of both clergy and laity to the questions of the requirement of celibacy for priests. This challenge creates conflict between priests' self concept and identification with the organization. Issues of sexual abuse by clergy, and the lack of appropriate response by church authorities, threatens to further deconstruct public and parishioner perception of the moral authority of the church, and consequently the view that priests are its sacred representatives.

Quantitative analysis supported the primary hypothesis and showed a significant association between rating the removal of the obligation of celibacy as the highest priority of pastoral strategy and thinking of resigning constantly (Tables 5.4 and 5.5). A significant association was also found between the age cohort 46-55 and a preference for the removal of the obligation of celibacy (Table 5.6), as well as over-representation (as expected under the null hypothesis) of this cohort in the *high* Openness range (Table 5.7). A significant association between Openness and attitude to celibacy (Table 5.8) suggests that the age cohort of priests who were seminarians or newly ordained post-Vatican II are more likely to hold the more liberal views on the obligation of celibacy than those ordained pre-Vatican II.

The question of heterosexuality as a fundamental aspect of priestly identity was explored in relation to a considerable body of research that points to an increase in the number of gay priests. In the absence of accurate quantitative data, this was looked at in the light of qualitative material from the semi-structured interviews and current research and literature from Australia and the United States. Important negative effects of the official hierarchical position on the psychological wellbeing of priests were identified and raised questions about the relationships of clergy with the organization and the hierarchy. These questions will be addressed in Chapter 6.

PRIESTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CHURCH AND BISHOPS

Overview

This chapter first examines the relationship between priests and the theological and ecclesiological aspects of the organization and second, the relationship between priests and their bishops as representatives of the hierarchy, both of which are fundamental in priestly ministry. A complex web of interactions between church, hierarchy and priests is played out on both conscious and unconscious dimensions. The conscious, or external functioning, is expressed in ministry, and the unconscious or internal dimension is directed towards the growth of psychological, emotional and spiritual maturity (Cozzens, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002). The following discussion includes investigation of both these dimensions, with quantitative and qualitative data from the CCLS 1996 and 2001 priest surveys illustrating the external, and an iconic reading of Freud as proposed by Cozzens (2000) providing a framework for understanding the internal dimensions of the relationships.

The primary hypothesis tested in this chapter is *satisfaction with priestly ministry will be positively associated with holding attitudes that are congruent with church teaching and feeling supported by bishops and diocesan authorities.*

PRIESTS, THEOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY

Background

While Western secular society can be seen to be moving towards more liberal cultural and social positions and away from fundamental religious attitudes with regard to personal morality, the Catholic organization is described by recent literature as becoming more orthodox in its position (Collins, 2001; Cozzens, 2000; Schoenherr, 2002; Wills, 2000). A swing away from the post-Vatican II reforms can be seen to contribute to a widening gap between the theological and ecclesiological position of the organization and the views of some of its priests, as well as contributing to the establishment of a polarity of views among clergy.

The trend towards orthodoxy was illustrated in research by Hoge and Wenger (2002a), who found an age cohort effect in operation in relation to attitudes to celibacy. They found a striking contrast over time in the views of priests aged 36 or less in 1970 (when 85% agreed with optional celibacy), and 1997 (when only 26% of this age group agreed that celibacy should be a matter of personal choice)(p.5). Yamane (Schoenherr, 2002) contended that this movement towards orthodoxy was creating a generation gap between clergy, and a widening of the gap between clergy and the laity. According to Yamane (Schoenherr, 2002) the list of divisive issues within the theological and ecclesiological positions of the church continues to grow: gender, reproductive ethics, homosexuality, abortion, premarital sex, artificial birth control, and ordination of women and married men, all show lack of acceptance by clergy and laity (p. xvii).

In contrast to Hoge and Yamane, McGovern (2002), who embraces the fundamental views of Opus Dei (a personal prelature set up according to the guidelines of Vatican II), is concerned that many priests have been affected by pressure to conform to the views of secular society. He suggested that the result of a loss of emphasis on supernatural destiny is that priests tend to see their role as that of Christian social workers, rather than embracing their role as the key to supernatural life with a principal task of leading souls to eternal salvation (p.12). McGovern (2002) argued that a side effect of the loss of the supernatural outlook is that priests could be influenced in their thinking by political,

academic and media elites. As a consequence of this influence, priests could interpret the theological categories of sin, repentance, and grace in “collective and social terms rather than personal and spiritual ones” (McGovern, 2002, p.12).

It could be argued that the hierarchical structure of the organization that gives the pope unilateral decision-making rights over theological and ecclesiological decisions, is anathema to the discovery of ways of bridging the widening gaps within the system. For instance, regarding the issues of ordination of women and allowing priests who have married to return to active ministry, Schoenherr (2002) states, “Of course the Holy Father and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith have declared these issues closed for discussion, in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) and *Responsum ad Dubium* (1995), respectively” (p. xviii).

More recently, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has reiterated the Vatican policy on homosexuality and, according to Zwartz (2003c), in its strongest statement for decades has directed Catholic politicians to oppose new laws and seek to repeal laws that currently allow for same-sex unions. This authoritarian attitude endemic throughout the structure of the organization can be seen to be exacerbating the very problems it is attempting to control, as further alienation of more liberal thinking priests and laity seems inevitable. Questions are raised about the way that priests are affected by the patriarchal structure of the church in both their ministry and in their personal psychological and spiritual development.

Qualitative data collected in the CCLS 2001 survey and semi-structured interviews (2002) provide clear evidence of the dissatisfaction felt by many. The following respondents expressed their need for open dialogue:

As a priest, (I am) learning to work through resistance to change in myself, as well as change in the parish and in the diocesan community. It is important for the church to be prepared to dialogue openly about controversial issues, not bury issues under pseudo ‘unity’ banners which in reality translate to uniformity and overt centralism. My well-being is enriched by being invited into dialogue. Invited into responsibility, being offered a vision to strive for.

We need a vision of the world, which has been redeemed by the blood of the Lord, so as to engage in positive dialogue, not to be afraid that unity can reign in diversity of theologies, ecclesiologies, cultures and rational church bodies. Priests need a new vision and way of viewing themselves, the world and church. A lot has been developed on the role of Bishops and laity, not much on the development of priests.

I feel that a radical reconstruction of the church's traditional vision of celibate priesthood needs to take place. I feel that the institutionalization of the church, particularly since the Council of Trent has robbed the church (especially its ordinary members) of the promised freedom of the spirit that would allow more leeway for cultural adaptation of basic human and cultic needs to be met. Our church structure no longer speaks to ordinary people with an enthusiasm that it should.

(The) democratization process, or lack thereof is most frustrating. We don't have consensus rule - policy making and consultation and process of resolution of such diversity of opinions needs airing. Most priests I talk to today say that the authority of the church is out of touch...empire building, bureaucracy, they're into keeping the machine going without asking the question whether we should get rid of the machine and build another one. Maintaining the structures of what has already been is the prime aim.

The above comments are poignant examples of the frustration and despair generated in those priests who feel they are denied a 'voice' within the church, and are left without a forum for resolution of their doubts and concerns about some of the positions of the hierarchy. Other survey respondents called for changes to the distribution of power and a more democratic consultative process of decision-making.

Reform within the church must start from the top. ie. Papacy and Curia: question of 'authority' is at stake, and lacks credibility. Lack of consultation for the appointment of bishops is contrary to Vat. II. Rome's 'heavy handedness' is counter-productive.

The Vatican should disengage from its dependence upon Opus Dei. This organisation is secretive, power driven, and elitist. The Vatican should trust bishops more, and withdraw from a structure in which it is source of all significant power to pastor the people of God. The bishops are increasingly looking like Vatican rubber stamps.

Conscious dimension of the relationships of priests with the church

The above discussion points to a tension between polarities of theological positions. These tensions, it could be argued, increase through the reactive intensification of the push towards orthodoxy by the hierarchy as the pressure for more liberal reforms occurs in the Catholic and other religious institutions. An example of this is the reaction of the Vatican, which re-iterated its policy of non-acceptance of homosexually oriented priests when news of the acceptance of openly homosexual priests as leaders by the Anglican and Uniting churches was announced (Zwartz, 2003c). Many priest respondents commented on church teachings that they would like to see debated and reformed:

I think the way forward is that diocesan assemblies for priests treat issues of practical pastoral concern. eg. The convalidation of *ne temere* marriages in the internal forum - admission of divorced and remarried people without an annulment, to receive Holy Communion.

Make celibacy optional for priests. Allow priests to marry if they wish. Undo the harm of *Humanae Vitae*. The recommendations of the laity at that time were not heard. The church needs to be more liberal.

Divorcees need to be welcome at the Eucharistic table. The Church needs to soften its approach to 'gays'. The Church should look again at inter-communion with our separate brethren.

Many men feel that they could be married and still be faithful and effective in ministry.

I feel the need for women in 'priestly' ministry could/should be raised. (The) issue of gay/lesbian matters is a reality in ministry. (The issue of) intimacy not raised here - should be.

Questions are raised about the effect of disagreement with the theological and ecclesiological positions of the church on priests. The qualitative data presented in this chapter delineates the problem for many priests, and quantitative analysis shows the degree to which the problem of dissent with church teaching affects priests satisfaction with ministry.

ANALYSIS

In order to test the hypothesis that *there is an association between disagreement with church teaching and wishing to leave ministry*, standard multiple regression analysis was performed. The dependent variable was ‘frequency of thinking about leaving’ and the independent variables were: ‘do you accept the teaching that women cannot be ordained as priests?’ and ‘do you accept the practice whereby divorced Catholics who have remarried without annulment of their previous marriage are refused communion?’ Respondents recorded their level of acceptance of the teachings from five options: *yes with no difficulty, yes with some difficulty, yes with great difficulty, no, and don’t know*. The analysis supported the hypothesis ($F [2,481] = 37.72, p < .001$; Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Acceptance of church teaching and frequency of thinking about leaving ministry.

	Pearson co-efficient	R Square	Beta
Women cannot be ordained priests	-.37***		-.36***
No communion for remarried without annulment	-.26***	.14	-.02

$n = 481$ *** = $p < .001$

Source: CCLS, 1996; Analysis: Jane Power.

A negative association between ‘non-acceptance of church teaching’ and ‘thinking about leaving’ is supported by the analysis in Table 6.1 where significant negative correlations were found with both variables. A significant and unique contribution of 36% to the variation in the dependent variable was made by the variable ‘women cannot be ordained as priests’, indicating that priests who have most difficulty accepting, or cannot accept this teaching, are likely to think about leaving frequently. The independent variable, ‘no communion for remarried without annulment’, while having a small significant correlation, made a non-significant contribution to the variation.

A particularly important finding in Table 6.1 is that the degree of effect on the priest of his disagreement with church teaching varies according to the actual teaching. For church authorities to be accurately informed about the organizational positions creating

the most difficulty for priests in terms of their felt compromise of their integrity, it is important that further research is allowed to address this issue directly. It was not possible to repeat the analysis in Table 6.1 for 2001 because these issues were not covered in the CCLS 2001 survey.

The findings in Table 6.1 were supported by research by Hoge (2002) in a study that looked into the effect of dissimilarities between the attitude of priests and church teaching. Hoge (2002) found a significant difference between the attitudes of diocesan priests, religious priests and resigned priests in the United States (p. 29). The finding that the largest degree of difference between attitudes is between diocesan (most similarity with church teaching) and resigned priests (least similarity) indicates, as in the present research, an association between disagreement with ecclesiology and wishing to leave ministry. The attitudes of religious priests dissented more from church teaching than diocesan priests, and less than resigned priests (Table 6.2).

Hoge's (2002) study looked at nine statements about priesthood and ministry. Table 6.2 shows the four statements in which the differences were greatest: first, that celibacy should be an option for diocesan priests; second, that ordination confers on the priest a new status which makes him essentially different from the laity; third, that the Catholic Church should allow women participation in all ministries; and finally, that a priest must see himself as a "man set apart" by God (Hoge, 2002, p. 29). Differences between religious priests and resigned priests were not covered in the CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys, but would be important areas for further research.

Table 6.2 Percent of diocesan, religious and resigned priests in agreement with pastoral strategies

Statement	Active diocesan <i>n</i> = 261	Active religious <i>n</i> = 266	Resigned <i>n</i> = 72
Celibacy should be an option for diocesan priests	29	64	94
Through ordination priests are essentially different from the laity	75	52	27
Women should be allowed greater participation in all ministries	45	75	90
A priest must see himself as a man set apart	69	40	28

Source: Adapted from Hoge (2001, p.7a), Problems felt in the first five years of priesthood

Hoge, Shields and Griffin (1995) investigated attitudes of clergy to ecclesiological issues, and found an emergent trend towards a more conservative outlook. Results indicated that younger priests were more orthodox than older ones, and clearly represented a more traditional view of priesthood. Furthermore, Hoge *et al.* (1995) argued, because Vatican leadership had been consistently conservative on institutional church issues for some time, that this probably influenced the theological and ecclesiological position of recent applicants to seminaries (p. 208). As the study by Hoge, Shields and Griffin was completed in 1995, further research is needed to ascertain whether the trend towards conservatism by new seminarians at that time has continued.

In order to test the hypothesis that a *trend to a more conservative outlook will be found in younger priests*, three cross-tabulation analyses were performed (Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5). The first variable used in Table 6.3 was ‘age cohorts’ which had five age categories: 25-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, and 66 +. The second variable was the question: ‘What do you think of the way church leaders are pursuing the goal of Christian unity?’ There were five responses to the question and priests were asked to circle one only: First, *there have already been too many compromises made in the name of Christian unity, Catholic bishops and ecumenical groups should work for unity with other Christians in the one church founded by Christ*. Second, *in the pursuit of the unity Christ wills, the Catholic Church should be prepared to modify structures and roles, even to the role of the pope, without sacrificing any essential truths*. Third, *the era of separate denominations has passed; Christians are one in spirit, and the various Christian traditions each have their*

own value; it is time to remove any rules preventing Christians from receiving communion in each other's churches. The fourth and fifth responses were that respondents were not well enough informed to give an opinion or did not give an opinion because the question did not matter to them (CCLS, 2001). Table 6.3 included only the first three responses.

Table 6.3 Attitude of clergy to church leader's pursuit of Christian unity by age cohorts.

		No more compromises	Modify structures even to the pope	Remove rules preventing communion	Total
Age cohorts					
25-35	Count	6	8	4	18
	Expected count	3.4	11.1	3.5	18.0
	Percent	33.3	44.4	22.2	100.0
36-45	Count	7	25	5	37
	Expected count	7.0	22.8	7.2	37.0
	Percent	18.9	67.6	13.5	100.0
46-55	Count	13	48	16	77
	Expected count	14.5	47.5	15.0	77.0
	Percent	16.9	62.3	20.8	100.0
56-65	Count	14	61	23	98
	Expected count	18.5	60.5	19.1	98.0
	Percent	14.3	62.2	23.5	100.0
66+	Count	18	48	12	78
	Expected count	14.7	48.0	15.2	78.0
	Percent	23.1	61.5	15.4	100.0

n = 308

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis was not supported by the analysis that resulted in a non-significant Chi-square value for the cross-tabulation ($\chi^2 [8, n = 308] = 7.36, p > .05$), which means that there is no significant association between 'age cohort' and 'attitude to church leaders' pursuit of Christian unity'. However, examination of Table 6.3 showed that 5 out of the 15 cells related to the five age groups and three choices of response had counts that differed from what would be expected under the null hypothesis. Some of these cells made large contributions to the value of the overall Chi-square, and indicated a trend in line with Hoge *et al.*'s findings.

The largest of these contributions (2) was made by the cell age cohort of 25-35 and *no more compromise* which is the most conservative view of leader's pursuit of Christian unity. As this is the youngest age cohort and is over-represented in the most orthodox view, the argument by Hoge *et al.* (1995) that there is congruence between the current position of the church and newly ordained priests is suggested also in the Australian experience. However, the small number of respondents in this age cohort means that further research with a larger sample of young priests is needed before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

For this discussion, the most salient feature of Table 6.3 is the high percentage of priests in all age cohorts (except the 25-35 age cohort) who would like to see modification of church structures and even to the role of the pope (62% overall). Dissatisfaction with the hierarchy and the distribution of power is suggested in such a high percentage of priests calling for change, and highlights the gap in the relationship between priests and the organization. Table 6.4 shows the results of a cross-tabulation of the variables 'age cohort' (as in Table 6.3) and 'do you accept the Catholic teaching that women cannot be ordained as priests?' which contained four response categories: *no*, *yes with great difficulty*, *yes with some difficulty*, and *yes with no difficulty*.

Table 6.4 Age cohorts and clergy acceptance of teaching that women cannot be ordained.

	No.	Accept with great difficulty	Accept with some difficulty	Accept with no difficulty	Total
Age cohorts					
25-35					
Count	3	3	1	2	9
Expected count	2.7	1.5	2.0	2.8	9.0
Percent	33.3	33.3	11.1	22.2	100.00
36-45					
Count	14	14	12	12	52
Expected count	15.6	8.6	11.7	16.1	52.0
Percent	26.9	26.9	23.1	23.1	100.00
46-55					
Count	37	25	19	26	107
Expected count	32.1	17.7	24.1	33.2	107.0
Percent	34.6	23.4	17.8	24.3	100.00
56-65					
Count	56	19	35	37	147
Expected count	44.0	24.3	33.1	45.6	147.0
Percent	38.1	12.9	23.8	25.2	100.00
66+					
Count	35	19	42	73	169
Expected count	50.6	27.9	38.1	52.4	169.0
Percent	20.7	11.2	24.9	43.2	100.00

$n = 484$

Source: CCLS, 1996; Analysis: Jane Power.

A significant association between age cohorts and level of acceptance of the teaching that women cannot be ordained was found by the analysis ($\chi^2 [12, n = 484] = 35.68$, $p < .001$). However, inspection of the cells showed that the age group that held the most orthodox view on this issue was the oldest age group where an over-representation according to the null hypothesis was found in the cell relating to *no difficulty* with acceptance of the teaching. This cell made the largest contribution to the value of Chi-square (8.1). As would be expected, the cells relating to this age group and *non-acceptance* or *great difficulty with acceptance* of the teaching were under-represented according to the null hypothesis and made the second largest contribution to the value of Chi-square (4.4).

Table 6.4 showed that the first four age cohorts were more inclined towards an open view on the issue of women's ordination, with over-representations (according to the null hypothesis) in the total non-acceptance (*no* cell) of the teaching and under-representations in the *acceptance with no difficulty* category. Inspection of the cells for

non-acceptance of the teaching showed that the contribution to the value of Chi-square increased with age until a sharp drop in the observed count in relation to the expected count in the oldest age group (66+). Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported by the analysis and showed that it was the age cohort that was ordained prior to Vatican II that held the most conservative views.

Table 6.5 showed results of a cross-tabulation analysis between the ‘age cohorts’ variable as in Tables 6.3 and 6.4, and the variable ‘do you accept the practice whereby divorced Catholics who have remarried without annulment of their previous marriage are refused Communion?’ which contained the four response categories: *no*, *yes with great difficulty*, *yes with some difficulty*, and *yes with no difficulty*.

Table 6.5 Age cohorts and clergy acceptance of refusal of communion to divorced and remarried without annulment of their previous marriage.

	No.	Accept with great difficulty	Accept with some difficulty	Accept with no difficulty	Total
Age cohorts					
25-35					
Count	3	3	2	1	9
Expected count	3.3	2.2	2.2	1.3	9.0
Percent	33.3	33.3	22.2	11.3	100.0
36-45					
Count	25	12	11	5	53
Expected count	19.2	13.0	13.1	7.7	53.0
Percent	47.2	22.6	20.8	9.4	100.0
46-55					
Count	42	29	28	9	108
Expected count	39.2	26.4	26.7	15.9	108.0
Percent	38.9	26.9	25.9	8.3	100.0
56-65					
Count	60	38	38	11	147
Expected count	53.4	36.0	36.3	21.3	147.0
Percent	40.8	25.9	25.9	7.5	100.0
66+					
Count	45	36	40	44	165
Expected count	59.9	40.4	40.7	24.0	165.0
Percent	27.3	21.8	24.2	26.7	100.0

n = 482

Source: CCLS, 1996; Analysis: Jane Power.

A significant association was found between ‘age cohorts’ and the level of acceptance of the church teaching on refusal of Communion to divorced and remarried people (C^2 [12,

$n = 482] = 33.83, p = < .001$). However, as in Table 6.4, it is the older age group who are the most conservative, with all age cohorts other than 66+ being over-represented according to the null hypothesis in not accepting the teaching. A particularly strong association was found in the 66+ age cohort and *acceptance with no difficulty* cell. This cell alone contributed nearly half of the value of Chi-square (16.6). Again, at the other end of the spectrum, the 66+ age cohort was found to be under-represented in the *no* cell and made a contribution of 3.7 to the value of Chi-square. Another salient factor in the table was that the age cohort 56-65, or priests ordained during or immediately after Vatican II, were significantly under-represented in the *acceptance with no difficulty* cell. This cell made a contribution of 5 to the value of Chi-square.

Tables 6.3-6.5 show that, not surprisingly, priests aged 66 and over hold the most conservative theological and ecclesiological views on the questions explored in the CCLS 2001 and 1996 surveys. A sharp swing to the other extreme is evident in the 56-65 age cohort, with this swing becoming more moderate towards the younger end of the spectrum. The attitudes of clergy to the questions about church leaders' pursuit of Christian unity canvassed in 2001 suggests a swing back to the orthodox position in the newest recruits as found by Hoge *et al.*, and suggests the need for further research to illuminate the current situation. If the majority of church leaders are found in the 66+ age group, it could be argued that tension between the hierarchy and numbers of experienced clergy is inevitable, as results of the analysis show that the polarity of opinion is largest between these two age cohorts.

Unconscious dimensions of the relationship of priests to the church

According to Cozzens (2000), ordination to the priesthood brings men into an Oedipal triangle with the Catholic church, "It is not unusual to hear the ordaining bishop turn to the parents of the men just ordained to thank them for the gift of their sons to the church" (p. 54). The Church represents 'mother', the bishop 'father', and other priests become symbolic 'brothers' in this new psychic family, inherent in which, according to psychoanalytic theory (Freud, cited in Ryckman, 2000), are all the conscious and unconscious power struggles and dynamics that were at work in the family of origin.

Cozzens (2000) suggests that priests have a symbiotic union with their ‘mother church’ and that resolution of the developmental task of the priest requires him to move from the immature position of needing to be the ‘special’ son of the mother, to maturity through recognizing his place amongst his brother priests (siblings). With this maturity, Cozzens (2000) argues that he gains the approval of his father-bishop, with whom he identifies. Thus he must become integrated in his personal identity as well as integrating his identity as a man of the Church, just as a young boy has to resolve his primary Oedipal complex by establishing his identity as an individual who is part of but distinct from his family.

...so the priest must suffer the anxiety and tension of being loyal to the Church and faithful to his own vision. To bear this tension is to stand in the fire that transforms the priest into a liberated man of the Gospel. Such a priest becomes an icon of Christ, a sacramental blessing to any community to which he is called (Cozzens, 2000, p. 59).

Given the structural forces that are deeply rooted in a hierarchy that by its very nature tends to support individuals who uncritically accept and obey its moral dictates, successful completion of this developmental task is difficult. This difficulty is exacerbated by the reported punishment of those who dissent from the orthodox theological and ecclesiological position with what Collins (2001) describes as ‘inquisitorial’ procedures.

The Vatican and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) are supported by a small but influential minority of Catholics who want to concentrate all power and authority with the papacy. One of the most potent weapons used to rein in their fellow Catholics is the secret reporting of bishops, priests, sisters and laity to Rome for supposed heresy, deviations or dissent from Catholic belief and practice (Collins, 2001, pp vii-viii).

Resistance by church authorities to questioning of the official position and frustration with the lack of open discussion contributes to tension for some priests who struggle with their personal moral integrity in particular matters of conscience. Schoenherr (2002) provides evidence of clergy taking positions that “run counter to Rome’s wishes” (p. 178), and points to professional associations that are either exclusively or predominantly clerical in membership, such as the US National Federation of Priests Councils. The purpose of these councils is to provide forums where concerns such as the ordination of

women and married men can be expressed (Schoenherr, 2002). Given the consequences for holding views that are deeply divided from the position of the hierarchy, it would be important to explore how successful the Councils are in encouraging open discussion.

Dilemma for priests with dissenting views from the official position of the church

Specific questions about priests' reflections on theological and pastoral teachings and practice were not included in the CCLS 2001 survey, therefore the degree that this is a problem for priests cannot be quantified. As shown in Tables 6.4 and 6.5, priests were asked in 1996 whether they were able to accept church teaching on two issues; these were, first, that women cannot be ordained as priests, and second, that divorced Catholics who have remarried without annulment are refused communion. Only 31% of priest respondents accepted the first and 15% accepted the second with no difficulty (CCLS, 1996). This puts many priests in an unenviable position; caught between some Vatican decrees and declarations they have difficulty accepting, and the necessity to promote these in their pastoral ministry.

Qualitative data collected during the 2001 CCLS survey highlighted the dilemma for clergy, of trying to integrate church doctrine that is incongruent with individual moral conscience. As respondents commented:

The seminary trained me for a church that was never there. The theology that I had reflected on was almost silenced within the mainstream church. We were brought up to be open, to question, to reinterpret, all those issues that are going to be part of the community that we live in. When you start to do that you are either silenced or ignored. There was constant tension with the institution when you brought these things up.

The most pressing problem is the growing gap between what needs to happen locally, and what is being 'said' hierarchically. There appears to be two Holy Spirits - one 'speaking' to men in authority (more and more esoteric and based on spiritual nepotism) and spirit endeavouring to liberate and encourage the people of God. I discover more and more of my fellow priests (varying theological persuasions) quite ready to give up on people and instructions from above.

In order to function effectively as spiritual leaders it is necessary for priests to achieve a balance between personal integrity and their priestly duty and obligation to the church. Where (as above) there is significant incongruence between the two, clergy are faced with a significant challenge to find a comfortable compromise. According to Cozzens (2000), this dilemma can be a painful continuing struggle for some, but he contends that most priests manage to find their way to mature and effective ministry, “free of adolescent dependency”, as “adult sons of mother-Church” (p. 59). Some, however, in a stance of pseudo-obedience, choose to subdue their own conscience and maintain consistency with church teaching on all matters. Cozzens argued that this compromise of their own integrity creates a chronic state of psychic unrest which is experienced as guilt and anxiety (Cozzens, 2000). Respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey described this struggle:

There is a growing belief that one should do one's best at the local level, and ignore directions that seem contrary to the gospel and out of touch with the spirit of the church. Priests and parishioners caught in the gap between reality and what is so often ‘sent down’, either unthinkingly follow orders or tend to have physical or psychological break-downs marrying the two.

The keenness of church authorities to act on complaints from the ‘right’ - while harassing those endeavoring to be ‘good news’ creates stress.

One feels that the institution does not listen.

What options do clergy have for resolving such conflicts in order to continue to minister effectively within the organization?

The most obvious choice is the option of passive obedience. McGovern (2002) encourages awareness of the deep theological justification of the virtue of unquestioning ecclesial obedience. He cites Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger:

This common bond of obedience is also common freedom: it offers protection against arbitrariness, and guarantees the authentically christological character of ecclesial obedience. Ecclesial obedience is not positivistic; it is not simply paid to a mere formal authority, but rather to someone who obeys on his own part too, and personifies the obedient Christ. And yet such obedience does not, of course depend on the virtue and holiness, precisely because it refers to the objectivity of faith, a gift

from our Lord that transcends all subjectivity. In this sense, obedience to one's bishop always transcends the local Church: it is a catholic obedience. The bishop is obeyed because he represents the *universal* Church in this specific place (p. 187).

According to McGovern (2002), the Vatican document *Pastores dabo vobis* highlights the view that obedience is apostolic in that it is an expression of a priest's love for, and service to the church in her hierarchical structure. "Such obedience is the best guarantee that he will contribute to safeguarding the truth of the mystery of the Church and better serve the Christian community" (p. 188). It could be argued that such a position denies the complexity of reconciliation of personal authenticity with a desire to serve the Church with sometimes conflicting views on ecclesiological and pastoral practices. It is a position requiring action and sanctifying that action without consideration of the psychological maturity of the intention behind the action. For instance, Cozzens (2000) maintained that the danger is that priests who choose the option of passive obedience run the risk of becoming demanding and authoritarian (p. 7), and therefore unable to tolerate in parishioners the open discussion and questioning they are unable to allow in themselves. One interviewee commented on the response of some clergy to objections by laity to particular teachings:

Some priests can feel threatened by it, and defensive, and retreat from questions about church teachings and these issues, particularly where cultural attitudes can be seen as antagonistic.

Another interview respondent exemplified the pre-conciliar attitude that underpins unquestioning obedience to authority:

The intelligentsia in the United States rejected absolute truth and moral values during the Vietnam war and brought in relativism. They destroyed reverence for authority, and consequently for priests. They found it impossible to give proper legitimate authority...young priests nowadays want consultation. They want to be consulted on everything. Some find it impossible to give respect to proper authority – freedom from your own will. This is important. They don't like doing what they're told.

Alternatively, Cozzens (2000) suggests, priests can become mavericks, in which case every dictate by the bishop is received in a stance of hostility and resentment. These priests, according to Cozzens (2000), never trust the institutional Church and reject any

initiative their bishop may undertake. Both the path of passive-obedience and the path of the maverick reveal the possibility that priests who choose them may have severe authority problems rooted in unhappy relationships with their birth fathers (Cozzens, 2000, p.59). This point will be discussed later in this chapter.

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and CCLS 2001 survey and semi-structured interviews however, point to a third option, in which priests pursue a course of quiet rebellion and minister according to their personal moral integrity, irrespective of the theological and ecclesiological position of the hierarchy. Comments by interview respondents point to this quiet rebellion:

I started to celebrate the Eucharist with the gay community in my parish.

A lot of priests I know just do their own thing in their own parish and don't worry about authority, they wouldn't flagrantly buck authority but they just say 'well they're there and we're here so hah ha'. We walk a tightrope. If you make a decision and the parish doesn't like it you can be in trouble. This is what some of the stress is about; they could write to the bishop and get you rapped over the knuckles.

People at grass roots level just ignore what doesn't impinge on their lives.

Many, many priests have to find a way to minister in a situation that they find alienating. The structure of the church to many people is unattractive, and some would see themselves as the 'front of house presenters' of this organization that they find unattractive. But they are connected with the heart of the place. Individual priests do not necessarily go along with the way the church is portrayed, for instance, with the statement that the church is not interested in caring for people who have been divorced and remarried.

This compromise of quiet rebellion serves the purpose of maintaining a priest's relationships with parishioners and his own integrity, but what is the effect of the tension it sets up with the organization on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of priests? It could be argued that metaphorically, where quiet rebellion happens, the dynamic with the organization is that of an adolescent with a dominating, punitive parent, and thus is not conducive to mature and healthy interaction. Those priests who through careful and prayerful reflection are able to integrate church teaching and their own moral integrity

and express this in compassionate pastoral ministry, could be seen to be doing much to diminish further alienation between parishioners and the organization.

According to Cozzens (2000), the ability to reconcile tensions inherent in the dilemma between obedience to the organization and personal moral integrity requires considerable emotional and psychological maturity, and again, reflects priest's psychosocial development. An interview respondent spoke perceptively about his observations of his path to the development of a secure identity:

Full time study in the UK at Oxford was a process of personal development that affected me greatly. I spent 3 years in a culture and a situation that was very different to anything I had known before. My friendships had always been arranged for me, seminarians, school friends or friends of the family. For once I had the chance to choose whom I wanted to be with, with no limits at all. Brings up negative issues about seminary formation. My training was largely to bring you up to academic standards.

This comment supports criticisms by writers such as Porter (2003) who claims that "seminaries were cold, austere institutions..." (p.141). Porter cites the work of Thomas Keneally, who claimed that seminary training was so inadequate in the development of psychological and emotional growth that many of the clergy who left the priesthood "discovered that they had a lot of growing up to do ...because their sexual and emotional maturity remained frozen at the age they entered the seminary" (p. 143). The respondent comments further on the problem of late development for some:

I wonder if a significant factor (in priest resignations) might be that the process of self-development came later for some others. There would be some men who would identify themselves as being dissatisfied in a celibate and authority framed structure, they would be the people who would be fulfilled more in different circumstances. If that realization had come to them much earlier it would have been better.

The respondent sums up his own experiences as having been positive in terms of his own sense of identity:

Ministry requires that you push yourself all the time into some sort of self-identity. I was fortunate in being given the opportunity so early. I'm

content with knowing myself...coming to self-realization. I would claim that I am largely content with who I am, which in no way means that I've closed down that search. That later coming to maturity can be a problem particularly with celibacy and authority structure, and not knowing how to manage in the situation.

Whether or not this priest is correct in attributing his psychological maturity to his experience of freedom during his university years is debatable, as other factors in his personality or family of origin may also have contributed to this maturity. What is most important for this discussion in the preceding thoughtful reflection is the allusion to the difficulties inherent in seminary training in achieving the psychosocial development necessary for reconciliation of tensions between personal moral integrity and church teaching.

Psychodynamic associations with priests' relationships with the church

According to Cozzens (2000), family of origin experiences play an important role in setting the foundation for self development and as an unconscious reflection of the relationship a priest develops with the Oedipal triangle of the church. Cozzens emphasized that the nature of a priest's relationship with his parents can indicate the degree of difficulty he is likely to have with maintenance of his integrity in his life and ministry. Priests' family backgrounds were not sufficiently explored in the CCLS surveys to draw any conclusions about the level of family function experienced by priests in the sample, but 25% of respondents reported that they were not close to their mother, and 38% were not close to their father when growing up (CCLS, 1996, 2001). According to Cozzens (2000), priests who experienced a difficult or distant relationship with their father are potentially at risk of having unresolved authority issues. One interview respondent described in detail the link between his psychological experience as a young assistant priest in his second appointment and his family of origin.

The parish priest at the appointment I was sent to was almost the embodiment of dad. So the darker side of dad, of being critical and distant and removed was what I had there. In the seminary I had discovered there were a lot of feelings of abandonment in my childhood, so with my parish priest going away a lot, and his human relationships games of distancing etc. pushed me over into depression.

The experience described above is a succinct illustration of the psychodynamics referred to by Cozzens. The respondent's projection of his relationship with his father onto the parish priest, and his inability to cope with the expression of the parish priest's authority, exacerbated an unfamiliar situation to the degree that he became chronically depressed. Both the father of the respondent and the parish priest appear to have their own unresolved issues with authority, as according to this account both people used bullying and intimidation as part of their expression of authority.

SUMMARY

The only two teachings investigated in the CCLS 1996 survey, first, that women cannot be ordained as priests and second, that people who have remarried without annulment of their first marriage cannot receive communion, showed a significant negative association between non-acceptance of the Church's position and frequently thinking about leaving ministry. The analysis revealed the importance particular teachings have on explaining the variation in frequency of thinking of resigning (Table 6.1) and highlighted the need for further research to explore the implications of this finding.

Although no significant associations were found for clergy between age cohorts and holding either an orthodox or liberal attitude towards theological and ecclesiological issues, examination of the contribution to the overall Chi-square by particular cells is suggestive that a trend towards orthodoxy by the youngest age cohort (Table 6.3) is emerging in line with Hoge *et al.*'s findings in the United States (Table 6.2). Table 6.4 showed that the most orthodox views on the issue of the teaching that women cannot be ordained and the ban on communion for divorced and remarried laity, were held by the oldest age cohort.

A high percentage of priests in all age cohorts (62%) would like to see modification of church structures even to the role of the pope.

Research has shown that a high degree of personal maturity is needed for clergy to find a balance within the tensions outlined above. Qualitative data suggest that seminary training has not been sufficiently focused on developing strategies to assist with the psychological and emotional maturation of seminarians. If it is accepted that it is the role

of parents to assist their offspring to mature, independent adulthood by providing a context conducive to physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual growth, then 'mother-church', while providing physical support, needs also to provide structures to support this growth in her clergy. Without such structures and without forums for discussion of doubts and differences, and without care for the emotional wellbeing of priests, it is likely (given Cozzens' (2000) psychodynamic theory and Fowler's (1996) theory of faith development), that the incomplete developmental stages of clergy will be played out unconsciously through relationships with their brother priests, bishops and parishioners.

PRIESTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH BISHOPS

Background

The documents of Vatican II exhorted diocesan bishops to govern, proclaim the Gospel, initiate and promote dialogue with men in the wider society, develop skills in others to teach the catechism, control, promote and protect the liturgy, and promote the sanctity of their clergy, religious and laity. Furthermore, they should regard their priests as 'sons and friends', be ready to listen to them, encourage them, and be solicitous for their spiritual, intellectual and material welfare (Flannery, 1977). McGovern (2002) emphasized the importance of the relationship between priests and bishops as a third dimension of priestly identity after the role and identity defining aspects of their relationships with Christ and the Church. He cites *Pastores dabo vobis*:

By its very nature, the ordained ministry can be carried out only to the extent that the priest is united to Christ through sacramental participation in the priestly order, and thus to the extent that he is in hierarchical communion with his own Bishop...The ministry of priests is above all communion and a responsible and necessary co-operation with the Bishop's ministry, in concern for the universal Church and for the individual particular Churches, for whose service they form with the Bishop a single presbyterate (McGovern, 2002, p. 88).

The father-son psychoanalytic configuration of the relationship between priests and bishops as proposed by Cozzens (2000) is intrinsic in the structural aspects of the relationship, set as it is within the context of patriarchal authoritarianism. The responsibility for bishops implied by this relationship configuration, as with 'mother-

church', is to assist their priest sons to attain mature self-identity within a priestly identity. Cozzens (2000) argues that within the Oedipal triangle, a priest is aligned with his father-bishop and secretly seeks to become him as the "beloved son of mother-church" (p. 58). However, Cozzens (2000) suggests that if a priest's bishop has not dealt with his own Oedipal conflict "... he will unwittingly, and perhaps consciously, sustain and even foster unhealthy Oedipal allegiance in the ranks of the presbyterate", with passively compliant priests giving the bishop a "false sense of harmony and fraternity" (p. 58). Therefore it is important that there are structures within the organization that are supportive of healthy psychological and emotional growth, as the quality of these structures can have a significant influence on the maturation of generations of priests.

The foregoing discussion shows the pivotal importance for priests, if they are to grow into inspirational pastoral leaders, of a positive, supportive relationship with their bishop. Comments and responses by priests in the CCLS 2001 survey suggest that this relationship is seriously undervalued in the Australian context and that bishops are not communicating with their priests sufficiently for a bond to form between them. Further, the comments suggest that when they do relate, it is more to priests as a group than as individuals, as more often than not the individual relating occurs mostly in a disciplinary context.

ANALYSIS

Only two questions concerning bishops and diocesan authorities were asked of respondents in the CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys, so very little quantitative data is available in answer to the question: What is the nature of the relationship between bishops and priests in the Australian context? In answer to the first question which asked whether respondents were satisfied with the way that appointments of bishops are made, only 19% responded affirmatively (CCLS, 1996, 2001). The question did not directly address the relationship between bishops and priests, so the low level of satisfaction with the process of appointment of bishops could be seen as an indictment on church practice

rather than a comment on priests' feelings about the people who are appointed. However, it could be argued that the question could also be seen to subtly address clergy satisfaction with the bishops who are appointed. Not only 'how' but 'who', as the following criticisms of appointments suggest:

For the personal well-being of priests, appoint bishops who have cared for parish life full time over a long period. Not office boys, like most officials in Rome, who have no heart. Appoint bishops who understand priests in all human circumstances.

I feel that priests find the present style of Vatican leadership abhorrent and a source of significant stress and sadness. The appointment of bishops who lack leadership and are seen as 'safe' is a scandal. Archbishop Pell's appointment is especially noteworthy as a gesture of arrogance. The reaction of some priests who are 'rule bound' suggests there is considerable feeling of lack of security among the clergy. Integrity often suffers.

Schoenherr (2002) argued that John Paul II has made concerted efforts to dismantle the participatory tradition where local churches played a major consultative role in the selection and promotion of bishops. Between 1978 and 1994, John Paul appointed more than three quarters (1,600) of the world's active bishops, choosing from among priests who conformed closely to an orthodox model of the church. According to Schoenherr (2002), bishop-candidates are rewarded for adherence to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* against birth-control, firm opposition to the ordination of women and married men, and maintenance of the status quo on sexual morality (p.151), so according to Schoenherr, there is a clear momentum towards conservatism and away from progressive liberalism. It would not be unreasonable to conclude therefore, that respondents who are unhappy with the way appointments of bishops are made, are also commenting on the general direction of ecclesiology and pastoral practice, as one respondent commented:

The most important need of our church is intelligent and creative leadership. We have inherited bishops who have been appointed for their loyalty to Rome and little else. The lack of process in appointments is a further abuse of the Catholic community. At 50 years of age, my main goal in ministry is to present the humanity of Christ in our institutions that seems more and more out of touch.

In response to the statement 'I have difficulty dealing with diocesan authorities', 70% of priests overall *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with it (CCLS, 1996, 2001), which (apart

from possible unconscious responses of the respondents to the question) gives the impression that these relationships work well and that very little stress in the lives of clergy is generated as a result of their interactions with bishops. However, a different picture emerged through respondent comments (below) which suggested that the fact that there is no difficulty in dealing with diocesan authorities is because of the limited nature of that interaction, rather than implicit satisfaction with the relationship (CCLS, 2001).

Priests' comments on the relationship with bishops

According to participants who commented on this issue in the CCLS 2001 survey, the relationship between priests and their bishops comprises either very little contact or more commonly, no contact at all. The relationship is characterized for many by disinterest on the one hand, and a sense of abandonment on the other, a relationship symbolic of the bishop as the 'absent' father, rather than a supportive and guiding presence. The following comments by respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey illustrate this point:

A friend of mine calls the Cathedral 'The Virtual Reality Church' he says we are the real church. We get no feedback at all from diocesan authorities. None. No personal affirmation. We don't expect it because it's never happened

Bishops must 'know' their priests. I don't think they do nor have I really felt 'known' or cared for by bishops. If they can't do it they must delegate this role to competent others who do spend the time and effort to know the clergy.

The role of the bishop is very unclear, particularly given the many expectations on them nationally and provincially. Clergy receive little or no pastoral care from their bishops usually because bishops have more demanding concerns or have few skills in dealing with their complex and often problematic clerical concerns.

(There should be) more pastoral formation and direction of priests by bishops, they are ordained, appointed, and left to fend for themselves.

Given the teaching of the sacramental nature of the relationship between bishops and priests, and priests and other priests by Pope John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis*, comments such as the above point to the possibility of a serious deficiency in this regard (McGovern, 2002). According to McGovern (2002), the pope sees

these relationships as fundamental to the development of a fraternity that is a “constitutive dimension of the sacrament of Orders intrinsic to the mission the priest receives at ordination” (p. 144). McGovern (2002) described the relationship in terms of “filiation-paternity” and claims that without the spiritual paternity of the bishop, “authentic priestly fraternity would not be possible” (p. 145).

The Vatican Council urged priests to see the bishop as a true father and obey him in all respects, as well as encouraging the bishops to treat priests as helpers, sons and friends. This way, a family is formed with the bishop as the father and the priests as sons (McGovern, 2002, p. 145). This ‘bishop as father’ metaphor is clearly evident in the following comments in which a desire for contact is tinged with a fear of being disciplined:

I assume that I can’t be doing anything too badly because I’m in my second appointment. But that would be the maximum affirmation I would get from the bishop. I know things can’t be too bad because I haven’t been rapped over the knuckles. I would link this back to the morale question. I think there are a lot of priests who would appreciate a genuine affirmation from the bishop, and in the absence of it would feel disenfranchised.

We need to feel free to express our feelings about many things without the fear of being pulled over the coals. I believe the powers that be are too conservative and power-hungry, wanting control over people’s lives and pressing down the freedom of the spirit. Bishops should listen more creatively to the pastoral and human concerns of priests, not like big brother but like the compassionate Jesus who went out of his way to walk with the ordinary people in the struggle.

McGovern (2002) argued that the spiritual and material welfare of his priests is one of the primary responsibilities of the bishop, who should provide appropriate support for both their professional needs, and their personal wellbeing. He saw it as the bishop’s responsibility to ensure that his priests don’t feel isolated and alone, or unsupported when difficulties in ministry arise. A context of openness and friendship between priests and their bishops as well as with other priests in the presbytery would be important for such responsibility to be met, together with

opportunities for open dialogue and expression of spiritual, psychological or emotional concerns. Many of the respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey and semi-structured interviews made the point that there is a need for bishops to be open to discussions about problems in the parish and show more appreciation and support for the work of priests in the parish:

Bishops and pope need to stop blaming priests for fewer vocations to the priesthood, fewer people at Mass, fewer people at confession, and listen to us. Treat us not as defective priests but committed Christians. (They should) value our bits of wisdom, as they are generally hard-won.

The bishop should leave his tower and dialogue with his priests and support them.

The Archbishop and bishops can help a lot if they realise that by being interested in and endeavour(ing) to really understand the difficulties and endeavours of their priests, they can be great morale boosters on one hand and motivate their priests to greater enthusiasm on the other as a result of priests feeling that they count.

Bishops should encourage and facilitate the on-going development of priests, as humans and in their ministry.

There should be more visible support in terms of fraternal interest and concern for priests in parishes from the bishop and religious superiors, especially when the demands of pastoral activity are ever increasing.

The bishop of a diocese can do much to help a priest; he should see a priest as a human being with emotions and personal needs.

The interpretation of his leadership role by diocesan bishop is very important - how far should he consult the priests before announcing pastoral projects that affect them?

Priests need support from authorities through personal encouragement and acceptance (even encouragement) of diversity and variety in pastoral practice. Bishops need to trust the pastoral choices of 'men' on the ground in the local situation.

I was surprised last week to receive a letter of encouragement from Archbishop Carroll on behalf of the trust. Bishops addressed to priests. It seems they are aware of a growing rift between bishops and priests. It will take more than a letter like this to heal the rift and promote stronger collaboration.

Most of the above responses were from survey participants who were sufficiently concerned about their relationship with their bishop, or the attitude of the bishop towards pastoral issues, to comment at length to the open-ended questions at the end of the CCLS 2001 survey. Two of the comments were from priests who participated in the semi-structured interviews. Of the 128 survey participants who wrote detailed comments, 47 (37%) were expressions of dissatisfaction with priests' relationship with their bishops, which, together with the finding that only 5% of priests would discuss parish concerns with their bishop (Table 7.12, Chapter 7), point to a significant problem in the relationship between bishops and diocesan priests.

Further research is needed in the Australian situation to see whether a random sample survey and specific questions about priests' attitudes towards their bishops produces similar findings, or whether the above negative comments come from a particularly specific group, for instance, men who have unresolved authority issues. Specific questions about the nature and structure of the relationship need to be asked, particularly as research in the United States paints a very different picture of the relationship between diocesan priests and their bishops. The CARA Report (2000) states that 94% of diocesan priests in the United States have a good relationship with their bishop and 88% agree that their bishop understands and supports the priests in his diocese. Further research is needed to explore the structural and attitudinal aspects of the relationship between diocesan priests and their bishops in the United States, in order to explain the differences between the CARA research and the research for this thesis.

Some priests expressed gratitude for positive affirmation and support from bishops:

We do need to know the pastoral support and concern of our bishops. This was expressed well in the letter from the ACBC to all of us priests.

(The) Letter from Frank Carroll was great - the first real show of support in 30 years.

One older priest (ordained for 75 years) spoke of his relationship with his bishop as being the way he moved through what he described as a 'black hole' of depression:

I asked for help from bishop X ... he was marvellous, I saw him once a week for about three months. Young priests must realize the bishop is their father, is God's gift to them, and make them love them; they should take the initiative.

This statement, while affirming of his bishop's valuable assistance, also recognizes that for the most part a relationship will not happen without the priest attempting to bridge the gap himself; a move, it could be argued, which would require an adult maturity that transcended the metaphorical parent/child relationship.

Effects of the relationship with diocesan authorities on clergy satisfaction with ministry

In order to explore the hypothesis that there is a *positive association between experiencing difficulty in the relationship with diocesan authorities and frequency of thinking of resigning*, cross-tabulation analysis was performed. The variables used were: 'I find it difficult dealing with diocesan authorities', which had five response categories: *strongly disagree, disagree, neutral/unsure, agree, and strongly agree* and 'think of resigning', which had three response categories: *never, sometimes, and constantly* (Table 6.6). The question does not directly ask about the relationship between priests and bishops, and the researcher found this somewhat problematic as it is not clear what the individual assumptions of the respondents were in relation to the meaning of the term 'diocesan authorities'. Some will have assumed it meant the bishop, and others will have included other possibilities such as 'school councils' in their answer. As this question came closest in the CCLS surveys to investigating the relationship of priests with their diocesan bishop it is important to include the analysis in this discussion.

Table 6.6 Difficulty with diocesan authorities and thinking of resigning.

		Never think of resigning	Sometimes think of resigning	Constantly think of resigning	Total
Difficulty with Diocesan authorities					
Strongly disagree	Count	61	33	4	98
	Expected count	46.0	43.3	8.7	98.0
	Percentage	62.2	33.7	4.1	100.0
Disagree	Count	70	73	9	152
	Expected count	71.3	67.2	13.5	152.0
	Percentage	46.1	48.0	5.9	100.0
Neutral/unsure	Count	28	24	6	58
	Expected count	27.2	25.6	5.2	58.0
	Percentage	48.3	41.4	10.3	100.0
Agree	Count	13	27	5	45
	Expected count	21.1	19.9	4.0	45.0
	Percentage	28.9	60.0	11.1	100
Strongly agree	Count	2	7	9	18
	Expected count	8.4	8.0	1.6	18.0
	Percentage	11.1	38.9	50.0	100.0

$n = 371$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis was supported by the analysis ($C^2 [8, n = 371] = 57.54, p < .001$), and shows a positive association between priests' agreement with the statement that they have difficulty dealing with diocesan authorities and thinking about leaving ministry.

Inspection of Table 6.6 shows that the category *constantly think of resigning* is over-represented according to the null hypothesis in the *strongly agree* cell, making a very large contribution of 34.2 to the value of Chi-square (probably particularly high because of the very low expected count). As would be expected given the association between *strongly agree* with the statement that they have difficulty with diocesan authorities and *constantly* thinking of resigning, the converse *strongly disagree* with the statement has an association with *never* thinking of resigning, making a contribution of 4.89 to the value of Chi-square. This would support Hoge, Shields, and Soroka's (1993) finding that poor communication with the diocesan Ordinary (bishop) was associated with stress.

Hoge (2002) found that resigned priests rated their relationship with their bishop or superior at 26 points lower than did active priests, and that priests overall are more satisfied with their relationships with laity than with relationships with fellow priests, bishops or superiors (p. 23). “The resigned priests found celibacy, living situations, and relationships with bishops or superiors to be alienating” (Hoge, 2002, p. 23). Cozzens (2000) developed a theoretical position that suggests that the unconscious clergy relationships with their bishops is a critical factor in supporting the ongoing psychological and spiritual development of a priest, and that consequently, lack of support and acknowledgement by bishops further alienates priests relationships with the organisation.

Psychodynamic investigation

Questions are raised by the foregoing discussion about whether the respondents who *agree* or *strongly agree* that they have difficulty dealing with diocesan authority were just a minority of priests who were experiencing difficulties with resolving their Oedipal conflicts with their ‘father-bishop’, as suggested by Cozzens (2000), or whether the problems in the relationship stem from structural factors.

In order to explore the psychodynamic theories referred to by Cozzens (2000), “Priests with dysfunctional family backgrounds, and serious, unresolved authority issues often feel under attack by the most reasonable expectations and directives of their bishops” (p. 16), two hypotheses were tested using cross-tabulation analysis. The first hypothesis was that *there is an association between not being close to mother when growing up and negative feelings towards the bishop*. The variables used in the analysis were ‘difficulty with bishop’ which contained two categories (*wrote negative comments about bishops*, and *did not write negative comments about bishops*) and the variable ‘closeness to mother’ which contained three categories (*not close*, *neutral* and *close*). The hypothesis was not supported by the analysis and a non-significant association was found between the two variables ($\chi^2 [2, 379] = 3.57, p = >.05$). Observed and expected cells were as expected under the null hypothesis.

The second hypothesis that *there is an association between not being close to father and negative feelings towards the bishop* was tested by cross-tabulation analysis as above. The variables used in the analysis were ‘difficulty with bishop’ which contained two categories (*wrote negative comments about bishops*, and *did not write negative comments about bishops*) and the variable ‘closeness to father’ which contained three categories (*not close*, *neutral* and *close*). The hypothesis was not supported by the analysis and a non-significant association was found between the two variables ($\chi^2[2, 375] = 4.93, p = >.05$).

Although the hypotheses were not supported by the analysis, partly perhaps because of the large disparity in numbers between the cells *wrote negative comments about bishops* ($n = 32$) and *did not write negative comments about bishops* ($n = 343$), some differences between the observed and expected (under the null hypothesis) counts relevant to this discussion (Table 6.7) warrant further examination. (Not writing negative comments does not imply that the respondent therefore had positive feelings towards the bishops; rather, the variable selects only respondents who had negative feelings about bishops and took the trouble to write a comment about it in the CCLS 2001 survey.)

Table 6. 7 Cross-tabulation between priests who wrote comments on the CCLS 2001 survey about bishops and those who did not comment and degree of closeness to father.

		Commented on bishops	Did not comment on bishops	Total
Not close to father	Count	9	61	70
	Expected count	6.0	64.0	70.0
	Percent	12.9	87.1	100.0
Neutral	Count	8	54	62
	Expected count	5.3	56.7	62.0
	Percent	12.9	87.1	100.0
Close to father	Count	15	228	243
	Expected count	20.7	222.3	243.0
	Percent	6.2	93.8	100.0

$n = 375$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 6.7 indicates that the count of priests who commented on lack of recognition and support from their bishops was higher than expected according to the null hypothesis in the *not close* to father cell. This cell contributed 1.5 to the overall value of Chi-square (4.93). Conversely, and contributing 1.6 to the value of Chi-square, was the *wrote negative comments about bishops* cell which was under-represented according to the null hypothesis in *close to father*. Results of the cross-tabulations and inspection of Table 6.7 suggests the possibility that for clergy, the degree of closeness with their father while growing up makes a more significant contribution to the variation in their relationship with diocesan authority than the degree of closeness with their mother.

Further quantitative research is needed to gain greater clarity on the questions raised here. Multivariate analysis would provide information about the significance of the associations suggested in Table 6.6, and accurately determine the degree of the contribution of psychodynamic factors to the variation in the relationship of clergy with diocesan authorities, particularly bishops. Despite the limitations of the data in providing definitive answers to the question of the connection between psychodynamic factors and difficulty with diocesan authorities, a clear message of a desire for more contact and recognition of diocesan priests by bishops is evidenced by the comments by respondents throughout this chapter.

SUMMARY

Although some priests may project their unconscious unresolved developmental issues onto their relationships, including those with the Church and their bishops as suggested by Cozzens (2000), it could be argued that it is important to clarify the dynamic in these relationships in order to create a supportive environment in which priests are able to resolve their personal or professional difficulties. Cozzens (2000) suggests that successful mega-organizations have a tendency to deny their own data as well as external data if they point to the need for adaptation and change. This raises several questions: is the lack of interest in priests by bishops, suggested by qualitative data in this chapter, a denial of what is happening in the parishes? Is it tacit approval by authorities of practices that while strictly outside the directions of Vatican decrees, maintain a tenuous

association with people whose religious faith is strong, but who differ from church teaching in some areas of belief and practice? Or is the lack of communication between priests and bishops simply an impossibility given an enormous workload of bishops?

Overall, the comments and responses by priests in the CCLS 2001 survey suggest that Australian bishops relate negligibly or not at all to priests, and that when they do, it is either more to priests as a group than as individuals. This result has important implications given the significance of the relationship both as a factor in the personal growth and development of priests, and as a support for the morale of clergy in an increasingly complex ministry.

CONCLUSION

Results in this chapter support the primary hypothesis and show that satisfaction with priestly ministry is enhanced through holding attitudes that are congruent with church teaching and feeling supported by bishops and diocesan authorities. Evidence of a gap between some priests and the theology and ecclesiology of the church was found in the analysis. Tables 6.3-6.5 showed a polarity of clergy attitudes between those who hold a more liberal position and those who support the orthodox organizational position. Table 6.1 showed a negative association between non-acceptance of church teaching and thinking about leaving ministry. The results showed that the oldest age cohort (66+) had the highest percentage of all age cohorts in holding the most conservative views, a sharp contrast to the age cohort (56-65), which had the highest percentage of respondents holding the most liberal views. This contrast then moderated towards the youngest age cohorts. Some support for Hoge *et al.*'s view (1995) that the youngest priests and new seminarians are more orthodox than older cohorts was found in Table 6.3.

The discussion pointed to a major hindrance to bridging the gap between the theology and ecclesiology of the church and some priests in the authoritarian hierarchical structure of the church, with its lack of encouragement of open discussion, and a policy of repression of those who question or doubt the official line (Collins, 2001; Schoenherr, 2002; Wills, 2000). Such a structure, it could be argued, also hinders the psychological and spiritual development of priests as they move toward attainment of an integrated identity and mature spirituality, and profoundly affects the relationship of priests with diocesan authority and bishops.

Pope John Paul II stresses the importance of the paternal nature of the relationship of bishops to priests. He gives the connection sacramental status and sees it as seminal to the development of fraternity necessary for the development of a strong presbytery. This emphasis on the importance of the relationship with bishops on the wellbeing of priests is validated by results of the analysis in this chapter where a positive association with clergy having difficulty with diocesan authorities and thinking of resigning (Table 6.6) was found. The hypotheses suggesting a psychodynamic association between

closeness to parents while growing up and currently experiencing difficulty with diocesan authorities were not supported by the analysis. However, the results suggest that priests' closeness to their father while growing up is a more important factor in explaining the variation in the relationship with diocesan authority (Table 6.7) than is closeness with their mother. The theme of clergy relationships is continued in Chapter 7, which examines the relationships of priests with parishioners, friends and colleagues.

CLERGY RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISHIONERS, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Overview

This chapter begins with an examination of the proposal, in recent research and literature, that satisfactory relationships with parishioners are crucial in contributing to satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing for priests (Cozzens, 2000; Hoge, 2000; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Whetham & Whetham, 2000). Three key factors currently impacting on priest/parishioner relationships, particularly in the decline of the authority of clergy, are explored. First, the effect of increasing lay participation in ministry; second, the effect of revelations of sexual abuse by clergy; and third, the quality of priest/laity relationships as an important area contributing to clergy satisfaction. These factors are discussed using material from semi-structured interviews and NCLS and CCLS surveys.

Finally, the importance for priests of close, intimate relationships with friends and colleagues is investigated within the unique context of the celibate male culture of the priesthood. The importance of these relationships on personal wellbeing and satisfaction with ministry will be analyzed with both NEO-FFI personality factors and age cohorts as covariates. The primary hypothesis tested in this chapter is *satisfaction with ministry and personal wellbeing will be found to have a positive association with harmonious relationships with parishioners, and close relationships with friends and colleagues.*

PRIESTS AND PARISHIONERS

Background

Ministry is a symbiotic interaction between a priest and his parishioners. As Leege (1988) states, “The pastor whose authority derives from the bishop is, by virtue of his ordination as a priest, called to be a servant. He is a servant not only of God but also of the Church, which in post-Vatican II parlance, is the people of God. His assignment is to a parish, to a local community of the people of God” (p. 5). According to McGovern (2002), the Church is both the body and spouse of Christ and as such is an integral part of priestly identity. *Pastores dabo vobis* illuminates the relationship as follows, “Inasmuch as he represents Christ the head, Shepherd and Spouse of the Church, the priest is placed not only *in the Church* but also *in the forefront of the Church*” (McGovern, 2002, p. 86).

Research (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Tentler, 1998; Whetham & Whetham, 2000) indicates that the relationship between priests and parishioners is a crucial factor in determining the level of satisfaction and fulfillment experienced by clergy in their ministerial role.

For most of my clerical correspondents, joy and meaning in their priestly lives derived principally from the evident faith of their parishioners: from their regular and reverent attendance at Mass, (and) their steady recourse to confession. (Tentler, 1998, p. 328).

Interview respondents in this research supported this finding. In answer to the question “What are the joys and satisfactions of priestly life?” most priests who participated in the semi-structured interviews emphasized the joy of being with people, sharing in their lives and the satisfaction of participating in their faith development. As one respondent said:

People are life-giving. The reason I became a priest was that I wanted to help people in their personal and spiritual development.

The Second Vatican Council pronouncement *Lumen Gentium* declared that the common priesthood belonged to the whole people of God and was shared by lay persons, the clergy and religious alike (Flannery, 1977). This pronouncement put priests under pressure to relinquish total independent control, and encourage active involvement of lay people to engage as never before in consultative processes and planning at all levels of parish life. Therefore, unlike the previous cultic model of priesthood, leaders were to

become more inclusive of members of the laity, and less exclusive and remote. According to Muggeridge (2000), while the special sacramental mystique of priests as conduits of the will of God was still endowed at ordination, it was no longer mandatory for this to promote and maintain a clergy/lay dichotomy that set priests apart from the people, and reinforced this with distinctive priestly garb and a cloistered lifestyle.

Fewer priests and larger parishes added impetus to these changes, which required a shift in the balance of the power and authority that priests exercised over their flocks, and obliged priests to diminish their physical and emotional distance from the people. A comment by a priest respondent in the CCLS 2001 survey showed a desire for this more egalitarian style of ministry, but implied that there was still some way to go to fully achieve this shift in power. One respondent commented:

We must become more collaborative in our sharing of ministry. By all means support priests in their special role but the clerical power control model is no longer appropriate. Changes in the model of church are essential and need to move away from the 'provided for' style of ministry towards shared discipleship in community where the gifts of all are welcomed.

Although ambiguities in the decree concerning the role of priests, and a clear definition of the essential differences between the ministerial and the common (or lay) priesthood remain unresolved, the spirit of the statement points to an elevation of the laity, and the emphasis on a 'servant-leader' model of priesthood. As lay people assumed more responsibility for all levels of pastoral ministry, a more consensual, collaborative style of leadership emerged (Muggeridge, 2000). Gremillion and Castelli (1987) reported that this was true also in the US where they conducted their study. The finding that many parishes had successfully adopted the model of the church as "The people of God", and that the parish community had become a reality, meant that a new relationship between priests and parishioners was emerging. However, it was found that despite this collaborative style of leadership, clergy and others involved in leadership roles differed in their perceptions of the way authority was expressed (Leege, 1988, p.6).

According to Leege (1988), Canon law detailed the responsibilities of a pastor, and made parish councils consultative bodies that helped identify needs and plan pastoral programs, but did not make it a democratic decision-making body with ‘majority rule’ for resolving conflict. This created the opportunity for different interpretations of the degree of authority vested in recommendations from staff, council or committee meetings. The Notre Dame study explored the question of who normally made final decisions about different areas of parish life, and identified several response categories: “pastor only,” “pastor and staff,” “pastor, council and staff,” “parish council only,” and “other patterns”(Leege, 1988, p.11). The responses showed that pastors consistently reported that they shared final decisions with staff, council or committee more often than these bodies felt that these decisions were shared (Leege, 1988).

ANALYSIS

Analysis of data from the NCLS and CCLS surveys of 1996 and 2001 showed that a similar situation of discrepancy between lay and ordained leaders’ perceptions of the decision making process existed in the current Australian context. Results in Table 7.1 showed that the spirit of *Lumen Gentium* had been largely integrated into pastoral practice in Australia as only 15% of laity and 11% of priests saw ordained clergy as completely taking charge. However, there were significant differences of opinion about the degree to which clergy acted on goals the people had been involved in setting and the number of decisions initiated by lay people (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Leadership style: Comparison between attender assessment and leader self-assessment.

	Attendees % <i>n</i> = 86,368	Priests % <i>n</i> = 381
Leader tends to take charge	15	11
Leader inspires people to take action	40	42
Leader acts on goals that people have been involved in setting	19	38
Leadership where people start most things	5	9
Don’t know	21	N/a
Total	100	100

Source: NCLS and CCLS 2001 surveys.

It could be argued that the discrepancies in Table 7.1 between perceptions of priests and attenders about decision-making are a reflection of the difficulty of integrating egalitarian practices within a hierarchical organization, where unequal authority is anathema to a truly collaborative process. Leege (1988) suggested that the difference in perception of the concentration of authority between priests and lay leaders matched the differences between the consultative and democratic models of authority, with non-ordained leaders forgetting the consultative nature of their role and expecting final decisions always to include their views (Leege, 1988, p.13). He argued that this expectation of lay leaders was a reflection of the democratic model of the society as a whole, but inconsistent with canon law and the hierarchical structure of the organization which, depending on the personality of the particular priest, allowed for the consultative model to become “little more than a rationale for authoritarian rule” (Leege, 1988, p.15).

Together with respondent comments (below), these results show that there is still some way to go before the full practice and expression of *Lumen Gentium* is realized in Australian parishes:

Laity, religious, and clergy need to live out our own baptismal commitment - to share in spreading the Gospel in keeping with our own particular life responsibilities. In other words, each parishioner needs to use his or her gifts actively in parish life - so that the priest(s) can concentrate on Gospel and sacramental leadership rather than administration.

Allow the parishioners to ‘own’ their parish. They are the ones who should ‘call the shots’. The priests are there to support them and offer leadership that comes from behind. This allows the parish to cope better when there is a change in priest or no priest at all.

Involve the laity of the ‘outer circle’ in ministries without fear of the laity of the ‘inner circle’ with the hope that the inner and outer will appreciate and encourage each other's activities in ministry. The clergy (and religious) need to be less possessive of ministries, especially in the absence of the pastor, and the laity (should) be given every encouragement to share the responsibility of the daily life of the parish.

Transformation of the relationship of priests and parishioners has been ongoing since Vatican II with many priests working towards encouraging parishioners to participate

more fully in parish life and ministry. However, achievement of a fully collaborative ministry is hindered through the unequal authority inherent in a hierarchical organization, and the unresolved ambiguities in the ‘servant leader’ model of ministry proposed by *Lumen Gentium*.

Diminishing authority of priests

The change in leadership style requires a relinquishment of supreme authority on the part of priests, with the speed and degree of this change governed by the attitude and willingness on the part of the priest for implementation of it. However, it could be argued that with the decline in numbers of new seminarians and an aging priest population, a rise in numbers and authority of lay in ministry is inevitable. Also outside the control of the priests is the decline of theological and ecclesiological authority of the organization in the eyes of priests and laity.

As the following data show, some priests are experiencing difficulty with whole-hearted acceptance of church teaching and the need to minister in a way that is congruent with an individual moral conscience and obedience to the authority of the organization. As discussed in chapter 6, in the CCLS 1996 survey, priests were asked whether they were able to accept church teaching on two issues. First, that women cannot be ordained as priests (only 32% of priests accepted this with no difficulty), and second, that divorced Catholics who have remarried without annulment are refused communion (accepted with no difficulty by 15% of priests).

This puts many priests in an unenviable position; caught between some Vatican doctrines on faith and morals they have difficulty accepting, and the necessity to promote these in their pastoral ministry where parishioners share the same doubts. As one respondent said, “I reflected carefully on all these things and came to the conclusion that my beliefs were just so different from what the institution was asking. I couldn’t be separated from what I preached and taught.”

Parishioners face the same dilemmas in their relationship with the organization, and it is possible that where there is a decline in unconditional acceptance of the moral authority of the church, a concurrent decline in acceptance of the moral authority of the clergy is experienced. In the NCLS 2001 survey, attenders were asked whether they would seek assistance from their parish priest for a number of problems. The responses were ranked on a five point scale: *certainly*, *probably*, *unsure*, *probably not* and *certainly not*.

Table 7.2 Likelihood of parishioner seeking assistance or advice from their priest.

	Probably/ Certainly %	Unsure %	Probably not/ Certainly not %	Total %
A problem of conscience: whether it would be right or wrong to do something	49	16	35	100
A relationship problem	26	19	55	100
A personal emotional problem	29	18	53	100
A problem in married life	32	19	49	100

n = 3183

Source: NCLS, 2001.

Table 7.2 showed that only 49% of parishioners would seek assistance from their parish priest for a problem of conscience and between 26% and 32% would go to the priest with emotional, relationship and marriage problems. Whether this reluctance is due to a lack of support for church teaching on these matters, or lack of faith in the priest is difficult to say. The suggestion that an overlap between a parishioner's relationship with their priest and their attitude to church authority is supported by the finding that only 46% of attenders have no difficulty accepting church authority on beliefs (CCLS, 1996).

These results are surprising and somewhat paradoxical given the belief of a large majority (83.1%) of practising Catholics that it is the role of the church, and by implication, church leaders, to encourage moral values (NCLS, 1996). Even though the studies are separated geographically and by a period of about 15 years, these findings corroborate Gremillion and Castelli's results, where about two-thirds of core Catholics in

their sample often disagreed with church teachings and only followed the official line when they agreed with it (Gremillion & Castelli, 1987).

Clergy sexual abuse

Another situation seriously impacting on the status and authority of priests is the revelation of clergy sexual abuse of minors. Since media revelations of decades of sexual misconduct by clergy, perception of priests as trusted moral role models has been seriously challenged. Although the majority (52% in 1996) of core attenders have remained loyal and supportive of their priests, 56% of these attenders believe that the Church's response to the revelations has been inadequate (CCLS, 2001), indicating a serious lack of faith in church authorities. This lack of faith in the organization then affects good priests with integrity and commitment, diminishing their morale, and undermining their credibility with parishioners (Cozzens, 2000).

Investigation of the effect on parishioners of the clergy sexual abuse scandals was carried out in both the NCLS and CCLS surveys of 1996 and 2001. Although questions concerning the attitude of parishioners to the organization and priests were sufficiently covered, questions about parishioners' satisfaction with the level of internal, organizational reflection on the source of the problem were not asked. This omission occurred even though evidence of decades of consistent and widespread abuse of trust by clergy, and generalized failure of church authorities to respond swiftly with compassion and concern for victims, would indicate that significant structural changes are needed. As discussed in Chapter 5, Cozzens (2000) alludes to reluctance by authorities in the US Catholic church to encourage thoughtful discussion about the causes of the problem, its meaning, or implications, and some comments by respondents to the CCLS (2001) survey suggested that this is also the case in Australia (Chapter 5).

It is evident that, while those parishioners who regularly attend Mass are generally happy with the leadership style and role of their parish priest, erosion of the unconditional acceptance of church teachings and loss of faith in church authorities through the sex

abuse issue has impacted negatively on lay perceptions of the moral authority of priests.

As one respondent commented:

I sense a marked decline in the relationship between priests and parishioners in the diocese in the past 10 years. There has been much adverse publicity re paedophilia - several priests involved. Also a number of priests have left ministry for various reasons. Many formerly supportive parishioners have withdrawn support in various degrees, sometimes they mention the wrongdoing of priests as an excuse, and often there are other reasons.

Qualitative evidence points to significant diminishing morale among clergy because of this threat to their identity as trusted moral role models:

Priests have been through a horrific battering due to all the scandals where all priests have been branded with the same brush.

Three former clergy (of this parish) have been imprisoned because of sexual abuse so many people have left.

There was huge suspicion, because of all the sexual stuff, abuse of people by clergy. I was not always conscious of the effect of this, but when I left, I felt a huge relief and thought 'I'm not a pedophile'.

Some cultures are a bit suspicious of who you were. I was also affected by diocesan attitude to priests who were pedophiles...people don't encourage their children to have anything to do with priests. It certainly affected my morale.

As analysis in Chapter 5 showed, the effect on the laity of revelations of sexual abuse by clergy revealed an even split between those who reported that their confidence in the church had been seriously damaged (36%), and those who said it had not (37%). Forty-five percent of the respondents giving an opinion on the adequacy of the response of church authorities to the problem believed that response to be inadequate. These results are extremely conservative, given that the respondents to the NCLS attender surveys were predominantly people who attended Mass weekly. No figures were available on those who have left or minimized their association with the parish as a result of these revelations. Clearly, a decline by laity in faith in the organization, and an attitude of suspicion of clergy, have impacted on the interaction between priests and parishioners.

Quality of relationships between priests and laity

The question of the level to which the relationships between priests and laity are a friendly and natural interaction between people, or the level to which the relationships are based on proscribed roles and status inequality is important in understanding the experience of priests. Are there a warmth and ease, and trust and openness about the relationships? Or are they highly stylized and formal, as has been suggested by previous research (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972; Tinsey, 1998). The vast majority of priests (81%) (CCLS, 2001) see themselves as the right person for their parish, feel accepted by attenders, and in agreement with parishioners about their role (Table 7.3). But do their parishioners like them, and do they like their parishioners?

The CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys did not specifically explore this question, but priests' comments about parishioners from the open-ended questions at the end of the CCLS 2001 survey and semi-structured interviews give some insight into the attitude of priests to parishioners, and their feelings about them. Several important themes emerged in these statements: unrealistic demands of parishioners, clergy perception that parishioners do not understand their role, or have different expectations of what the priest should be doing in their professional role. Finally, pressure on clergy to conform to idealistic projections from parishioners about what should be embodied and expressed in the person of a priest.

Demands of parishioners

The following selection of respondent comments illustrates the pressure on clergy from parishioners:

Parishioners' expectations have risen. They're critical, they're articulate, they're looking for excellence in service, they're looking to participate, and they're looking for multi-skilled priests.

Parishioners are, in my experience, very caring for their priests, but still incredibly demanding in what they expect of us. The workload is often crippling and bad for priest's health and welfare.

The more people are told of the workings of the parish, and encouraged to face up to the realities of how things are the better.

I do not believe people really understand priesthood and what a priest does. The diocesan authority needs to set guide lines if it wishes to retain its priests alive and well (the few that are left).

(It is a problem) being unable to fulfill all the expectations of parishioners, for instance, performing Italian masses for the dead when they would like. There are high expectations from people from other countries where the priests did everything. It is disappointing seeing people walk away angry because they don't feel as though they are getting what they want here. It's disappointing when you have made an effort. The difficult ones are always those who are not strongly attached to the church. The task of getting to know people is made harder because of fewer priests and larger parishes.

It can be very stressful. The laity is demanding more and more. You have to be on hand all the time. You have to be strong sometimes and say 'I'm sorry' but I'm only human.

Different focus of priestly role

I went from the idealism of the seminary to the parish where no one was particularly interested in the church; they had their lives and weren't interested in the ideas that had fired me in the seminary. My understanding and their understanding of what I was doing were very different.

I am constantly amazed at the focus of many parishioners (which is) more on church structure and practice and not so much on the person and vision of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. The connection does not seem to be made.

In the eyes of the young (teens to thirty year olds) the priest is there as a functionary who can be used. There is little appreciation of the role of the priest and little affirmation. I think this is because faith and the church have minimal importance in their lives.

Expectations of the person

Ministry was very different to what I expected in ways that I couldn't anticipate. It is difficult to train people into what it means to be a public figure. People have a very clear idea about whom a priest should be, where he should stand on certain issues, who he should be seen or not seen with. They relate to the role and not the person. With such a variety of cultures it was impossible to please everybody.

You're expected to maintain professional relationships with people all the time. You work in this community and you live in this community. You are a spiritual leader in this community. Lots of conflicts of interests, an impossible structure to work in.

On the other hand, clergy want greater support with running parish affairs and personal encouragement for their efforts from parishioners. Given diminishing numbers of regular attenders, and fewer priests running multiple parishes, it could be suggested that this situation is unlikely to improve in the near future.

I find it frustrating to try and run a parish, which is nearly a business these days on a work force, which is completely voluntary. If they don't turn up or drop out of something - you can't say anything - you have to be grateful for what they have given. Also, with people working 2-3 jobs mums and dads it is difficult and getting harder to get people involved in parish affairs. Also, I'm finding that after eight years in this parish that people are becoming burnt out and want a rest...but there is no one to take their place.

It would be good if the priest could meet regularly with his pastoral team - which hopefully he would have to both pray with and share with and be supported and encouraged by them.

The high and unrealistic expectation by parishioners of their parish priest is the main theme throughout these comments. Attempting to live up to the demands of the laity for greater service in all aspects of ministry, and the pressure to live up to the personal ideal of who the laity think a priest should be puts clergy under enormous strain. Certainly, this impacts significantly on priest/parishioner interaction, and creates a difficult climate for establishing close friendships. However, some of the comments do show a level of distance and separateness, and a feeling of exasperation with the perceived attitude of parishioners to clergy. Some priests commented on the need for more social contact with parishioners, in order to improve communication and bridge some of the gaps in expectations of both priests and laity:

Visit people in their homes. Know them. Let the people's lives, my story, God's story and the church's story interact dynamically, not ponderously as if the church story was the definitive story.

The parish priest needs to spend time to visit his parishioners as well as non-catholic neighbors.

Priests must relax with lay people, not only in the visitation sense, but also in a spirit of friendship.

The following respondent suggests that changes in the status and authority of priests since Vatican II represent another challenge to clergy who enjoyed the high status and power implicit in the role of priests prior to *Lumen Gentium*:

Some priests want to get back up on that pedestal. It's got to do with the relationship between the ordained priest and lay people ... they fear that the priest is losing his status and they don't like the sanctuary being invaded by ordinary people ... the present archbishop doesn't like anyone coming into the sacred space when he's sitting there on his chair. Priests are going to have to learn that they need to earn their authority and respect.

Further research is needed to specifically focus on the themes presented in the foregoing discussion, particularly on the nature and quality of the relationships. Evidence that a level of strain is a feature generally of priests working in partnerships with others was provided in a study exploring the relationships between teachers and clergy in an Australian diocese (Tinsey, 1998). The project was a case study in which a survey research methodology was used. Data were collected through self-completion questionnaires and a series of semi-structured interviews with both teachers and clergy in a Catholic diocese. Tinsey (1998) identified several main themes that dominated in the relationship and contributed to a generally poor level of communication experienced by both teachers and clergy. Table 7.3 is a selection of statements relevant to the present discussion from Tinsey's synthesized and quantified data from the semi-structured interviews. Percentages of teachers and clergy in agreement with statements about clergy/teacher relationships are shown.

Table 7.3 Relationships between teachers and clergy.

Questions discussed in Interviews	% of Teachers in agreement <i>n</i> = 32	% of Clergy in agreement <i>n</i> = 39
Communication between teachers and clergy is generally poor in the diocese	87	60
Some clergy abuse power	86	62
Authority is an issue in the relationship	83	72
Authority problems relate to clergy formation and training	56	39
Relationships are superficial	68	28
Clergy are theologically and spiritually 'out of touch'	34	0
Priests have difficulties in relating through personality difficulties	24	0
Clergy have difficulties in relating to lay people	21	0
Communication is poor among the teachers	18	12
Communication is poor among the clergy	12	24

Source: Adapted from Tinsey, W. (1998), Teachers, Clergy and Catholic Schools: A Report of a Study of relationships between Teachers and Priests and their Perceptions of the Mission of Catholic Schools

Table 7.3 shows that both teachers (87%) and, to a lesser extent, clergy (60%) viewed communication between the two as generally poor. Issues identified by both teachers and clergy as the most important impediments to good communication were about authority and power, with 56% of teachers and 39% of clergy suggesting that problems relate to clergy training and formation (Tinsey, 1998, p.36). Of particular significance for the present discussion is the perception by 68% of teachers, and only 28% of clergy, that the relationships are superficial, suggestive of a discrepancy between relationship experiences of the two groups. If superficial relationships were the 'norm' for clergy, and a consequence of their formation and training, would they necessarily be able to recognize superficiality in relationships? The perception by some teachers that clergy have difficulties relating to lay people (21%), personality difficulties (24%), and are theologically and spiritually 'out of touch' (34%) was understandably not shared at all by clergy.

Priest/parishioner relationships and satisfaction with ministry

Recent research (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Tentler, 1998; Whetham & Whetham, 2000) indicates that the relationship between priests and parishioners is a crucial factor in determining the level of satisfaction and fulfillment experienced by clergy in their ministerial role, and this is supported in the quantitative material for this research.

In response to the question *how would you rate your overall effectiveness as a priest?* (CCLS, 2001) 81% of priests rated themselves (on a 7-point Likert scale) as *effective* to *very effective* in their current ministry. Results in Table 7.4, where variables exploring the relationship between priests and parishioners were investigated, would support this assessment.

Table 7.4 Priests and relationships with parishioners (percentages).

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
The parish and I disagree on my role as a priest	10	18	72	100
I'm not the right person for the parish	10	14	76	100
I do not feel accepted by attenders	4	7	89	100
I am now less patient with people in my parish than I used to be	21	14	65	100
Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience	30	N/A	70	100
I am spending less and less time with attenders	18	N/A	82	100
I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work	20	N/A	80	100

n = 901.

Source: CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys of priests in parish ministry.

NB: The last 3 variables did not have a specified category neutral or unsure as did the first 4 variables, so N/A is inserted instead.

Most priests feel that they are the right person for their parish, accepted by, in agreement with attenders on their role, and are generally patient and highly involved with people. However, the figures of 30% of priests who are finding fatigue and irritation a part of their day, 21% who are less patient with people, 20% who feel negative and cynical, and 18% who are increasingly withdrawn from attenders is indicative of a level of stress and potential difficulty.

The implications of this stress on respondents' feelings about work and relationships with parishioners were investigated further with multivariate analysis conducted on two hypotheses: first, *a positive association will be found between the factors negative priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of the priest by laity and the factor lack of interest in work*. Second, *a negative association with 'Neuroticism', and a positive association with 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' will be found with the two factors priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of the priest by laity*.

The effect of relationships between priests and laity on clergy interest in work

To test the hypothesis that *priest/parishioner relationships will be found to have an association with interest in work*, two factors for measuring the relationship between priests and parishioners, and one factor for measuring the level of interest in work were produced. In order to construct factors for measuring priest/parishioner relationships, the seven variables in Table 7.5 relating to priests' relationships with parishioners were subjected to principle components analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was .84, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance (approximate C^2 [21, $n = 354$] = 583.19, $p < .001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Table 7.5 Pattern matrix for 'negative priest/parishioner relationships' and 'non-acceptance of priest' factors.

	Component 1	Component 2
I am now less patient with people in my parish than I used to be	.66	
Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience	.79	
I am spending less and less time with attenders	.79	
I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work	.73	
The parish and I disagree on my role as a priest	-.15	.87
I'm not the right person for the parish	.16	.67
I do not feel accepted by attenders	.14	.67

(Absolute values < .10 suppressed)

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Two simple structure components (Table 7.5) resulted from an Oblimin oblique rotation, with all variables loading substantially on only one component. Component 1 contributed 44%, and component 2 contributed 14% of the variation in the model. The results of this analysis support the use of component 1 as a *negative priest/ parishioner relationship* factor, and component 2 as a *non-acceptance of priest by laity* factor (Pallant, 2001).

In order to create a single factor with which to measure clergy level of interest in work three variables were subjected to an unrotated principle components analysis: *extent of enthusiasm for work*, *extent of emotional investment in work* and *extent of feeling supported in work*. The variables loaded strongly on one component (Table 7.6), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was .63, exceeding the recommended value of .6. The Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance (approximate $X^2 [3, n = 374] = 263.69, p < .001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The single component produced explained 65% of the variance, therefore the analysis supports the use of the component as a *lack of interest in work* factor (Pallant, 2001).

Table 7.6 Component matrix for lack of interest in work factor.

	Component 1
Extent of enthusiasm for work	.88
Extent of emotional investment in work	.80
Extent of feeling supported in work	.74

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

In order to test the hypothesis: *Negative priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance by laity of priest will be found to have a positive association with lack of interest in work* standard multiple regression was performed using ‘lack of interest in work’ as the dependent variable and ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ and ‘non-acceptance of priest by laity’ as the independent variables ($F [2,340] = 180.22, p < .001$) (Table 7.7).

Table 7.7 Influence of negative priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of priest by laity on lack of interest in work.

Factor	Pearson Correlation	R Square	Standardized Beta
Negative relationships	.70***		.61***
Non-acceptance by laity	.50***	.52	.17***

$n = 343$, *** = $< .001$

Source: CCLS 2001 survey of priests in parish ministry. Analysis Jane Power.

The hypothesis is supported by the analysis and indicates that 52% of the variation in satisfaction with work is explained by ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ and ‘non-acceptance of priest by laity’. ‘Negative relationships’ makes a significant and unique contribution of 61%, and ‘non-acceptance by laity’ makes a significant and unique contribution of 17% to the variation in interest in work. As positive feelings towards, and acceptance by, parishioners is an important factor in interest in work, further investigation was conducted to explore whether the personality profiles of priests had a significant effect on their relationships with laity. The hypothesis that *an association will be found between NEO-FFI personality factors and priest/parishioner relationships* was tested using standard multiple regression analysis. Six standard multiple regression

analyses were performed on the six dependent variables that relate to priests' relationships: 'the extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience'; 'I'm not the right person for the parish'; 'the extent to which I spend less and less time with attenders'; 'I do not feel accepted here by attenders'; 'the extent to which I am less patient with people'; and 'the extent to which I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work'. The independent variables were the five domains of the NEO-FFI, 'Neuroticism', 'Extraversion', 'Openness', 'Agreeableness' and 'Conscientiousness' (Table 7.8).

Table 7.8 NEO-FFI and priests' relationships with parishioners.

	Pearson's Correlation	R Square	Standardized Beta
The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience.		.24 (n = 378)	
Neuroticism	.47***		.40***
Extraversion	-.32***		-.15**
Openness	-.02		.02
Agreeableness	-.24***		-.07
Conscientiousness	-.23***		.03
I'm not the right person for the parish		.17 (n = 374)	
Neuroticism	.37***		.28***
Extraversion	-.28***		-.09
Openness	-.09*		-.05
Agreeableness	-.23***		-.10
Conscientiousness	-.24***		-.03
The extent to which I spend less time with attenders		.19 (n = 377)	
Neuroticism	.38***		.24***
Extraversion	-.33***		-.18**
Openness	-.00		.04
Agreeableness	-.26***		-.11
Conscientiousness	-.25***		-.03
I do not feel accepted here by attenders		.16 (n = 375)	
Neuroticism	.32***		.23***
Extraversion	-.28***		-.20**
Openness	.02		.06
Agreeableness	-.26***		-.17**
Conscientiousness	-.13*		.11
The extent to which I am less patient with people		.11 (n = 375)	
Neuroticism	.30***		.24***
Extraversion	-.15**		.02
Openness	-.00		.02
Agreeableness	-.24***		-.16**
Conscientiousness	-.18***		-.04
The extent to which I feel negative and cynical about the people for whom I work		.14 (n = 375)	
Neuroticism	.31***		.24***
Extraversion	-.20***		-.04
Openness	-.04		-.01
Agreeableness	-.29***		-.21***
Conscientiousness	-.16**		.03

*** = <. 001; ** = <. 01; * = <. 05

Source: CCLS 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Multivariate analysis (above) shows that ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ are the significant predictors in the six variables relating to ‘priest/parishioner relationships’, even though significant bivariate correlations were found on all the independent variables except ‘Openness’ (Table 7.8). The combined independent variables contributed from between 14% and 24% to the variation in the dependent variables, with standardized betas showing that N made a unique and significant contribution to the variation in all the dependent variables, with either E or A also making significant and unique contributions to the variation when the contribution of all independent variables was taken into account.

Therefore, the hypothesis that NEO-FFI personality factors associate with priest/parishioner relationships is supported by the analysis. Respondents who are *high* on ‘Neuroticism’ experience increased negativity in priest/parishioner relationships generally. Respondents who are *high* on ‘Neuroticism’ and *low* on ‘Extraversion’ experience fatigue and irritation, and increasing withdrawal from attenders. Respondents who are *high* on ‘Neuroticism’, and *low* on ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ experience non-acceptance by attenders, and respondents who are *high* on ‘Neuroticism’ and *low* on ‘Agreeableness’ experience more feelings of negativity and increased cynicism about parishioners. Taking these findings into account, further analysis was conducted. The hypothesis that *Neuroticism has a positive association, and Extraversion and Agreeableness have negative associations with negative priest/parishioner relationships and non-acceptance of priest by laity* was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

The first analysis used ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ as the dependent variable, and ‘Neuroticism’ as the independent variable in step 1 (as ‘Neuroticism’ was found to correlate consistently at $>.3$ with all dependent variables in Table 7.9). In step 2, ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ were added (as these also had significant correlations in Table 7.9), and in Step 3, ‘Openness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ were added so that all factors of the NEO-FFI were included in the analysis.

Table 7.9 NEO-FFI and negative priest/parishioner relationships.

	Pearson's Correlation	Standardized coefficient Beta	ΔR^2	R Square
Step 1				
Neuroticism	.50***	.50***		.25
Step 2				
Neuroticism		.37***		
Extraversion	-.38***	-.16**		
Agreeableness	-.37***	-.21***	.07***	.32
Step 3				
Neuroticism		.37***		
Extraversion		-.16**		
Agreeableness		-.20***		
Openness	-.06	-.00		
Conscientiousness	-.30***	.00	.00	.32

n = 354, *** = <. 001, ** = <. 01, * = <. 05

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey; Analysis: Jane Power.

The analysis supports the hypothesis, indicating that 'Neuroticism' has a positive association, and 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' have negative associations with negative 'priest/parishioner relationships'. Although 'Conscientiousness' has a negative correlation >.3 with the dependent variable, the addition of 'Openness' and 'Conscientiousness' in step 3 contributes non-significantly to the variation in negative 'priest/parishioner relationships'. Step 2 provides explanation for 32% of the variation, with 'Neuroticism' making a unique contribution of 25% and 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' together contributing 7%.

The analysis was repeated for the factor 'non-acceptance of priest by laity' to test the hypothesis that *an association will be found between NEO-FFI personality factors and non-acceptance of priest by laity* ('Neuroticism' positive association and 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' negative associations; Table 7.10).

Table 7.10 NEO-FFI and non-acceptance of priest by laity.

	Pearson's Correlation	Standardized coefficient Beta	ΔR^2	R Square
Step 1				
Neuroticism	.38***	.38***		.14
Step 2				
Neuroticism		.28***		
Extraversion	-.29***	-.12*		
Agreeableness	-.25***	-.12*	.03**	.17
Step 3				
Neuroticism		.28***		
Extraversion		-.14*		
Agreeableness		-.13*		
Openness	-.06	.05		
Conscientiousness	-.30***	.01	.00	.17

$n = 354$, *** = < .001, ** = < .01, * = < .05

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis was supported by the analysis and contributes a total of 17% of the explanation for the variation in non-acceptance of priest by parishioners. 'Neuroticism' makes a unique and significant contribution of 14%, and 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' together contribute a further 3%. Again, the contribution of 'Openness' and 'Conscientiousness' is non-significant.

Tables 7.8 and 7.9 indicate that 'Neuroticism' is the most important personality factor impacting on 'negative priest/parishioner relationships', and 'non-acceptance of priests by laity', with 'Extraversion' and 'Agreeableness' having a significant but lesser influence. In Chapter 4, results of analysis of the NEO-FFI personality inventory showed that 57% of priests had *T* scores in the *high* to *very high* ranges in 'Neuroticism', a result that indicates potential for priests to have some difficulty in relationship with parishioners. Many priests have a strong preference for interaction with others, with 64% of priests having *T* scores in the *high* to *very high* ranges for 'Extraversion', and 25% having *T* scores in the *high* to *very high* ranges for 'Agreeableness'. However, results in

Tables 7.7 and 7.8 indicate that the influence of ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ on clergy relationships is very small.

SUMMARY

The changing shape of professional relationships of priests was heralded by the Vatican II decree of *Lumen Gentium*, which emphasized greater participation by laity in all areas of parish life, radically shifting the traditional remote and authoritarian attitude in the relationship of clergy to laity, to a more egalitarian, collaborative model.

Concurrent with this shift was the diminishing authority of priests in the promotion of church teaching in their parishes. The momentum for this reduction in authority has several compounding factors including a more highly educated laity who are more inclined to question church teachings and less inclined to view priests as unquestioned moral authority figures, tensions between a priest’s own moral conscience and Vatican dictates and revelations of clergy sexual abuse.

Results of the analysis showed that ‘Neuroticism’ has a positive association with ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ (Table 7.9), and ‘non-acceptance of priest by laity’ (Table 7.10), and explains 25% of the variation in the relationship in the former and 14% in the latter. Furthermore, a positive association with ‘Neuroticism’, and a negative association with ‘Extraversion’ and ‘Agreeableness’ was found with ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ and ‘non-acceptance of priests by laity’. As the mean score of respondents was in the *high* range for ‘Neuroticism’, it is possible that many priests have the potential to experience difficulty in these areas. A positive association was found between ‘negative priest/parishioner relationships’ and a ‘lack of interest in work’, indicating that good relationships between priests and parishioners makes an important contribution to clergy interest in and enthusiasm for work.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Background

The issue of personal relationships for priests is particularly complex in the Catholic organizational culture of clerical male celibacy. Since the inception of a celibate clergy in the 12th century, a policy restated by Pope John II in 1993, the authority of the church has continued to emphasize mandatory celibacy as a requisite for ordination (Schoenherr, 2002). The celibate identity of priests has informed and shaped clerical personal relationships, and has required them to achieve a delicate balance between the need to uphold the church's ecclesiological position, and their basic human needs for intimacy and closeness with others. Cozzens (2000) argued that the apparent paradox of celibate intimacy is that "one of the hallmarks of a healthy, celibate priest is his capacity for honest, close friendship with both men and women, and with both priests and laity" (p.31).

Throughout the period since celibacy became synonymous with priesthood there has been considerable fluctuation in support for celibacy by both priests and laity. Swings have occurred through the last 900 years between the polarity of periods of tacit acceptance, and periods of total non-acceptance of priests having intimate sexual relationships with women (Kerkhofs, 1995). The view of church authorities pre-Vatican II was one of total non-acceptance of sexually intimate relationships between priests and women, and it was believed that priests should maintain a distance and separateness from parishioners in order to both support the boundaries of celibacy, and emphasize the distinctiveness conferred on them through ordination. Therefore, close human relationships of any kind were largely discouraged. Nestor (1993) in his study *Intimacy and Adjustment in Catholic Priests* claimed that those who received training up until 1970, knew the consequences of what was called a 'particular friendship' (p.37), and that seminary life was one of virtual seclusion, with interpersonal restrictions even more rigorously enforced in relationships outside the family.

The greatest concern of the institution was about those people with whom seminarians had the most contact, namely one another. Silence and distance marked the typical interaction among seminarians. The rule stated: Students should associate freely with others in their own

department and should avoid habitual association with the same few companions. There should be no exclusive friendships and no private aversions” (Nestor, 1993, p. 38).

The policy of avoidance of particular friendships was turned around when the Bishop’s Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry (1972) found that neglect of the emotional needs of priests because of their relationship to celibate life was a cause of significant stress. The document stated, “When there is a lack of close, personal relationships in a priest’s life, his sexuality often becomes conflict ridden. This becomes acute when the priest concludes that there is no convincing reason for living a celibate life. Human closeness is essential to emotional vitality and good self-image” (Nestor, 1993, p. 36).

Following release of the Bishops’ Committee Report (1972), the detailed regulations that went with the policy of isolation from close relationships were gradually replaced with a policy that recognized the importance to emotional and psychological wellbeing of close personal relationships. Nestor (1993) claimed that intimate friendships then became an important part of seminary experience.

Friendships form the foundation of mutual support and cooperation in the 1976 Rule of Saint John’s Seminary. This rule goes on to advise that discovering the meaning of relationships with both men and women is the way to develop as a fully human person with the spiritual and emotional freedom to minister to others.” (Nestor, 1993, p. 44).

Nearly half of priests in parish ministry today were trained in the pre-conciliar model, and the others were in seminaries throughout the inevitable upheavals caused by such radical changes in attitude and all, therefore, have experienced formation in a very ambiguous climate. Whetham and Whetham (2000) asserted that:

In sum, a great many church leaders have problems in relating. In many cases, being set apart from people both outside and inside the church leaves church leaders prone to loneliness. To add to this dilemma, even their closest relationships with family and friends are impoverished (Whetham & Whetham, 2000, p. 45).

Tinsey (1998) found a range of problems in the interaction between priests and teachers with “inadequate communication, conflicting views over accountability, expectations,

authority and teacher commitment,” just some of the difficulties encountered (p. 78). Of particular relevance for this discussion is the finding that there was a tendency towards superficiality in cordial relationships, and an underlying fear and mistrust as the basis of poor relationships between clergy and teachers. Tinsey (1998) argued that the evidence showed that the relationships were characterized by “the role of the priest relating to the role of the teacher in many instances” (p. 79), and that there was little evidence that interactions went beyond that.

A comment by an octogenarian priest respondent to the semi-structured interviews conducted for this research showed a propensity for relating more at a distance than on a close, intimate level, and is an example of the style of relating characteristic of the interaction between teachers and priests discussed in Tinsey’s study (1998):

It’s very important to feel the love of your parishioners come back to you, and to have a close relationship with your bishop, who is your father. I’m pretty much a loner, so friendships are not that important for me.

Relating to parishioners as a group, and the bishop simply because he is the bishop, is an example of relating to roles rather than people. A non-personal style of relating, particularly with laity, was encouraged during traditional formation so it is not surprising to find evidence of relating which maintained an aloof distance such as in this example. However, such interaction precludes the possibility of either an emotional connection or flexibility of interaction, and is therefore an exchange devoid of human warmth and spontaneity. As such, it is a style of relating that is not conducive to healthy psychological and emotional development (Cozzens, 2000; Nestor, 1993; Tinsey, 1998).

The above supports earlier studies such as Kennedy and Heckler’s psychological study of priests in 1972 where one of the ways that underdevelopment manifested in the lives and work of the majority of priests was found to be focused in relationship with others, where close relationships were deeply desired, yet intimacy was experienced as awkward and difficult (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972). In the estimation of the clinical psychologists who interviewed and evaluated the priests, it was revealed that relationships between priests and others tended to be distant, highly stylized and frequently unrewarding.

Maldeveloped and underdeveloped priests tended to have few close friends and were uncomfortable about intimacy, and Kennedy and Heckler saw this intimacy problem as rooted in the priest's failure to arrive at a mature personal identity (Nestor, 1993, pp 12-13).

Kennedy and Heckler's study was a precursor to the radical change in attitude to personal friendships, but Cozzens (2000) suggested that the experience of union and intimacy with a few good friends was still missing nearly 30 years later for many priests. He further argued that without deep and authentic human friendship, priests' intimacy with God could become slightly out of balance. Cozzens (2000) stated that others experience the rewards of deep relating and over time "come to understand that their love for God is actually deepened and strengthened by celibate, intimate friendships with others – friendships that go beyond their ministerial love for parishioners as parishioners" (Cozzens, 2000, pp. 26-27).

Qualitative analysis from the semi-structured interviews (2002) showed that priests recognize the supportive nature of friendships, and the value of these friendships to their wellbeing. However, the comments appeared to view friendships simply as a recreational pastime, and a beneficial relief from stress. None of the comments suggested recognition of the deeper psychological and emotional benefits to be gained through the experience of intimate human relationships. None suggested that close relationships were a vehicle that offered the opportunity for personal development and a challenge to achieve celibate intimacy, and thus potentially provide a conduit for achievement of the transcendence implied by ordination. This lack of depth in the discussions about friendship could simply be a reflection of the unfamiliarity of the interviewees with the interviewer, but in general the comments reveal (for one reason or another) a very limited recognition of the need for close relating, a limited range of friendships, as well as limited time spent with friends.

I've found my supports through personal friendships. With other priests, married couples from previous parishes. Difficulty with friendships in the parish I am in, so that I am seen to be even handed. I don't feel bound to find my points of reference in the presbytery.

I've got a couple of good non-priest friends that I visit regularly. I met these people through a group I was involved in called 'marriage encounter'. Through this I gained skills to be able to relate to some people on a family level. They are great friends. I only visit them about once every 5 months, but I see them around the parish. I grab it while I can.

I play golf with 3 other priests every week. I meet with a group of 7 priests once a month, we have dinner together then stay overnight and meet the next day and share how our month has gone and how we are. On a broad scale I don't look for friendships with priests apart from that.

The above comments would support Cozzen's (2000) suggestion about a lack of close union and intimacy with others, and showed evidence of the highly stylized form of relating alluded to in Kennedy and Heckler's study (1972). Bishop Gumbleton (2002) argued that the failure of the bishops of the time to follow up on this major study contributed significantly to the level of accountability of church authorities to the current crisis surrounding sexual abuse cases. Gumbleton (2002) argued further that the fact that the authorities knew that serious psychological developmental deficits existed in numbers of clergy, and that they then failed to create programs and supports to help these priests, constituted a critical failure of responsibility.

Many studies of priests and celibacy/sexuality have been undertaken, including a study by Harrigan (1999) into strategies for assisting celibates in their personal relationships. Harrigan (1999) pointed to the difficulty for priests of the organizational change (since the early 1970s) of policy on personal relationships, and suggested that the effect of this has been to leave many priests confused. According to Sipe (1995), some of the confusion meant that these friendships went well beyond ministerial love for parishioners, even to the point of rupture of the boundary between the two.

Sipe (1995) claimed that in the United States, 50% of priests (religious and diocesan) were not practising celibacy; 20% were in heterosexual relationships, 8% experimented with various associations, and 10% engaged in homosexual behaviours (Sipe, 1995). The data were obtained by Sipe through evaluation of the celibate/sexual stories of more than 1,500 Catholic priests during the years 1960-1985, and material submitted to him by "25

psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, and historians” (Sipe, 1995, p. 66). Sipe cited a later study by Murphy in 1992 on vowed religious priests, which found that 62% of her male respondents reported being sexually active. Of the sexually active priests, 32% were with exclusively male partners, and 58% with exclusively female partners (Sipe, 1995, p. 79). It is argued by Miles (cited by Sipe, 1995) that many heterosexual priests use women to “prove their masculinity, to comfort their loneliness, and to relieve their sexual needs” (p.121). Miles’ study of the nature of the relationship between priests and women found that some priests have sequential relationships, some have affairs lasting from 1 to 5 years, and some have a group of women all at the one time (Sipe, 1995).

Sipe’s (1995) material on homosexuality appears to be the most accurate to date due to the acute sensitivity of questions of celibacy/sexuality, the self-reporting nature of the issue, and the obvious difficulty of obtaining up to date data. Sipe (1995) claimed that generally, 30% of all US priests “are either involved in homosexual relationships, have a conflict about periodic sexual activity, feel compelled towards homosexual involvements, identify themselves as homosexual, or at least have serious questions about their sexual orientation or differentiation. Approximately half of these men act out sexually with others” (Sipe, 1995, p. 136). Hoge (2002a) conducted a survey in 2001 (as mentioned in ch.5) on the attitude of Catholic priests towards celibacy and homosexuality, by asking about homosexual subcultures in their seminaries, dioceses or religious institutions. Results were vague, with many priests unsure about whether or not they could probably or clearly identify a homosexual subculture. However, data based on this survey and on focus groups showed that “homosexual subcultures increased in visibility, and probably also in numbers, in recent decades” (Hoge & Wenger, 2002a, p. 12).

The CCLS 2001 survey contained a question that asked whether priests had someone with whom they could be completely honest and who supported them in their life and ministry. The question was primarily aimed at gathering information about friendships as support in order to minimize stress, and did not directly ask about intimate friendships. Results showed that for 50% of priests, the closest relationship is with another priest, 7%

with a layman, 12% with a woman religious, and 20% with a laywoman. Due to both the sensitive nature of issues of sexuality and the doctrinal position on celibacy, information about the degree of intimacy in these relationships was not sought through the survey, nor revealed by respondents. The following discussion does not imply that there is genital activity in what are described as intimate relationships, and neither does it assume that there is no genital activity. That a similar pattern of sexual relationships and difficulty with celibacy to that described by Sipe (1995) is also the case for diocesan priests in Australia, is suggested by comments by some interview respondents:

The issue is; how do you live that (celibacy) and act that out? There are many men in priesthood who are living in a relationship with either a woman or a man. It seems celibacy does not work.

I was lonely, I fell in love a couple of times and had a heartbreaking struggle before I came to the decision to continue in the priesthood.

I have felt lonely sometimes as I got older.

There are some very good priests who have integrated celibacy. However, when the vast majority of priests are living in relationship, this has to be looked at.

ANALYSIS

Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) found in their study on burnout, that 10-15% of the variation in the rate of burnout among all denominations of clergy is explained by lack of close friends and/or social isolation (p.126). Family life accounted for 15-20% of the variation, and was described by Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001) as of critical importance for leader wellbeing (p. 44). The context of priestly celibacy means that priests do not live within a family or partnership, and consequently have to find ways of dealing with this deficit in life support.

Friendships and coping

In order to investigate the question: How important to priests are intimate friendships in assisting them to cope with the stresses and problems encountered in their day-to-day lives and ministry?, frequencies of coping methods of priests were obtained (Table 7.11) using a coping scale developed by Billings and Moos (1981). The scale included a list of 12 variables descriptive of three categories of coping methods: avoidant (AV), active behavioural (AB), active cognitive (AC), and two categories of focus - emotion focused (EF) and problem focused (PF). Priests were asked to answer *yes* or *no* for each coping strategy. Responses were ranked according to the percentage of priests agreeing that they had used that particular item in dealing with a stressful event over the last three months.

Table 7.11 Priests and coping methods.

Method (rank order)	Yes (%)	AV	AB	AC	EF	PF
I took things one step at a time	93			x		x
I prayed for guidance and strength	92			x	x	
I took positive action	92		x			x
I talked with a friend about the situation	91		x			x
I considered several alternatives	90			x		x
I tried to find out more about the problem	81		x			x
I drew on past experiences	75			x		x
I prepared for the worst	38	x			x	
I kept my feelings to myself	36	x			x	
I participated in more physical exercise	31		x		x	
I got busy to keep my mind off the problem	30	x			x	
I didn't worry about it; I figured everything would work out fine	23	x			x	

n = 381

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey of Priests in Parish Ministry.

The top ranking third of the coping options in Table 7.11 showed that priests predominantly used AC or AB styles of coping with 'problem' focus. The one exception is the emotion-focused coping strategy of praying for guidance and strength, but this

strategy is entirely consistent with a vocation in spiritual leadership, and may have a very different meaning in the priest sample, than it does in a general sample. Most relevant for this research is the importance of talking things over with a friend, with 91% of respondents including this as a mechanism for coping with problems. The following analysis explores the most significant supportive relationships for priests.

Holding the position of leader of a community creates unique obstacles to developing close supportive relationships. This situation is compounded for Catholic priests who, unlike priests and ministers of other Christian denominations, do not live within the context of family and ready opportunity for regular debriefing and sharing of daily struggles and triumphs. A question ‘with whom do you find it most useful to talk about concerns regarding your parish?’ explored the people priests go to in order to satisfy the need for debriefing and support. Respondents were asked to circle up to two categories of resource people, so results show frequencies of the responses ($n = 1552$) rather than frequencies of the cases ($n = 901$) surveyed in both CCLS 1996 and CCLS 2001. Table 7.12 shows the rank order of preference from the list of resource people provided.

Table 7.12 The most useful resource people for priests to discuss parish concerns with.

<i>Resource people</i>	Frequency	Percent
Other priests	702	45
Other friends	404	26
Spiritual director	123	8
Bishop	72	5
Other	80	5
Family members	58	4
Counsellor	48	3
Diocesan resource people	43	3
I do not find it useful to talk about my concerns	22	1
Total	1552	100

$n = 1552$ (responses)

Source: CCLS 1996 and 2001.

Not surprisingly, with the question specifically focused on the most useful person to talk to about parish concerns, the category other priests was the preference for 45% of the responses. The finding that 26% of the responses cited other friends rather than spiritual director, bishop or diocesan resource people showed that priests value friendships other than with colleagues, and find them a more helpful support in their professional life than structural supports.

Frequencies were obtained for a variable ‘support person’, which was drawn from the question, ‘Do you have someone with whom you are able to be completely honest, who encourages and supports you in your ministry role? If so, which of the following describes that person?’ (CCLS, 2001). Table 7.13 showed the percentages of priests who have a colleague, a woman religious, a layman or a laywoman as their most intimate and supportive friend.

Table 7.13 Most significant close friendship for priests.

Support person	Frequency	Percent
Another priest	181	50
A woman religious	45	12
A layman	25	7
A laywoman	74	20
No-one	37	10
Total	362	100

Source: CCLS 2001 Survey of Priests in Parish Ministry.

Table 7.13 showed that priests predominantly have other priests as their main support person (50%). A recent study by Perl and Froehle for the Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA, 2002), corroborated the results in Table 7.13, as clergy in that survey also showed a preference for close relationships with colleagues. Results of the priest poll conducted by CARA showed that for 67% of diocesan priests, at least half of

their close friendships were with other priests. Another 35% reported that at least half of their friendships were with parishioners or former parishioners (CARA, 2002). Direct comparison between this report and the Australian experience is not possible as the CARA survey referred to a group of close friendships, rather than selection of a single closest friend as in the CCLS 2001 survey, but the overall result between preference for colleagues as the main source of support is comparable between the two surveys.

The question arises as to whether some types of friendships are more supportive of priesthood as a vocation than others. This question was examined in cross-tabulation analysis of CCLS 2001 survey data which was conducted in order to test the hypothesis: *The category of the most significant support person for priests will be found to have an association with frequency of thinking about leaving.* The analysis was performed using the variables ‘support person and ‘frequency of thinking of leaving’.

Table 7.14 Clergy support person and frequency of thinking of resigning.

		<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Constantly</i>	<i>Total</i>
Another priest	Count	97	69	13	179
	Expected count	83.0	80.0	16	179.0
	Percentage	54.2	38.5	7.3	100.0
A woman religious	Count	24	18	2	44
	Expected count	20.4	19.7	3.9	44.0
	Percentage	54.5	40.9	4.5	100.0
A layman	Count	11	11	2	24
	Expected count	11.1	10.7	2.1	24.0
	Percentage	45.8	45.8	8.3	100.0
A laywoman	Count	24	39	11	74
	Expected count	34.3	33.1	6.6	74.0
	Percentage	32.4	52.7	14.9	100.0
No-one	Count	10	23	4	37
	Expected count	17.2	16.5	3.3	37.0
	Percentage	27.0	62.2	10.8	100.0

n = 358

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The hypothesis was supported by the analysis with a significant association (C^2 [8, *n* = 358] = 18.906, $p < .05$) between ‘support person’ and ‘frequency of thinking about

leaving'. The cell that made the largest contribution to the total value of Chi-square (4.75) was the *laywoman* support person with *constantly* think of resigning cell. Those respondents who choose a laywoman as their closest confidante were over-represented under the null hypothesis in *constantly* thinking of resigning, and under-represented in *never* think of resigning. This result lends support to the suggestion by Hoge (2001), Wills (2000) and Schoenherr (2002), that a large part of the decline in numbers of priests over the last three decades is due to many priests in Western countries leaving the priesthood to marry.

The next largest contribution to the value of Chi-square (3.0) was the *no-one* support person and *never* think of resigning cell. The 10% of diocesan priests who have no close friends at all are therefore significantly under-represented in *never* think of resigning. Therefore, results in Table 7.14 indicated that priests whose closest friendship was with a laywoman, and those who had no close friends at all were the most likely groups to think about resigning. The CARA report also found an association between having thought about leaving the priesthood and having no close friendships (CARA, 2002, p. 47).

It is clear from Table 7.14 that the priests whose closest friendships are with ordained male and female colleagues are over-represented (according to the null hypothesis) in *never* think of resigning. These cells made a very small contribution (ranging from 0.1 to 2.0) to the value of Chi-square, indicating that clergy whose closest relationships are with other priests or women religious are the least likely to think about resigning. This result is supported by the CARA report which found that priests whose closest friends are other priests are less likely than those with few friends who are priests, to have seriously considered leaving the priesthood over the past five years (CARA, 2002, p. 2).

Intimacy and age

As a change in policy towards friendships both inside and outside of seminaries happened in the 1970s, cross-tabulation analysis was performed in order to test the hypothesis that *priests who experienced formation prior to the Second Vatican Council will be less likely than those ordained after, to have close, intimate relationships with others, particularly*

with laywomen. The variables used in the analysis were ‘age’ (split at age 60) and ‘support person’.

Table 7.15 Cross-tabulation of priests’ choice of support person by age.

		Another priest	A woman religious	A layman	A laywoman	No-one	Total
Under 60							
	Count	100	12	17	48	18	195
	Expected Count	98.0	24.1	13.7	38.9	20.3	195.0
	Percent	51.3	6.2	8.7	24.6	9.2	100.0
Over 60							
	Count	79	32	8	23	19	161
	Expected Count	81.0	19.9	11.3	32.1	16.7	161.0
	Percent	49.1	19.9	5.0	14.3	11.8	100.0

n = 356

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Inspection of the *under 60, no-one* cell showed a small difference between the observed and expected counts under the null hypothesis. The same was true of the *over 60, no-one* cell, so because no significant difference was observed between the younger and older group of priests for the cells relating to having a support person, the hypothesis was only partially supported by the analysis. Both age groups showed that they have close relationships with others. Age as a predictor of depth of intimacy in relationships of priests was supported in the study by Nestor (1993), which found that young men scored significantly higher than older men on measures of level of intimacy. However, the difference in intimacy was not vocation specific, with young men in the control group also showing higher scores than older men on the same measures. Nestor (1993) argued that the results showed that differences in seminary training did not affect the ability of priests to form close, intimate relationships, and that life cycle factors are more important (p.124).

Friendship with colleagues

Although the results of Table 7.15 did not support the hypothesis in relation to the capacity for establishing close relationships, the results supported the hypothesized significant differences between the two age groups for the category of support person,

particularly in relation to laywomen ($\chi^2 [4, n = 356] = 20.56, p < .001$). Half of the sample population of priests experienced their closest relationships within their peer group in both age groups (<60 = 51%, >60 = 49%), with cell counts for *another priest* almost exactly as expected under the null hypothesis. Table 7.15 showed that of those respondents who had a woman as their closest confidante (31% for priests *under 60*, and 34% for priests *60 and over*), the most interesting differences between the age groups was found. This important finding will be discussed in more detail later.

Friendships with laymen showed a small difference between the two age groups, with the cell counts for younger priests higher than expected, and lower than expected for older priests. This suggests that younger priests are more likely than older priests to have close relationships with laymen. So how much time did the priest respondents spend with their closest friend/support person? Two questions about the level of recreational time priests spent with colleagues were analyzed in Table 7.16: How many times in an average month would you spend a day with a fellow priest? And how many times in an average month would you spend an evening or a few hours with one or a small group of priest-colleagues (not for work)?

Table 7.16 How many times in an average month do priests spend time together?

	None per month % of priests	1-2 per month % of priests	3-4 per month % of priests	More than 4 per per month % of priests	Total %
Days <i>n</i> = 379	23	44	25	8	100
An evening or a few hours <i>n</i> = 378	27	47	20	6	100

Source: CCLS, 2001.

Given that the most common close relationship for priests is another priest (51%), the results in Table 7.16 showing that 67% of priests spend from none to 2 days, and that 74% spend from none to 2 evenings with fellow priests per month suggested that many priests experience a lack of close supportive companionship most of the time. As the

population sample in Table 7.16 is drawn from the whole CCLS 2001 survey ($n = 383$), and therefore includes clergy with other categories of friendship, the analysis was repeated after selecting only those priests who responded that their closest relationship was with another priest (Table 7.17).

Table 7.17 How many times in an average month do priests with a close relationship with another priest spend time together?

	None per month % of priests	1-2 per month % of priests	3-4 per month % of priests	More than 4 per month % of priests	Total %
Days $n = 180$	15	47	29	9	100
An evening or a few hours $n = 178$	16	52	24	8	100

Source: CCLS, 2001.

The results in Table 7.17 are even more surprising than in Table 7.16, with up to 16% of respondents spending no time with another priest even though this was reported to be their most close, supportive relationship. Up to a further 52% of respondents in this category only spend up to two evenings a month with the person they are closest to, raising questions as to why this situation might be as it is. Are priests so overworked that time for a recreational pursuit is a problem? Does moving from one parish to another make it difficult to make and keep close friendships? Or is this result suggestive of an inability to form close relationships, and discomfort with intimacy as proposed by Kennedy and Heckler (1972), and Whetham and Whetham (2000)?

The above results show that the emphasis on priestly fraternity frequently stressed by Pope John Paul II as part of the context of the spiritual life of the priest is not being met in the Australian experience. According to McGovern (2002), unity of the priest with “Christ, with the Church, with his own bishop, with his brothers in the priesthood, and with the faithful ...” (p. 142) lies at the very core of what it is to be a priest. He cites *Lumen Gentium*:

In virtue of their sacred ordination and of their common mission, all priests are united together by bonds of intimate brotherhood, which manifests itself in a spontaneously and gladly given mutual help, whether spiritual or temporal, whether pastoral or personal, through the medium of reunions and community life, work and fraternal charity (McGovern, 2002, p. 142).

The fraternal relationship with other priests is, according to Pope John Paul II, to be built up day-by-day "...you cannot live or work in an isolated manner. With the aid of all, diocesan and religious priests, you must build up the presbyterate as a family and as a sacramental brotherhood..." (McGovern, 2002, p. 144). Priests may feel connected and in unison with an intimate brotherhood by virtue of their ordination, but the above results show that for many, this is not lived out in regular or frequent communion with each other as an intrinsic part of daily life.

Results of the CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys showed that 30% of priests agreed that the need to move as part of ministry makes it hard to make and keep close friendships, and a further 10% were neutral or unsure. This evidence lends support to the view that loneliness is a problem for many clergy (Cozzens, 2000; Hoge, 2001; Hoge et al., 1993; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Whetham & Whetham, 2000), and is an indication that communication at a distance may be a feature of many of these close friendships. Comments by respondents to the CCLS 2001 survey convey something of their thoughts and experiences:

I feel, because we live in an age of collaboration in ministry, this forces more priests to be isolated from other priests. A sense of 'brotherhood' is declining (which is) all the more reason for creation of opportunities of attending conferences like N.C.P (National Council of Priests of Australia).

On Fridays I drive for an hour or so to meet with 4 other priests and a religious sister (ADM of a parish) to reflect on the Sunday Scripture, share a meal at that presbytery (in turn) and discuss current issues during a meal. This is helpful in reducing isolation and encouraging teamwork.

A bivariate Pearson's correlation was performed to test the hypothesis *that there is a negative association between time spent with colleagues and a feeling of sadness*. The

variables were: ‘the extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can’t explain’ and the ‘number of times per month an evening or a few hours were spent with a small group of priest-colleagues (not for work)’.

Table 7.18 Pearson's correlation between unexplained sadness and time spent with colleagues.

	Unexplained sadness	Time spent with colleagues
Unexplained sadness		
Pearson correlation	1	-0.14**
<i>n</i> = 378		
Time spent with colleagues		
Pearson correlation	-0.14**	1
<i>n</i> = 375		

** = < .01

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

The results of the analysis supported the hypothesis with a small negative association found between the variables ($r^2 = -0.14$, $p < .001$; Table 7.18). Therefore, spending very little time with colleagues is associated with feelings of sadness or depression.

Friendship with women

Inspection of the cells in Table 7.15 relating to friendships with women showed that there is a considerable difference between the percentage of older priests (20%) and younger priests (6%), who have close friendships with religious women, while on the other hand, a much larger percentage (25%) of younger priests have close relationships with laywomen than older priests (14%). Counts for these cells showed that fewer than expected (under the null hypothesis) of younger priests had close relationships with religious women, making a contribution of 5.8 to the value of Chi-square ($\chi^2 = 20.56$), while for older priests counts were higher than expected, making a contribution of 7.3 to the value of Chi-square.

Conversely, counts for younger priests and relationships with laywomen were higher than expected, and contributed 2.5 to the value of Chi-square, and counts were lower than expected for older priests, contributing 2.6 to the value of Chi-square. Therefore, priests who were ordained prior to the Second Vatican Council are more likely to have close

friendships with religious women, and those ordained after Vatican II are more likely to have close friendships with laywomen. The reasons for this are unclear; further research is needed to explore questions such as whether a more rigidly proscribed friendship network as was the case prior to Vatican II, or support of more open views contributed to the pattern of clergy friendships with women, or whether dwindling numbers of religious women make availability of these friendships scarce. Important information to obtain also, is the level of intimacy in clergy relationships with women, and the implication of this for predicting the likelihood of priest resignations.

Analysis was conducted to investigate the hypothesis that as well as the age association, *NEO-FFI personality factors will contribute to the difference between priests who have close relationships with laywomen and those who have close relationships with religious women.* Five cross-tabulations of the variable ‘support person’ and the variables relating to the five factors of the NEO-FFI personality instrument ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extraversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’ were conducted. The analysis showed significant associations with ‘Extraversion’, $\chi^2(8, n = 361) = 30.63, p < .001$, ‘Agreeableness’, $\chi^2(8, n = 358) = 16.60, p < .05$, and ‘Openness’ $\chi^2(8, n = 360) = 16.72, p < .05$. Non-significant associations were found on ‘Neuroticism’ $\chi^2(8, n = 362) = 4.94, p > .05$, and ‘Conscientiousness’ $\chi^2(8, n = 352) = 7.61, p > .05$, so these two factors were not included in Table 7.19.

Table 7.19 Support person for clergy and NEO-FFI personality factors.

	Extraversion <i>n</i> = 361				Openness <i>n</i> = 360				Agreeableness <i>n</i> = 358			
	low	avrg	high	total	low	avrg	high	total	low	avrg	high	total
Another priest												
Count	9	56	115	180	72	84	24	180	71	73	35	179
Expected count	14.0	53.4	112.7	180.0	64.5	81.5	34.0	180.0	65.5	66.5	47.0	179.0
Percentage	5.0	31.1	63.9	100.0	40.0	46.7	13.3	100.0	39.7	40.8	19.6	100.0
A woman religious												
Count	1	14	30	45	18	16	11	45	12	14	19	45
Expected count	3.5	13.3	28.2	45.0	16.1	20.4	8.5	45.0	16.5	16.7	11.8	45.0
Percentage	2.2	31.1	66.7	100.0	40.0	35.6	24.4	100.0	26.7	31.1	42.2	100.0
A layman												
Count	0	3	22	25	5	11	8	24	7	8	10	25
Expected count	1.9	7.4	15.7	25.0	8.6	10.9	4.5	24.0	9.1	9.3	6.6	25.0
Percentage	0.0	12.0	88.0	100.0	20.8	45.8	33.3	100.0	28.0	32.0	40.0	100.0
A laywoman												
Count	9	20	45	74	18	40	16	74	25	30	18	73
Expected count	5.7	21.9	46.3	74.0	26.5	33.5	14	74.0	26.7	27.1	19.2	73.0
Percentage	12.2	27.0	60.8	100.0	24.3	54.1	21.6	100.0	34.2	41.1	24.7	100.0
No-one												
Count	9	14	14	37	16	12	9	37	16	8	12	36
Expected count	2.9	11.0	23.2	37.0	13.3	16.8	7.0	37.0	13.2	13.4	9.5	36.0
Percentage	24.3	37.8	37.8	100.0	43.2	32.4	24.3	100.0	44.4	22.2	33.3	100.0

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Inspection of the cells for religious women and laywomen showed that two cell counts differed significantly from the expected count according to the null hypothesis. Priests with a religious woman as a close friend were over-represented in the *high* A cell and made the largest contribution to the value of Chi-square (6.5). Therefore priests with a high *T*-score for A are more likely to cite a religious woman as their closest confidante. The next largest contribution (2.7) was made by the *laywoman low* O cell where a lower than expected count was found. Slightly higher than expected counts were found in the *average* and *high* O cells, so priests who have *average* to *high* O *T*-scores on the NEO-FFI personality inventory are more likely than those with *low* O to have a *laywoman* as a close supportive friend. Therefore the hypothesis was supported by the analysis, and showed an association between personality and clergy friendships with women.

Significant differences between the observed and expected counts under the null hypothesis were found in the *no-one* cells and *low* and *high* E, and *average* A cells. Of particular note is the *no-one low* E cell, which made a large contribution (12.8) to the

Chi-square value. Therefore, priests who have *low* E *T* -scores in their NEO-FFI profile are over-represented in having no one as a close friend and support person. The difference was then distributed in under-representation in the high E range. Noteworthy also is the under-representation of priests with *another priest* as support person in the *high* openness range.

Analysis has shown significant differences between priests ordained pre- and those ordained post-Vatican II in relation to having intimate friendships with laywomen or religious women. Clergy with higher scores on Openness are more likely to be in the under 60 age group, and have a relationship with a laywoman than those in the 60 and over group. Clergy with higher scores on Agreeableness are more likely to be in the over 60 age group, and have a close friendship with a religious woman than those in the under 60 age group. This finding demonstrates that differences in formation policies on friendships pre- and post-Vatican II have had a measurable effect on clergy choice in close relationships with women, but did not affect whether or not priests had close friendships.

Nestor (1993) found that priests who named a woman as their closest friend were higher than priests who named a man as their closest friend on the measure of intimacy according to the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS), but argued that this scale is biased in favor of opposite sex relationships. While not directly implying that the celibacy obligation had been violated, Nestor (1993) claimed that ‘very’ intimate relationships between priests and women, had well known precedents in the Christian tradition. He cited evidence that despite the potential for isolation and loneliness, many priests attain higher levels of intimacy than their lay male peers, and are likely to maintain intimate relationships with women (p.133). Further research is needed in order to ascertain first, the level of intimacy in the close relationships of Australian priests and second, whether Nestor’s finding that priests who have friendships with women are higher than others in their capacity for intimacy is replicated in the Australian experience.

Priests' attitudes about the view that friendship and intimacy with women is important for psychological development for clergy was canvassed in the CCLS surveys. The question was "Some authors writing on the psychological development of priests emphasize the need for genuine friendship and intimacy with women (precluding, of course, genital intimacy). They argue that this enhances emotional health, and thus ministry, and far from threatening celibacy, can support it. Do you agree?" (CCLS, 2001). Agreement was measured on a 7-point likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Frequency analysis showed that 18% of respondents disagreed strongly or disagreed with the statement, 10% were neutral, and 72% agreed or agreed strongly with it.

Given the finding of a significant association between the NEO-FFI personality factor Agreeableness and naming a religious woman, and Openness and naming a laywoman as the respondent's closest friend (Table 7.19), it was hypothesized that *a positive association will be found between both Agreeableness and Openness and agreement with the view that friendships with women are important for clergy psychological and emotional health and development*. Five cross-tabulation analyses were performed using the variable 'priests' attitude to relations with women' drawn from the question above, and the NEO-FFI factors 'Neuroticism', 'Extraversion', 'Openness', 'Agreeableness' and 'Conscientiousness'. Results produced significant associations for O, ($\chi^2 [4, n = 375] = 18.39, p < .001$), and A ($\chi^2 [4, n = 370] = 13.02, p = .05$), and non-significant associations for N ($\chi^2 [4, n = 375] = 2.64, p > .05$), E ($\chi^2 [4, n = 374] = 4.86, p > .05$), and C ($\chi^2 [4, n = 364] = 1.86, p > .05$), thus supporting the hypothesis.

Table 7.20 NEO-FFI Openness, Agreeableness and attitude of priests to friendship and intimacy with women.

		Low O	Ave O	High O	Total	Low A	Ave A	High A	Total
Relations with women									
Disagree									
	Count	35	26	8	69	36	18	12	66
	Expected count	25.4	31.1	12.5	69.0	24.4	24.4	17.1	66.0
	Percentage	50.7	37.7	11.6	100.0	54.5	27.3	18.2	100.0
Neutral									
	Count	16	21	0	37	11	18	7	36
	Expected count	13.6	16.7	6.7	37.0	13.3	13.3	9.3	36.0
	Percentage	43.2	56.8	0.0	100.0	30.6	50.0	19.4	100.0
Agree									
	Count	87	122	60	269	90	101	77	268
	Expected count	99.0	121.2	48.8	269.0	99.2	99.2	69.5	268.0
	Percentage	32.3	45.4	22.3	100.0	33.6	37.7	28.7	100.0

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 7.20 showed that according to the null hypothesis, priests with *low* O were over-represented in *disagree*, making a large contribution (3.6) to the overall Chi-square for O. Therefore, priests with *low* Openness in their personality profile are more likely than those with *high* Openness, to disagree with the view that genuine friendship and intimacy with women enhances emotional and psychological health, and thus ministry, and supports, rather than threatens, celibacy. Conversely, the *high* O *agree* cell was over-represented according to the null hypothesis, and contributed 2.6 to the value of Chi-square. Priests with *high* O were more likely to agree with the above position, thus further validating the finding in Table 7.17 of a significant association between *high* O and likelihood of a close relationship with a laywoman.

Results in Table 7.20 also confirmed the hypothesis in relation to ‘Agreeableness’, with priests who disagreed with the statement over-represented according to the null hypothesis in the *low* ‘A’ cell. This cell made a large (5.5) contribution to the overall value of Chi-square for ‘A’. Therefore priests who have *low* T- scores for ‘A’, are more likely than those with high scores to disagree that close friendships with women are beneficial in the lives of clergy, again supporting the findings in Table 7.20 of a

significant association between *high* ‘A’ and likelihood of a close relationship with a religious woman.

As the five factors of the NEO-FFI and the variable priests’ attitudes to relations with women are all likert scales, further analysis was conducted using standard multiple regression. The dependent variable was ‘priests’ attitudes to relations with women’ and the independent variables were ‘Neuroticism’, ‘Extraversion’, ‘Openness’, ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Conscientiousness’. Results showed a significant association between the dependent and independent variables, $F(5, 369) = 11.33, p < .001$, $R^2 = .13$.

Table 7.21 NEO-FFI and priests’ attitude to relations with women.

	Pearson Correlation	Standardized Beta
Neuroticism	-.11*	-.09
Extraversion	.09*	-.02
Openness	.28***	.27***
Agreeableness	.23***	.22***
Conscientiousness	.01	-.12*

$n = 375$ *** = $<.001$, ** = $<.01$, * = $<.05$

Source: CCLS, 2001; Analysis: Jane Power.

Table 7.21 shows a significant Pearson correlation on all factors except ‘C’, with both ‘O’ and ‘A’ significant at $<.001$. Inspection of the standardized Beta values shows that when the contribution of all the variables is taken into account, ‘O’ makes a significant and unique contribution of 27%, and ‘A’ makes a significant and unique contribution of 22% to the variation in the dependent variable.

SUMMARY

In a context that precludes strategies available to the non-ordained, the Catholic culture of clerical male celibacy that has informed and shaped personal relationships for priests, has

presented them with a unique dilemma. The fulfillment of human needs for closeness and intimacy with others while in a vocation that sets limits on the physical expression of relationship requires clergy to achieve a high level of mature personal development. Research and literature over the last 30 years has suggested that many priests may experience some difficulty with the successful attainment of intimate relationships.

Analysis of the CCLS 2001 survey showed that 91% of priests used the coping method of talking with a friend about problems (Table 7.11), and 90% had a person with whom they had an open and close, supportive relationship. Having a laywoman, or having no one for a close friend was found to contribute to greater frequency of thinking about leaving than close friendship with another priest or with a woman religious (Table 7.14). However, frequencies in Tables 7.16 and 7.17 showed that priests, including those who cited other priests as their closest friends, spent a limited time with their colleagues, with up to 47% spending no more than 2 days or 2 evenings per month in that company.

Important differences were found between priests in the over 60 age range who were more likely to be close to religious women, and priests in the under 60 age range who were more likely to have intimate relationships with a laywoman (Table 7.15), which suggested that policies on friendships pre- and post-Vatican II may have influenced this result. Priests with *average* or *high* Openness on the NEO-FFI personality inventory were found to be more likely than those who were *low* on O to cite a laywoman as their most supportive relationship, while priests who were *high* on Agreeableness were found to be more likely to cite religious women (Table 7.19). Table 7.20 showed that priests who are *high* on either O or A are more likely than those who are *low*, to agree with the view that the psychological development, emotional health, and consequently the experience of ministry is enhanced for priests through friendships with women, and that these friendships support rather than threaten celibacy. Table 7.21 showed that the unique and significant contribution of O and A to the variation of support for the above view was 27% and 22%, respectively.

Although 90% of respondents had someone with whom they could be completely honest, and who encouraged and supported them in their ministry role (Table 7.12), 31% responded that they often felt lonely, 24% felt very lonely or remote from others, and 22% said they felt depressed or very unhappy (CCLS, 1996, 2001). These results suggest that even though most priests report a significant close relationship, many do not experience sufficient consistent and deep relating in order to satisfy the need for human emotional closeness.

A very different result was obtained by Nestor (1993) who argued that his priest respondents had a strong capacity to establish and maintain close intimacy, and that they showed higher levels of intimacy than other men. As well as conflicting with results in the present study, this view differs from much of the literature on priests, including Kennedy and Heckler's psychological study (1972), Cozzens (2000) and Schoenherr (2002) in the USA, Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001), Swinburne (1991), Tinsey (1998) and Whetham and Whetham (2000) in Australia.

The above writers all point to difficulties with intimacy encountered by clergy, and by others in interactions with them. It is arguable that the criticism by Nestor, of the 'highly subjective' nature of Kennedy and Heckler's classification of priests into four categories of development from *maldeveloped* to *developed* had some validity, as the criteria for selection were attitudinal and characterological, and therefore intangible. It is always possible that there was some distortion of the way the priests in the study experienced themselves compared to the way they were evaluated by the psychiatrists who interpreted the material. But this view underrates the long established efficacy of clinical impressions by competent professionals. Rating of the interpersonal style of an individual by another could also be interpreted as 'objective' evaluation, if not a more objective evaluation than Nestor's use of the MSIS, which, it could be argued, is 'highly subjective' because of the self reporting by the subjects according to the 17-item relational variables.

At the same time as Kennedy and Heckler produced their findings of a largely undeveloped priest population, Greeley's sociological study *The Catholic Priest in the United States* (1972) also found emotional problems that were distinctive to his priest respondents and were suggestive of high levels of 'Neuroticism' (Greeley, 1972). The measurement of the 'capacity for intimate contact', one of the sub-scales of the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) used by Greeley, showed that the mean score of active priests (16.9) was lower than the mean score for his 'normal adult' control group (18.8) (Greeley, 1972, p.57). It could be argued that contrary to Nestor's results, the clinical impressions described in the Kennedy and Heckler study (1972) have largely been validated in the 30 years since their findings were published. Evidence for this view is provided by the writers cited above which suggested that many priests had more difficulty than a general population of males with achieving personally satisfying intimate relationships with others. An important contributing factor to this situation was the increased ministerial pressure on priests through the decline in numbers of seminarians, which meant workloads left little time for nurturing and developing recreational friendships.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that relationships with parishioners are an important factor in determining satisfaction with ministry, and that these relationships are undergoing transformation due to the diminishing authority of priests (Table 7.2). Increasing participation of a more highly educated laity in all aspects of parish life, and laity attitudes which dissent from church teaching, was shown to contribute to a decrease in the authority of priests. The moral authority of priests has been further eroded by revelations of clergy sexual abuse, and qualitative data supported the suggestion that this issue has negatively impacted on the relationship between priests and parishioners.

Next, results in this chapter showed that although the majority of priests see themselves as very effective in their ministries, evidence of difficulties in relationships with the laity was reported by up to 30% of respondents in the CCLS 2001 survey. Analysis found that priest/parishioner relationships account for 52% of the variation in interest in work (Table 7.7), while personality factors make a significant contribution to the nature and quality of these relationships (Table 7.8). Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness were found to be the significant predictors in the six variables relating to priest/parishioner relationships, with Neuroticism making a unique and significant contribution on all of the independent variables.

Finally, qualitative and quantitative analysis in this chapter would support an argument that the requirement of celibacy as requisite to ordination, and the consequent segregation and disapproval of particular friendships had a significant effect on the psychological and emotional development of priests and consequently on the ability of many clergy to relate in a close, intimate way with others. Results of the analysis showed that although 50% of priests had their most significant friendship with a colleague (Table 7.13), very limited time was spent in that company (Tables 7.16 and 7.17), and that this contributed to feelings of depression (Table 7.18). Differences between age cohorts were found in relation to clergy whose main friendship was with a woman, with younger priests (under 60) more likely to have relationships with lay women than priests over 60, whose main friendships were with religious women (Table 7.15).

Results in Chapter 7 support the primary hypothesis, and demonstrate that close relationships with friends and colleagues have a positive association with satisfaction with priestly ministry and personal wellbeing. This concludes the discussion of the four main themes identified in Chapter 1. A review of this research follows in Chapter 8, together with a discussion about the limitations of the present study and recommendations for future directions for research.

8

CONCLUSION

Overview

This chapter draws together the themes investigated and conclusions found in Chapters 4-7 in an overview of the project. Limitations of the present study are identified and important areas for further study are proposed. Finally the contribution of this research to current knowledge about Catholic clergy in Australia is discussed.

SUMMARY

This thesis explored four major themes about the professional and personal lives of Catholic clergy arising from the current crisis in the Catholic Church. The first theme investigated the impact on the identity and role of clergy brought about through structural changes in the organization following the Second Vatican Council, particularly *Lumen Gentium* that narrowed the gap between clergy and laity, and transformed the status and authority of priests. It was found that although the sacramental role of priests remains largely intact, their identity as religious and spiritual leaders is under challenge through greater participation in all areas of parish life by educated and theologically competent lay people. Results suggested that satisfaction with the priesthood is dependent upon a context in which priests are able to competently and appropriately express themselves as spiritual teachers, preachers and religious leaders.

It was argued that this competence rests on the attainment of an integrated priestly identity through establishment of a strong theology and faith and mature psychological development. Analysis of data revealed that more attention to spiritual growth is necessary if this integration is to occur in the majority of cases. The psychological resources of priests showed that sound organizational and structural supports are needed to assist priests in their personal as well as their professional lives. Analysis of personality factors showed that over half of the priests in this study were found to be vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress, while others had strong resources to cope with increased ambiguity and complexities in ministry (Chapter 4).

Second, the thesis examined cultural changes that challenged the institutional structure of the Church and some of its theological and ecclesiological positions, predominantly the hierarchical structure and teachings on sexual morality. Results of the analysis showed that there is little support for the obligation of celibacy among both clergy and laity, and that attainment of a stable celibacy again demands a maturity of psychosexual development. Qualitative analysis suggested that structural supports for this development were lacking in seminary formation programs, and it was argued that without a strong clerical commitment to obligatory celibacy, that education and training programs

currently being implemented in seminaries to address this deficit will be largely ineffectual. Although quantitative data were lacking, qualitative data suggested that the question of homosexually oriented priests is an important focus for Australian clergy currently. Evidence points to an increasing number of gay clergy in the organization and it was argued that the current orthodoxy in the organization contributes to stress and alienation of homosexually oriented priests.

Third, this thesis looked at clergy relationships with the church, bishops, parishioners, friends and colleagues. The complexity of these relationships was examined from the conscious level of functioning in ministry, and the unconscious or internal dimension that is directed towards the growth of psychological, emotional and spiritual maturity. A tension was found between priests holding more liberal views on some topics and the orthodox theological and ecclesiological position of the church, and this was shown through the analysis to contribute to dissatisfaction with priestly ministry. The authoritarian hierarchical structure of the church was found in this research to be a hindrance to overcoming such tension, as well as an impediment in the spiritual and psychological growth of clergy.

The research found a positive association between clergy who have difficulty with diocesan authority and thinking of resigning. Qualitative evidence suggested that the relationship between priests and bishops in the Australian context is not supportive of formation of a strong presbytery as proposed by Pope John Paul II (McGovern, 2002), and that many priests feel abandoned by bishops. It was argued that a strong relationship with their bishops is important for clergy, both in support of their ministry and of their spiritual and psychological development.

Key factors impacting on the relationships of priests with parishioners were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data. The decline in the authority of clergy was found to have occurred through increasing participation by laity in all areas of parish life, and the effect of revelations of sexual abuse by clergy. It was found that harmonious relationships with parishioners were positively associated with satisfaction with work,

and that most priests felt accepted by attenders and effective in ministry. The personality factors Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness were found to be significant predictors in the quality of the relationships between priests and parishioners, with 30% of clergy experiencing difficulty in these relationships.

Evidence that numbers of clergy experience difficulty with establishing and maintaining close, intimate relationships with others was supported by quantitative analysis in this research. The celibate male clerical system that is the context of the organization means that priests must find a delicate balance between the need to uphold the ecclesiological position of celibacy and satisfaction of their basic human needs for intimacy and closeness with others. Results of analysis in this thesis suggest that Australian clergy find it difficult to achieve this balance, and that although most report having a close supportive relationship, the nature and quality of these friendships is questionable. It was found that priests whose closest friend was with another priest spent very limited time with that person, leading to the conclusion in this research that the requirement of celibacy, and the policy of social segregation in seminaries, had a significant effect on the ability of many priests to form satisfying intimate relationships.

The theoretical perspective for understanding the unconscious, psychodynamic factors impacting on the spiritual and psychological dimensions of priestly life was the fourth theme investigated in this research. This theme was raised throughout the discussion as maturity in spiritual, psychological and psychosexual development was found to impact significantly on the way clergy cope in a system under pressure through cultural change, organizational change, and increasing tensions between clergy and the church, other clergy and laity. The thesis has shown that the way each priest experiences and meets the challenges posed by such pressures both contributes to his personal growth and wellbeing, and shapes its direction.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH

The primary limitation of the current research is that the CCLS 1996 and 2001 surveys of priests in parish ministry, which provided the majority of data for the project, were

conducted solely on active priests. This meant that information on factors leading to the resignation of priests, a significant factor in the decline in numbers of priests, could not be obtained.

A second limitation of the surveys was in the construction of the questionnaires, where the use of categorical variables meant that important multivariate techniques such as multiple regression could not be utilized in order to measure levels of association between variables relating to attitudes to celibacy, church pastoral strategies and relationships for professional and personal support.

A third limitation was the omission of questions relating to some of the most relevant themes impacting on the lives of priests today, such as clergy attitude to theological and ecclesiological issues and psychosexual identity and development. As a consequence, the effect of these factors could not be quantified. Some ambiguities with some questions were discussed in the analysis.

The same limitations apply to the data on attenders provided by the CCLS 1996, 2001, and NCLS surveys. Respondents were predominantly those Catholics who attended Mass at least once a week (85%). A clearer picture of the attitudes of catholic laity as a whole would have provided a more comprehensive analysis of attitudes of parishioners to pastoral strategies, church teaching and their priests, and pointed to reasons for the decline in active participation in parish affairs.

INDICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter 4

Research is needed to explore the types of spiritual practice and the amount of time spent by clergy engaged in spiritual disciplines and the experience of personal and spiritual growth as a result of these practices. Allied with this is the question of whether a sense of calling is affected by a deepening of spiritual practice.

More research is needed to investigate personality factors and the effects of these on the professional and personal lives of priests, specifically in whether the suggestion in this thesis that priests who are *high* on Neuroticism and *low* on conscientiousness are vulnerable to stress and burnout, depression, substance abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviour. Similarly, more research is needed to explore first, whether priests with *very high* Neuroticism and Extraversion in their profiles are more likely to have less impulse control and less inhibition than those with *average* or *low* Neuroticism. Second, research is needed to determine the combination of levels of these factors to accurately predict those who have a predisposition to overriding the sociability inherent in Extraversion with the impulsivity of extreme Extraversion and *high* Neuroticism. Development of appropriate Australian norms for the NEO-FFI would assist with the accuracy of comparative analysis of a specific sample such as that used in this research.

Chapter 5

Large gaps exist in the whole area of clergy sexuality, including psychosexual development, sexual orientations and the practice of celibacy due to a lack of sound statistical research. This research is difficult given the heterosexual, celibate context of the priesthood and the self-selective nature of the subject. However, the importance of research to bridge this gap cannot be overestimated in the current climate, where the whole question of clergy sexuality has been brought into the public arena through media revelations of clergy sexual abuse.

Chapter 6

A need for research that includes analysis of differences between active, religious and resigned priests and attitudes to pastoral strategies is indicated by results in this chapter. Also important is the need to include a larger sample of priests in the youngest age cohort to ascertain whether a trend towards conservatism found in the United States is happening in Australia.

Qualitative evidence of lack of support of clergy by bishops requires further research to quantify the level of this dissatisfaction and ascertain the seriousness of the problem. The structural and attitudinal aspects of the relationships between diocesan priests and bishops in the United States needs to be explored in order to explain the contrary results obtained by the CARA research and results of this study.

Chapter 7

Further research is needed to explore the nature and quality of the relationships between priests and parishioners and friends and colleagues. This research is needed first, to clarify questions raised by the finding in this research that younger priests are more likely than older priests to have close friendships with lay women; second, to ascertain the level of intimacy in the close relationships of priests; and third, to test whether Nestor's (1993) finding that priests who have friendships with women are higher than others in their capacity for intimacy, is replicated in the Australian experience.

CONCLUSION

This research contributes to current knowledge about the impact on clergy and the Catholic organization of the rapid social and cultural changes that have occurred over the 30 years since the Second Vatican Council. It bridges the gap between current research into Australian clergy as a whole and the unique position of Catholic clergy, and incorporates analysis of the impact of these changes on both the professional and personal dimensions of priestly life. In conjunction with situational factors, dispositional factors were analyzed with the use of the NEO-FFI personality instrument providing valuable information for evaluating selection, training and support for priests and seminarians. Finally, the thesis began collection of data about the attitude of priests to questions about celibacy and homosexuality and demonstrated the importance of these issues for future research.

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APPENDIX A

Survey of priests in parish ministry, May, 2001

Survey of Priests In Parish Ministry May, 2001

A project sponsored by the
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
in association with the
National Church Life Survey

This is the second in a series of surveys designed to help understand the current situation of priests engaged in parish ministry: their personal background, their changing role in the parish community, the consequences for them of rapid change in society and in the church; their well-being, the means of support they find most helpful. The survey also seeks the views of priests on a range of policy issues. It builds upon the findings of the 1996 survey, and seeks to deepen and extend them, and to register the change that has taken place over the last five years.

In a few cases, this survey will be received by a religious sister or a lay person appointed to pastoral responsibility for a parish, under the supervision of a non-resident parish priest. We do intend such administrators to respond to the survey; but please excuse us if we keep the questionnaire simple by addressing the questions throughout as if to clergy.

Perhaps you completed the Priests' Questionnaire in the Catholic Church Life Survey of 1996. Do we want to hear from you again this time? Definitely Yes! Some of your views have changed since then. You may be in a different situation. We are most interested in the change in priests' responses over the intervening five years. Some of the questions are the same as in the 1996 survey, but many are completely different.

*Before answering the questions, please read the Introduction
(it's on a blue page separate from the Questionnaire)*

*Please complete and return the questionnaire as soon as possible,
posting it by May 27 at the latest. Returns will then be processed all together.*

The survey is completely confidential; see the accompanying guarantee of confidentiality (gold page).

How to indicate your responses:

In most questions, you are asked to circle ONE number (and one only) next to the response option that best describes your position ⑤.

Thank you for your time and effort.
It is a valuable gift to the Church.

Preface

Pope John Paul II, in Pastores Dabo (Ch. 5) sees priestly life as consisting of: the human, the spiritual (or together, the personal) the pastoral and the intellectual (together, the professional).

Although by no means a comprehensive study of priestly life, the purpose of this survey is to consult priests themselves about some key aspects of their personal and professional lives, so that the Church may more effectively provide for the pastoral care of priests as persons, and facilitate their ministry as professionals. In addition, the views of priests on their parishes are an indispensable source of information for the continuing study of Australian Catholic Parishes.

The questionnaire consists of the following sections:

A. Your Background and approach to life

B. Your Spirituality

C. The Human Costs of Ministry

- Job Morale
- Sources of Stress
- Surviving and thriving

D. Your Pastoral Ministry

- Church Pastoral Strategies
- Your Pastoral Leadership
- Your Pastoral Practices
- Your Parish (*This vital information on the parish should be provided in only one person's response, if there are several priests responding from the same parish.*)

NB: QUESTION 13

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Did you complete a questionnaire similar to this in 1996, as part of the Catholic Church Life Survey?
(Please circle the ① beside Yes, or the ② beside No.)

1. Yes, I completed a questionnaire like this in 1996

If Yes, please write in:

Patron of the Parish where you were at that time: e.g. St. John's _____

Location of that 1996 parish: e.g. Harrowdene _____

Diocese: _____

Your role in that 1996 parish (Please circle one of the numbers below)

1. Parish Priest / Administrator
2. Assistant priest
3. Non-clerical pastoral administrator

2. No, I didn't complete a questionnaire like this in the 1996 Catholic Church Life Survey.

A. Your Background

1. In what year were you born? Please write in here: 19__

2. Where were you and your parents born?

Place of birth	Yourself	Your father	Your mother	Your ethnic group if different
Australia	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	2	2	2	2
Britain	3	3	3	3
Ireland (incl Nthn. Ireland)	4	4	4	4
Italy	5	5	5	5
Croatia	6	6	6	6
Poland	7	7	7	7
Malta	8	8	8	8
Netherlands	9	9	9	9
Germany (East or West)	10	10	10	10
Former USSR	11	11	11	11
Other Europe	12	12	12	12
Philippines	13	13	13	13
Vietnam	14	14	14	14
India or Sri Lanka	15	15	15	15
Other Asia	16	16	16	16
Lebanon	17	17	17	17
Chile	18	18	18	18
Other South America	19	19	19	19
Central America	20	20	20	20
North America	21	21	21	21
Africa / Middle East	22	22	22	22
Pacific Islands	23	23	23	23

If you regard yourself as belonging to a particular ethnic group not indicated by your birthplace or the birthplaces of your parents, circle the corresponding number in the fourth column above.

3. Your ecclesiastical status

1. Diocesan Priest
2. Religious priest
3. Religious sister or brother
4. Lay person

4. Gender (if religious sister or brother or lay person)

1. Female
2. Male

5. Your role in your present parish:

1. Parish Priest / Administrator
2. Assistant priest,
3. Non-clerical pastoral administrator

6. What is the highest educational qualification you have completed, apart from your seminary studies?

3. Completed secondary school
4. Trade certificate
5. Diploma or Assoc. Diploma
6. Bachelor degree from university or equivalent institution
7. Post graduate diploma
8. Master's degree
9. Doctorate

7. What were the religious denominations of your parents and yourself when you were growing up ?

Denomination	Father	Mother	Yourself
Catholic	1	1	1
Anglican (C of E)	2	2	2
Uniting (incl. Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational)	3	3	3
Presbyterian	4	4	4
Orthodox	5	5	5
Baptist	6	6	6
Pentecostal (e.g. Assemblies of God)	7	7	7
Another Christian church	8	8	8
A non-Christian religion	9	9	9
No religion	10	10	10

8. Church attendance of yourself and your parents when you were growing up.

	Father	Mother	Yourself
Hardly ever / special occasions only	1	1	1
Less than once a month	2	2	2
Once a month	3	3	3
Two or three times a month	4	4	4
Usually every week	5	5	5
More than once a week	6	6	6

9. When you were growing up, how often did your family pray together as a family?

1. We did not pray together as a family.
2. Occasionally
3. About once a week
4. Several times a week
5. Most days

10. Your relationship with each parent, when you were growing up:

(Please circle one number in each row)

	Not close						Extremely close
Your Mother:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Your Father:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. When you were growing up, did you feel that your parents' faith, or style of religion, was joyful?

(Please indicate the extent by circling a number on each row)

	<u>How</u>						
	Not at all joyful					Extremely joyful	
Your Mother's:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Your Father's:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. How long have you been a priest, or pastoral administrator (whether religious or lay) ?

1. 0-4 yrs. 2. 5-9 yrs. 3. 10-19 yrs. 4. 20-29 yrs. 5. 30-39 yrs. 6. 40-49 yrs. 7. 50+ yrs.

13. Your approach to life

Please answer every question

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I like to have a lot of people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not a worrier	1	2	3	4	5
I don't like to waste my time daydreaming.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.	1	2	3	4	5
I keep my belongings clean and neat.	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel inferior to others.	1	2	3	4	5
I laugh easily.	1	2	3	4	5
Once I find the right way to do something I stick to it.	1	2	3	4	5
I often get into arguments with my family and co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time.	1	2	3	4	5
When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't consider myself especially 'light-hearted'.	1	2	3	4	5
I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature.	1	2	3	4	5
Some people think I'm selfish and egotistical.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not a very methodical person.	1	2	3	4	5
I rarely feel lonely or blue.	1	2	3	4	5
I really enjoy talking to people.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to perform all the tasks assigned to me conscientiously.	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel tense and jittery.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to be where the action is.	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others' intentions.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a clear set of goals and work towards them in an orderly fashion.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I feel completely worthless.	1	2	3	4	5
I usually prefer to do things alone.	1	2	3	4	5
I often try new and foreign foods.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that most people will take advantage of you if you let them.	1	2	3	4	5
I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.	1	2	3	4	5
I rarely feel fearful or anxious.	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel as if I'm bursting with energy.	1	2	3	4	5
I seldom notice the moods or feelings that different environments produce.	1	2	3	4	5
Most people I know like me.	1	2	3	4	5
I work hard to accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
I often get angry at the way people treat me.	1	2	3	4	5
I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe we should look to our religious authorities for decisions on moral issues.	1	2	3	4	5
Some people think of me as cold and calculating.	1	2	3	4	5
When I make a commitment, I can always be counted on to follow through.	1	2	3	4	5
Too often, when things go wrong, I get discouraged and feel like giving up.	1	2	3	4	5
I am not a cheerful optimist.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work of art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm hard-headed and tough-minded in my attitudes.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I'm not as dependable or reliable, as I should be.	1	2	3	4	5
I am seldom sad or depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
My life is fast-paced.	1	2	3	4	5
I have little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition.	1	2	3	4	5
I generally try to be thoughtful and considerate.	1	2	3	4	5
I am a productive person who always gets the job done.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
I am a very active person.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lot of intellectual curiosity.	1	2	3	4	5
If I don't like people I let them know it.	1	2	3	4	5
I never seem to be able to get organized.	1	2	3	4	5
At times I have been so ashamed I just wanted to hide.	1	2	3	4	5
I would rather go my own way than be the leader of others.	1	2	3	4	5
I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
If necessary, I am willing to manipulate people to get what I want.	1	2	3	4	5
I strive for excellence in everything I do.	1	2	3	4	5

B. Your Spirituality

14a. Apart from Mass and Prayer of the Church, how often do you spend some time praying or meditating by yourself, or reading the Scriptures?

1. Every day, or most days
2. A few times a week
3. About once a week
4. Occasionally
5. Hardly ever
7. Never

14b. How much time do you spend in private prayer or meditation ? *(Please write in)*

About _____ hours per week

14c. Is this less or more than:-

(Please Circle one number in each row)

- | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| 10 years ago? | 1. Less | 2. More |
| 5 years ago ? | 1. Less | 2. More |

15. How often do you pray spontaneously during the day while doing other things?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Almost all the time

16. Over the past twelve months, do you feel you have grown in the depth of your commitment to your faith?

1. No real growth.
2. Some growth
3. Much growth, mainly through working in this parish.
4. Much growth, mainly through other groups.
5. Much growth, mainly through my own private activity

17. Even those who have committed their lives to God and the ministry of the Gospel can find at times that belief in God involves a real struggle of faith. Do you agree or disagree that the following are things that challenge the faith of a priest? Please give your view on each question.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Tend to Disagree

4 = Tend to Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

The evil and injustice in the world make faith in God a struggle for a priest at times.

SD D TD TA A SA

1 2 3 4 5 6

Science has explained so many things which were once seen as religious mysteries; this makes faith in God a struggle for a priest at times

1 2 3 4 5 6

Many intelligent people don't believe, and our society has little respect for religion; this makes faith in God a struggle for a priest at times.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Experiencing great pain or sorrow makes faith in God a struggle for a priest at times.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Feeling that life has no meaning makes faith in God a struggle for a priest at times.

1 2 3 4 5 6

18. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Tend to Disagree

4 = Tend to Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

SD D TD TA A SA

We should be hesitant about easy certainties in matters of faith.

1 2 3 4 5 6

The suffering of the innocent makes it more difficult to believe in a loving and all-powerful God.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Faith in God calls us to accept truths we can't fully understand and can't prove.

1 2 3 4 5 6

As I grow and change through experience, I expect my religious beliefs also to grow and change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Even religious views we strongly disagree with contain some truth we can learn from.

1 2 3 4 5 6

I believe God's plan for the world will work out; but I don't really understand how.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Sometimes it looks as if God doesn't care--the ruthless get stronger, and the poor are oppressed.

1 2 3 4 5 6

By questioning things you believed when younger, you grow to a deeper and surer faith.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Even with true faith, we can experience moments of difficulty, uncertainty or hesitation.

1 2 3 4 5 6

C. The Human Costs of Ministry

19. How many separate 'mass centres' are there within the parish (even if some of them now have only Communion services)?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

20. How long have you been (continuously) in this parish ?

1. Less than one year
2. 1-2 years
3. 3-4 years
4. 5-9 years
5. 10-14 years
6. 15-20 years
7. More than 20 years

21. Approximately how many hours in a typical week do you spend in work related to this parish?

1. 10 hours or less
2. 11 to 20 hours
3. 21 to 30 hours
4. 31 to 40 hours
5. 41 to 50 hours
6. 51 to 60 hours
7. 61 to 70 hours
8. Over 70 hours

Job Morale

This section includes a range of questions about how you feel about your life and ministry. It includes a set of questions designed to help understand better the level of stresses and pressures on clergy. While individual responses will remain completely anonymous, the overall results will provide a vital picture for us all. It is important that you attempt every question.

(For each question, circle the number from 1 to 6 that best describes you on the scale.)

22. The extent to which I am feeling negative or cynical about the people for whom I work (despairing of their ability to change and grow).

Optimistic about attenders

Cynical about attenders

- 1 2 3 4 5 6

23. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy my work and look forward to it regularly).

High internal energy for my work

Loss of enthusiasm for my job

- 1 2 3 4 5 6

24. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the parish.

Highly invested emotionally

Withdrawn and detached

- 1 2 3 4 5 6

25. The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience.

Cheerfulness, high energy much of the time

Tired and irritated

- 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. The extent to which my humour has a cynical, biting tone.
Humour reflects a positive joyful attitude Humour cynical and sarcastic
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
27. The extent to which I find myself spending less and less time with attenders.
Eager to be involved with attenders Increasing withdrawal from attenders
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
28. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with attenders.
Remaining open and flexible with attenders' needs and wants Becoming more fixed and rigid in dealing with attenders
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
29. The extent to which I feel supported in my work.
Feeling fully supported Feeling alone and isolated
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me.
Reasonably successful in accomplishing tasks Mainly frustrated in accomplishing tasks
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
31. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can't explain.
Generally optimistic Sad much of the time
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
32. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints (e.g. aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds).
Feeling healthy most of the time Constantly irritated by physical ailments
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
33. The extent to which I blame others for problems I encounter.
Minimal blaming or scapegoating Others are usually to blame for the malaise I'm feeling
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
34. The extent to which I feel guilt about what is not happening in this parish or with attenders.
Guilt free Feeling guilty much of the time
- 1 2 3 4 5 6

35. The extent to which I am biding my time until retirement or a change of job.
Highly engaged

Doing what I must to get by
in my work

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. The extent to which I feel used up and spent.
High source of
energy for my work

Feeling empty and
depleted

1 2 3 4 5 6

Sources of difficulty in life and work

*Here are a few issues of concern to some in their ministries.
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not Applic.
37. I feel drained in fulfilling my functions in the parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I am less patient with people in my parish than I used to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions in this parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I find it hard to keep my work life separate from my private life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. The parish and I disagree on my role as a priest.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. It is difficult to find suitable people to fill roles in parish life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. I often think that I am not the right kind of person for this parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. Too much of my time is wasted on tasks (e.g. administration) not central to my role as a priest.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. I often find I have a lack of time for recreation, relaxation or personal reflection/ prayer/meditation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I have concerns about my present/future financial situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. I do not feel accepted here by attenders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. I find it difficult dealing with diocesan authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. I find dealing with difficult or critical parishioners hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. Where I live leaves me feeling isolated from social and cultural events I would enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. The need to move as part of my ministry has made it hard to make and keep close friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. I find it hard to deal with my colleagues in ministry.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Surviving and Thriving

53. To what degree are the following helpful to you in reducing stress levels or enhancing your wellbeing?

(Please respond to EACH question)

	Extremely helpful					Not at all helpful
Talking with someone else about concerns in my parish	1	2	3	4	5	6
Going on recreational leave	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spending quality time with my family	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spending time alone (e.g. listening to music, in the bush)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Getting out, physical exercise or going to cultural events	1	2	3	4	5	6
My prayer life	1	2	3	4	5	6
Delegating responsibilities for tasks in my parish	1	2	3	4	5	6
Realistically reorganizing my time and activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Doing additional training/workshops/study	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other (Please write in) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

54. With whom do you find it most useful to talk about concerns regarding your parish?

(Circle up to TWO options)

1. Assistant priest(s) in the parish (if any)
2. Member(s) of my family
3. The bishop
4. Other priests
5. Non-priest friends
6. A counsellor
7. A spiritual director
8. Diocesan resource people
9. Other
10. I do not find it useful to talk about my concerns

55. Do you have someone with whom you are able to be completely honest, who encourages and supports you in your ministry role? If so, which of the following describes that person? (If you have more than one, choose the most significant one)

(Circle ONE only)

1. Another priest
2. A woman religious
3. A layman
4. A laywoman
5. No, I don't have anyone like that

56. In the last twelve months, have you:

Visited an art gallery or museum?

1. No 2. Yes, once / twice 3. More often

Gone to a live ballet or dance performance
(not including school performances):

1. No 2. Yes, once / twice 3. More often

Gone to a classical concert or opera performance
(not including school performances)

1. No 2. Yes, once / twice 3. More often

Engaged in any creative musical or artistic or
literary work of your own?

1. No 2. Yes, once / twice 3. More often

Attended a football, basketball, cricket or other major
sporting event (not incl. school or parish events.)

1. No 2. Yes, once / twice 3. More often

57. Coping with Stressful Problems:

To respond to these items, consider a difficult or stressful event that has occurred in the last 3 months, then circle YES or NO in relation to how you dealt with it (you can circle as many options as appropriate). This event need not have occurred at work; any stressful situation will do.

	Yes	No
I considered several alternatives for handling the problem	1	2
I talked with a friend.	1	2
I didn't worry about it; I figured everything would probably work out fine	1	2
I drew on my past experiences: I was in a similar position before	1	2
I participated in more physical exercise	1	2
I got busy with other things in order to keep my mind off the problem	1	2
I kept my feelings to myself	1	2
I took some positive action	1	2
I prayed for guidance and strength	1	2
I tried to find out more about the situation	1	2
I prepared for the worst	1	2
I took things one step at a time	1	2

58. Apart from the time of your annual vacation, do you engage in any of the following recreational pursuits?

Playing sport, gym workouts, swimming, walking or other physical exercise.

How many hours in an average month?

1. None 2. 1-4 3. 5-9 4. 10-14 5. 15-19 6. 20-24 7. 25-29 8. 30 or more

Reading.

How many hours in an average month?

1. None 2. 1-4 3. 5-9 4. 10-14 5. 15-19 6. 20-24 7. 25-29 8. 30 or more

What kinds of books or magazines do you favour?

1. Light entertainment 2. Heavier fare: e.g. literature, politics, current affairs, history

Going to the cinema or watching a video.

How many times in an average month?

1. None 2. 1-2 3. 3 - 4 4. 5 or more

Spending a day with fellow priests?

How many times in an average month?

1. None 2. 1-2 3. 3-4 4. 5 or more

Watching television.

How many hours in an average week?

1. None 2. 1-4 3. 5-9 4. 10-14 5. 15-19 6. 20 or more

Listening to music.

How many hours in an average week?

1. None 2. 1-4 3. 5-9 4. 10-14 5. 15-19 6. 20 or more

Spending an evening or a few hours with one or a small group of priest-colleagues (not for work).

How many times in an average month?

1. None 2. 1-2 3. 3-4 4. 5 or more

59. I entered the ordained ministry with a strong sense of vocation.

1. Strongly agree 4. Disagree
2. Agree 5. Strongly disagree
3. Neutral or unsure 6. Not applicable

60. I still have a strong sense of vocation to the ordained ministry.

1. Strongly agree 4. Disagree
2. Agree 5. Strongly disagree
3. Neutral or unsure 6. Not applicable

61. How would you rate your overall effectiveness as a priest?

Very low Very high
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

62. In general, how stressed do you feel in your vocation as a priest?

Very low stress Very high stress
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

63. How often do you think about leaving the ministry?

Never Constantly
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

D. Pastoral Ministry

Church Pastoral Strategies

64. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which appointments of priests to parishes are made, and with the amount of consultation that takes place?

1. I am satisfied
2. I can't decide
3. I am dissatisfied
9. I have no opinion / Don't know.

65. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which appointments of bishops to dioceses are made, and with the amount of consultation that takes place?

1. I am satisfied
2. I can't decide
3. I am dissatisfied
9. I have no opinion / Don't know

66. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your opinion on the requirement of celibacy for priests?
1. It is of great benefit to the Church
 2. The Church would be equally well served if celibacy were not required, but optional
 3. I can't decide
 4. Although the celibacy requirement has been of great benefit in the past, it is not suited to today's circumstances.
 5. Requiring priests to be celibate has overall had a negative impact
 9. I have no opinion / Don't know

67. The following have been proposed as appropriate strategies to respond to the pastoral need arising from the declining number of priests in Australia. Please write in a number at left, number them in order of your preference, with '1' indicating your first preference. Leave an option blank if you have no opinion on it, or number it '0' if you are opposed to it.

- ___ Encourage Australian Catholics to pray for vocations, and renew the family piety which nurtures them
- ___ Concentrate on building vital parishes and communities which will be a source of vocations
- ___ Admit more men to the permanent diaconate
- ___ Ordain a member of the parish community, with minimal training, solely to preside at Eucharist in that community
- ___ Select and prepare suitable lay ministers to carry out the pastoral functions permitted to them by Canon law
- ___ Readmit to active ministry suitable candidates from among those who have resigned from the ministry
- ___ Recruit priests from overseas
- ___ Remove the obligation to celibacy so that those who do not have this calling may enter the priesthood

68. Some authors writing on the psychological development of priests emphasise the need for genuine friendship and intimacy with women (precluding, of course, genital intimacy). They argue that this enhances emotional health, and thus ministry, and far from threatening celibacy, can support it. Do you agree?

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

69. What do you think of the way church leaders are pursuing the goal of Christian unity?

(Circle one response)

1. There have already been too many compromises made in the name of Christian unity; Catholic bishops and ecumenical groups should work for unity with other Christians in the one church founded by Christ.
2. In the pursuit of the unity Christ wills, the Catholic Church should be prepared to modify even structures such as the role of the Pope, without sacrificing any essential truths.
3. The era of separate denominations has passed; Christians are one in spirit, and the various Christian traditions each have their own value; it is time to remove any rules preventing Christians from receiving Communion in each other's churches.
4. I do not feel well enough informed to offer an opinion.
5. The question does not matter to me.

Your Pastoral Leadership

70. What aspects do you ACTUALLY spend most time on in your present role? (Circle up to TWO options)

1. Teaching people about the Christian faith
2. Parish Administration
3. Converting others to the faith
4. Supervising the pastoral work of the parish
5. Visiting, counselling and helping people
6. Conducting worship/administering the sacraments
7. Tackling social injustices
8. Providing visions and goals for the future
9. Providing prayer/being a spiritual role model

71. What do you think **SHOULD BE** your main roles? (Circle up to TWO options)

1. Teaching people about the Christian faith
2. Parish Administration
3. Converting others to the faith
4. Supervising the pastoral work of the parish
5. Visiting, counselling and helping people
6. Conducting worship/administering the sacraments
7. Tackling social injustices
8. Providing visions and goals for the future
9. Providing prayer/being a spiritual role model

72. Which of the following would come closest to describing your style of leadership? (Circle ONE)

1. Tends to take charge
2. Inspires people to take action
3. Is guided by the goals that parishioners have had a say in setting
4. Expects the parishioners themselves to take most of the initiative

73. Where would you put yourself between task-oriented and people-oriented?

Task-oriented								People-oriented
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

74. Do you tend to prefer to maintain or change the situation in which you find yourself?

Maintain situation								Change situation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

75. Because of differing natural abilities, formation and experience, different priests excel in different aspects of pastoral leadership.

In the questions below, the numbers 1 – 5 mean:-

- "This is not at all my forte" = 1
 "I don't manage this as well as I'd like to" = 2
 "I'm fair enough at this" = 3
 "I think I do this reasonably well" = 4
 "I think my gifts, such as they are, lie in this area" = 5

To what extent do you feel you possess the following qualities?

Clearly explains Catholic beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
Is a man of vision, close to God, an inspiring leader.	1	2	3	4	5
Is a good administrator, organiser and planner; gets things done.	1	2	3	4	5
Welcomes the active participation of lay people in the life of the parish e.g. in preparing the liturgy, starting various activities on their own initiative. He listens to their ideas and takes notice of their advice.	1	2	3	4	5
Encourages people to use their gifts and talents	1	2	3	4	5

76. In making decisions, priests are influenced by different concerns. Obviously, you will be concerned about all of the following; but usually, you will tend to emphasise one aspect more than the other. Please indicate your emphasis on the following scale:
(1 means "I am less concerned about this"; 5 means "I am very concerned about this".)

	Less Concerned			More Concerned	
Doing things in a way that respects what we have learned from our tradition.	1	2	3	4	5
Doing what works best to meet today's needs after consulting the parish community and making plans.	1	2	3	4	5
Doing what comes from your own prayerful and inspiring vision of what God wants.	1	2	3	4	5

Your Pastoral Practices

78. You may value many different styles of music at Mass, or you may prefer to have none. Which of the following do you find most helps the people of your parish to enter into the Mass? Which creates the best atmosphere for that?

(Circle one)

1. Traditional Hymns
2. Hymns from more recent times
3. Hymns by today's composers
4. Contemplative chants (e.g. Taizé)
5. Choir singing
6. Instrumental music
7. Quiet—no music or singing
9. Don't know

79. Does the celebration have a high quality of beauty (e.g. in decoration of interior and altar, care of vestments, trained and competent readers and musicians, quality of speech, music, movement)?

1. Very beautiful; this is a high priority for me
2. Quite good, especially on special occasions
3. Medium; some things better than others
4. Not particularly beautiful; other elements of liturgy are more important to me
5. Not at all 'beautiful'; this is not a priority for me

80. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your view on participation in liturgy by readers, commentators, singers and musicians?

(Circle one number.)

1. The important thing is that people be encouraged to participate in these ways; if people want to have a go they should be allowed to; the 'quality' of their speaking, playing or singing is not important; it's not an opera performance; God sees the heart.
2. Participation is important; but so is quality, so that the hearers are helped and uplifted, not distracted or put off by aesthetically grating performances.
3. Those who take these leadership roles in liturgy are there to serve the celebration and the people, not primarily for their own fulfilment; I'd rather not have them participating if they can't do it adequately. I try to provide training for readers, and to make sure the selection and quality of music, and abilities of musicians and singers are as good as possible, given our limitations.

81. Which of the following comes closest to expressing your style of celebrating Mass (apart from the homily)
(Circle one number.)

1. Serious, reverent, unhurried; emphasis on sacredness
2. Brisk and business-like; emphasis on not keeping people too long
3. Casual, often humorous; emphasis on putting people at ease
4. Warm and personal; emphasis on involving all the people present in a communal celebration
5. None of the above

82. About what percentage of your ministry time is directed to each of the following groups?
(Circle one number in each row.)

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
Active attenders?	1	2	3	4	5
Fringe attenders?	1	2	3	4	5
The wider church?	1	2	3	4	5
The wider society?	1	2	3	4	5

83. If a parishioner ceases to attend altogether, or drops back from weekly attendance to a pattern of lesser regularity, do you (or someone else from the parish) make a pastoral visit to the home?

(Circle the number of the option that applies.)

1. Always
2. Usually
3. Sometimes
4. Not often
5. Never

84. Reasons why Catholics (including some who have not long been initiated) are attending less frequently or not at all.

(You will well understand the need to get an Australia-wide picture of this issue based on first-hand pastoral experience)

If some of your parishioners have stopped coming to Mass (not because they moved away), or notably decreased the frequency of their attendance (e.g. from weekly to once or twice a month or less often), and you have personal knowledge of the principal reason in individual cases, please write beside each of the categories below, the number of people from this parish who, in the last 5-10 years, decreased or ceased attendance for this reason. Please do not guess numbers or reasons. Tell us only about people you know about.

1. Married a non-Catholic and no longer came (*how many can you recall to whom this applies?*)
Please write in the number here : _____
2. Divorced; felt awkward and unsupported in parish community: : _____
3. Divorced and remarried; embarrassed to come and not receive communion : _____
4. Living de facto; felt moral lifestyle incompatible : _____
5. Uncomfortable with church teaching on divorce, abortion, birth control, etc : _____
6. Objected to church attitudes to / treatment of, women : _____
7. Complained of unfulfilled spiritual needs : _____
8. Secular worldview; not finding religion or worship meaningful : _____
9. Children or youth rejecting parental values and authority, and ceasing attendance; : _____
10. People having to work on weekends : _____

11. Other commitments at the weekend: (especially where both parents work during the week)—e.g. spending time with spouse or children, taking children to sport etc., playing sport, doing chores around the house _____
 12. People away on weekends (visiting relatives etc.); don't go to Mass elsewhere _____
 13. Initiate who could not accept some Catholic beliefs _____
 14. Initiate or newcomer who found the parish 'hard to break into', 'impersonal'; not very welcoming, accepting, or interested in new members _____
 15. Wanted 'warmer' style of community and worship; more accessible clergy; found them elsewhere _____
 16. RCIA initiate who knew few people in parish apart from RCIA team _____
 17. An active person who felt his/her initiatives rejected _____
 18. Someone who suffered 'burnout' from excessive involvement _____
 19. Experienced conflict with priest, parish staff, school staff or parishioner(s) _____
 20. People previously at home, now working, who no longer need churchgoing to fulfil their social needs _____
 21. Resented authority, being told what to do _____
 22. Some other reason(s) you know of not listed here _____
- Please write in these reason(s):
-
-

Your Parish

(Note: This section should be completed only once for each parish, usually by the parish priest or the parish pastoral administrator. If other priests from the same parish are also responding, they should not enter this information.)

85. Number of attenders at weekend Masses (or services in place of Mass) in this parish in 2001 _____
(Count everyone, including babies. If no official count has been done, average May 13 & 20)
86. Count for 2000 (if no official count, your estimate) 2000 _____
87. Same for these years 1999 _____
88. 1998 _____
89. 1997 _____
90. 1996 _____
91. 1990 _____
92. (If there are parish or diocesan records for these earlier years, the information 1980 _____
93. would be most valuable to the research project.) 1970 _____

94. How many parishioners that you know of have stopped attending Mass altogether in the last 12 months?

1. 0-4 2. 5-9 3. 10-14 4. 15-19 5. 20-24 6. 25-29 7. 30-39 8. 40-49

9. More than this – write the number here: _____

95. How many parishioners that you know of have notably decreased their frequency of attendance (e.g. from weekly to once or twice a month or less often), in the past 12 months?

1. 0-4 2. 5-9 3. 10-14 4. 15-19 5. 20-24 6. 25-29 7. 30-39 8. 40-49
9. More than this – write the number here: _____

96. What percentage of parents from your parish who have children in the parish primary school attend mass more or less regularly?

If your parish and school are of modest size, and you have access to a list of enrolments from your parish, and know who attends, please count. If this is not at all feasible, please consult, and provide a considered estimate.

Please write the percentage here: _____

97. Could you please have your RCIA coordinator consult the records of the program, and write in the following figures:

Total no. of non-Catholics who entered the parish RCIA program during the 5 years 1995-2000: _____

Total no. of entrants who were initiated _____

Total no. who are still practising more or less regularly _____

98. Some Parish financial details

The purpose of asking this information is to estimate the parish financial burden, related to parishioners' economic status, and so calculate a measure of the 'relative generosity' of giving which is comparable across parishes of different kinds. From this comparison we can try to discover the factors that influence this generosity. (Please answer for the last complete financial year. Express all figures in Thousands of Dollars)

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Total parish income from all sources in last complete financial year
(Not including diocesan subsidies or contributions for the support of priests.) | \$ _____,000 |
| 2. Parish debt | |
| parish component | \$ _____,000 |
| parish school component | \$ _____,000 |
| TOTAL | \$ _____,000 |
| 3. Amount paid in last complete financial year to service parish debt: | \$ _____,000 |
| 4. Total amount of parish income which was spent on parish school | \$ _____,000 |
| 5. What percentage of the financial support for its priest(s) is the parish able to provide?
(presuming that if this is not 100%, any deficit is made up from a diocesan source) | _____ % |

Comments Invited:

By all means comment on the questionnaire itself if something annoying or neglected is on your mind; but it would be particularly valuable to hear your thoughts, freed from the constraints of the question and answer format, on either or both of two issues:

- 1) *What do you think are **the most important steps forward** that the Church, or priests, or other members of Christ's Faithful, should take in this area of **ministry** ?*
- 2) *What do you think are the most important things to be done (and by whom) to support the **personal** (human and spiritual) **well-being of priests**, their **professional** (pastoral and intellectual) **competence**, and their **practice of ministry** among the people of God?*

APPENDIX B

**Ethics approval from the Australian Catholic University
Human Research Ethics Committee.**



11

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
Human Research Ethics Committee



Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor:	Rev Dr Michael Mason	Campus: St Patrick's
Co-Investigator:	Prof Barry Fallon	Campus: St Patrick's
Student Researcher:	Ms Jane Power	Campus: St Patrick's

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project: Organisational, professional and personal roles in an era of change: the case of the Catholic clergy

for the period: 18.9.2001 - 01.09.2002

Human Research Ethics Committee Register Number: V2001/02-15

subject to the following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999):

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants;

and subject to the following special conditions being met, as stipulated by the Human Research Ethics Committee:

Research Design and Procedures

- The Committee sought clarification in relation to the method of recruitment. How would the participants be selected?

Gathering, security, disposal of data; dissemination of results

- The Committee sought clarification as to the different levels of reporting for this project, and the dissemination of results. Which 'descriptive data' will be reported, and to whom?
It was noted that this Project was part of an APA(I) Grant, with the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference as Industry Partners.

Confidentiality, anonymity, privacy

- The Committee was concerned that, if individual profiles are to be constructed, the identity of some of the participants might be able to be deduced by readers of the report/s. If there are any such limits to confidentiality, these should be identified in the Information Letter. In view of the possible reporting requirements of this project, it is especially important that the identity of participants be protected. The Committee queried whether it was necessary for the actual identity of the participants to be known to anyone other than the Student Researcher. The Student Researcher's discussion of her findings with her Supervisors could be conducted using pseudonyms.

Information Letter to Participants

- Please include a statement informing participants that this research forms part of a project that is co-sponsored by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- Please include a statement informing participants about the variety of levels of reporting for this project.
- Please include a statement informing participants about any limitations to confidentiality, or provide a more detailed description of how complete confidentiality will be maintained.
- The full name of 'St Patrick's Campus' is to be used.
- In light of the outcome of the consideration recommended above (i.e., that pseudonyms should be used in discussions with Supervisors), reference to the identities of participants being known to Supervisors might be removed.
- The letter should be redrafted in the second person.

The Committee approved the application, subject to the local Deputy Chair confirming that the above matters have been addressed satisfactorily by the Supervisor and the Student Researcher.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Administrative Officer (Research and Ethics).

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Administrative Officer (Research and Ethics) within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed:

Raymond Canning
(Chair, HREC)

Date: *24-09-01*

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
OR BY THE SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT RESEARCHER

The Principal Investigator, or the Supervisor and Student Researcher, are to sign, date and return this form to the local Administrative Officer (Research and Ethics). Evidence of compliance with any special conditions set by the HREC should be provided when the form is returned. Please note that data-collection must not commence until the stipulated special conditions have been met.

The date when I/we expect to commence contact with human participants or access their records is:

I/We hereby declare that I/We am/are aware of the principles and requirements governing research involving human participants, as expressed in the Human Research Ethics Committee's *Guidelines*, and I/We agree to the standard and special conditions (if applicable) stated above.

Signed:

[Principal Investigator or Supervisor]

Date:

Signed:

[Student Researcher]

Date:

APPENDIX C

**Letter to the Chair of the Australian Catholic University
Human Research Ethics Committee.**

ACU
St. Patrick's Campus
27 Sep 2001

Professor Raymond Canning
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee
Signadou Campus
Australian Catholic University, ACT.

Re: ACU HREC Approval form for project: "Organisational, professional and personal roles in an era of change: the case of the Catholic clergy"
Register Number: V2001/02-15
Student Researcher: Jane Power.

Dear Professor Canning,

Thank you and the ACU HREC for the Approval Form received today.

I note the standard conditions as stipulated in the *National statement on Ethical Conduct in Humans* (1999), and agree to comply with points (i) and (ii) as outlined.

The following information is supplied to fulfil the special conditions stipulated by the HREC. Copies of this response are being sent to the required persons.

1. Research Design and Procedures

Method of recruitment: "How would the participants be selected?"

The current and immediate past Directors of Ministry to Priests in the Archdiocese of Melbourne have been asked to nominate 20 priests to be approached by the researcher with a request for an interview.

2. Gathering, security, disposal of data; dissemination of results

a) "What are the different levels of reporting, and dissemination of results?"

One requirement of the project is for reports to dioceses and to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The thesis itself will, it is hoped, be published, and various articles and papers produced.

b) "Which 'descriptive data' will be reported, and to whom?"

- i) Descriptive statistics on the aggregated interview findings will be reported to readers of the above reports / publications;
- ii) Non-aggregated findings, such as verbatim quotes (with the specific permission of the interviewee) or paraphrased statements, will be reported to all of the above, ensuring that they are free of any possible identifying information.

3. Confidentiality, anonymity, privacy.

a) "If individual profiles are to be constructed, the identity of some of the participants might be able to be deduced by readers of the reports."

It is indispensable in qualitative research to be able to discuss "cases" (perhaps this is what the HREC means by 'individual profiles'). Sometimes a "case" will be an amalgam of characteristics of individuals, sometimes it may refer directly to one individual. But it has been throughout a fundamental concern of the researcher and her supervisors that **no** identification of any individual should be remotely possible. Readers will receive no information on the identity, geographical location, diocese or parish of subjects. Reports to dioceses will not include discussion of any real individual cases drawn from that diocese.

b) "The Student Researcher's discussion of her findings with her Supervisors could be conducted using pseudonyms."

This procedure will be adopted.

4. Information Letter to Participants

A revised Information Letter is attached which complies with the six points raised under 'special conditions' in the Approval form.

Sincerely,

Jane Power
Student Researcher
St. Patrick's Campus
Australian Catholic University

cc. J. Mushin, Administrative Officer (Research) , St. Patrick's Campus.
Deputy Chair, HREC, St. Patrick's Campus
Chair, HREC Expedited Review Panel.

APPENDIX D

Letter to participants



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
Information Letter to Participants

ORGANISATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ROLES IN AN ERA OF
CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY

Principal Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Michael Mason (S.T.T.M.Phil.PhD.)

Co-supervisor: Professor Barry Fallon (B.D., B.A.Hons.,M.A., PhD.)

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Jane Power

This research project is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. at the Australian Catholic University, St Patrick's Campus, Melbourne, and is co-sponsored by the Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The purpose of this study is to investigate the professional and personal experience of Parish Priests and Assistant Priests currently engaged in parish ministry in Australia, in order to better understand the nature and effects of the current changes in the church. As well as inclusion in the Ph.D. thesis, reports on the findings of this research will be provided to dioceses and to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, ensuring that there is no possibility of identifying any individual respondent.

Your name has been suggested to me by the current and immediate past Directors of Ministry to Priests in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, as a possible participant in the project. You are asked to give approximately an hour and a half of your time to respond to a semi-structured interview, and have your responses tape-recorded. To ensure complete privacy and confidentiality, I will be the only person who knows the identities of the participants, and the interviews will not be permanently recorded. Readers of the above reports will receive no information on your identity, geographical location, diocese, or parish.

It is hoped that the interview will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your experience of your vocation in both your professional and personal lives, and provide a vehicle for expression of issues of importance to you. This contribution will be a valuable complement to the quantitative data collected by the 1996 and 2001 CCLS surveys on Catholic clergy, and will provide greater depth to understanding the effects on clergy of current changes within the church. Further, it is anticipated that from this understanding, organisational structures necessary to support and nurture clergy can be articulated.

As participation in this research is entirely voluntary, I understand that you are free to discontinue the interview at any time without giving any reason for doing so.

Any questions regarding this project can be directed to the student researcher and /or the Principal Supervisor at the following address and phone number:

Rev. Dr. Michael Mason,
ACU,
St. Patrick's Campus,
Locked Bag 4115,
Fitzroy MDC 3065
Phone (03) 9953 3161

Preliminary results of the study will be available in late 2002 or early 2003, and will be sent to you if requested.

This study has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee At Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study, or a query that the Researcher or Supervisor has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee:

Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065

Tel: (03) 9953 3157
Fax: (03) 9953 3305

Any complaint will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Informed Consent form, retain one for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher.

Yours Sincerely,

Jane Power

APPENDIX E

Consent forms



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM
(COPY TO BE RETAINED BY PARTICIPANT)

ORGANISATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ROLES IN
AN ERA OF CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY

Principal Research Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Michael Mason.

Co-Supervisor: Professor Barry Fallon.

Student Researcher: Jane Power

I.....have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a way that doesn't identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT.....

SIGNATURE.....DATE.....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR.....

DATE.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER.....

DATE.....

Two copies of the consent form are required: one copy for the participant to sign and keep for their records and one copy to sign to be returned to the researcher.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM
(COPY TO BE RETURNED TO STUDENT RESEARCHER)

ORGANISATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ROLES IN
AN ERA OF CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY

Principal Research Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Michael Mason.

Co-Supervisor: Professor Barry Fallon.

Student Researcher: Jane Power

I.....have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a way that doesn't identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT.....

SIGNATURE.....DATE.....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR.....

DATE.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER.....

DATE.....

Two copies of the consent form are required: one copy for the participant to sign and keep for their records and one copy to sign to be returned to the researcher.

APPENDIX F

Sample questions for semi-structured interview

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. Greeting and introductory information about the study.

General discussion about the priest's life and work, including length of time in ministry, size of parish(es), and hours of work.

2. Vocation.

- At what age did you start thinking about becoming a priest and what were the most influential factors that determined your ultimate decision to become a priest?
- What was your family's attitude to your decision?
- Where did you train to become a priest and how well did your training prepare you for the realities of parish life?
- Is the reality of being a parish priest different from what you anticipated? If so, what did you expect, and what is different from what you expected?

3. Ministry

- What are the most satisfying/ rewarding aspects of your ministry?
- What are the least satisfying/ rewarding aspects of your ministry?
- Do you think priests in general feel adequately supported by those with authority over them?

4. Relationships.

- Has the pattern of your personal relationships changed since your ordination? (if so) How?
- How would you describe your relationship with those in the parish with whom you work closely and over whom you exercise authority? Eg. Office staff, school principal, pastoral associates and parish community.

5. Family and relationship with parents.

- Can you tell me something about your background, and your relationship with your family members?
- What were the religious denominations of your parents?
- Did your parents share an equal commitment to religious faith? (describe)

6. Spirituality

- Can you describe the experience of being a man of faith in a rapidly changing social climate which poses challenging ethical and moral dilemmas for people? Eg. Gender roles, sexual mores, respect for authority, and technological advances.

7. Towards the future of the church.

- What do you think are the most important steps to be taken to support the personal well-being and professional practice of parish priests?

APPENDIX G

List of additional publications

List of Additional Publications

- Power G. & Fallon B. (2004), Chapter: Sacred and Profane: A crisis of identity for gay Catholic clergy in D.W. Riggs & G. Walker (Eds.), *Out in the Antipodes: Australian and New Zealand Perspectives on Gay & Lesbian Psychology*. NSW: Pearson.
- Power G. & Fallon B. (2002), Priests and relationships: The case of the Catholic clergy *Conference proceedings 2nd Annual Conference of the Psychology of Relationships Interest Group*, pages 49-58
- Power G. & Fallon B. (2003), Sacred and Profane: Catholic gay priests: *Conference proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society*, pages 162-167
- Power G. & Fallon B. (2003), Celibacy and Intimacy: A clerical dilemma, *Conference proceedings of the 3rd Annual Conference of the Psychology of Relationships interest Group*, pages 79-84