Durham E-Theses

Representational presence in the context of isolation: The missiology of priests in The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda.

STOCK, KATHARINE,VICTORIA,HANNAH

Representational presence in the context of isolation: The missiology of priests in The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda.

Katharine Victoria Hannah Stock

Abstract

This thesis seeks to establish the missional self-understanding of priests in The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda (The Society). The overarching argument of this thesis is that the participant-priests have a missiology of representational presence that operates within a context of isolation. This is argued by viewing the participant-priests within the wider contexts of a historical narrative of isolation, in addition to a recent shift in missional approach within the Church of England, as represented by the *Mission-Shaped Church*[1] report.

The participant-priests' missional approach can be characterised by a cumulative scale of presence. While this approach addresses a shortcoming within *Mission-Shaped Church,* the missiology is underdeveloped by the participant-priests, thus preventing it from being gifted to the wider Church of England. The development of this missiological approach is therefore proposed.

The project's data suggest that the participant-priests' narrative of isolation is false and self-serving while having a detrimental effect on the missional practice of priests in The Society. The thesis argues that this narrative is perpetuated by both The Society and the wider Church of England and therefore proposes that the current practice of Alternative Episcopal Oversight be adjusted to bring both conservative Evangelicals and traditionalist Anglo-Catholics under the same bishop based on geographical area rather than church tradition. Finally, this thesis points to signs of life among the younger participant-priests that offer hope to both The Society and the wider Church of England.

---

[1]Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context.* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009).

Representational presence in the context of isolation:

The missiology of priests in The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda

Katharine Victoria Hannah Stock

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Theology and Ministry in the Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University

2022

Contents

Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree in this or any other institution. The thesis is my own work.

Statement of Copyright

Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION

The self-understanding of priests in The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda (hereafter 'The Society') is an as yet unexplored area of theological research. This research was sparked during my time as an ordinand training for ordained ministry in the Church of England. Despite the increased priority of church planting within the Church of England's missional strategy, I observed a notable absence of Anglo-Catholics practising this method. This raised the question of why such an absence existed. (It ought to be stated that over the time it took to complete this thesis, Anglo-Catholic missional voices have grown in confidence. However, the lack of such large-scale practice, including the prolific church planting linked to the HTB[2] and New Wine[3] networks, continues.)

Tim Thorlby notes that the observed methods of growth within Anglo-Catholic churches are 'similar' to those of many growing Evangelical churches. He writes, 'It is possible that the underlying habits of church growth may be rather more universal and not owned by any particular tradition.'[4] This led me to ask: What are the missional practices within the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England that could be shared as a gift to the wider Church? My research homed in on The Society under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda as a possible participant pool for the reasons explained below, which in turn led me down the less travelled path of being a female ordinand studying priests under Alternative Episcopal Oversight.

The last three decades have seen significant changes in the life of the Church of England and the wider country she serves. In 1994, the first women were ordained as priests, with women eventually entering the episcopacy in 2015. In the midst of this change in the Church's sacramental life, the *Mission-Shaped Church* report was published in 2009, outlining a new ecclesiological approach as the Church of England sought to address shifts in the country's social and religious practices. This

---

[2] 'Church Revitalisation Trust', accessed 19 July 2021, www.crtrust.org.
[3] 'New Wine', accessed 12 July 2021, www.new-wine.org.
[4] Tim Thorlby, A Time to Sow: Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London, (The Centre for Theology & Community: October 2017) P.XVII

thesis is situated in the context of these sacramental and ecclesiological changes. My research question is: What is the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda? This will be answered by asking further sub-questions:

What is their missiological approach to parochial practice?

How does the historical theme of isolation still affect their self-understanding?

The context and explanation of these two questions will be presented in Chapter 1.

By definition, this group of priests is at odds with the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood. In addition, they often hold a parish-focused missiology considered counter to the ecclesiology espoused by *Mission-Shaped Church.* Although empirical studies have considered priests in The Society,[5] never before has there been an investigation into their missiological perspectives, nor how they understand themselves in the Church of England since the consecration of women as bishops. Nor has there been a consideration of the effects of historical marginalisation leading to a continuing sense of isolation in priests in The Society. Using empirical research methods within a practical theological framework, this thesis asks which missiological approaches the participant-priests apply to their parochial practice and how the historical theme of isolation continues to affect their self-understanding.

Why The Society?

Anglo-Catholicism makes up one of the three broad strands of thought within the Church of England: Anglo-Catholicism, Evangelicalism and Liberalism. These three strands each represent a myriad of theological and liturgical positions. Indeed,

---

[5] A. D. J. Fry, 'Clergy, Capital, and Gender Inequality: An Assessment of How Social and Spiritual Capital Are Denied to Women Priests in the Church of England', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16 June 2021. F. Sani and S. Reicher, 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups: Opposing the Ordination of Women as Priests in the Church of England', *The British Journal of Social Psychology* 39 (Pt 1) (March 2000): 95–112.

some reject the label 'Anglo-Catholic', preferring 'Anglican Catholic' or 'Sacramental Anglican'. This ambiguity makes identifying a suitable pool of research participants problematic. Due to the evasive nature of the definition of Anglo-Catholicism, self-identification was not a suitable criterion for selecting research participants. Self-identification had the potential to pool a group of individuals with little more in common than a nod, to varying degrees, to a Catholic approach to theology or liturgy. Thus, I required a clearly defined selection criterion that was significantly far along the Anglo-Catholic spectrum, where priests would not straddle the line between the other two strands.

The requirement for clarity in the research pool offered three options: The Society of the Holy Cross (SSC), The Society of Catholic Priests (SCP) and The Society under the patronage of St Wilfrid and St Hilda (The Society). The SCP, a devotional society for Catholic priests, does not provide a list of its members in the public domain, although it may have been possible to acquire such a list using personal contacts. The SCP holds what they describe as an 'inclusive Catholic vision': 'God calls both women and men to receive the sacrament of ordination to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopate.'[6] Although the SCP is situated within the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England, some may consider their position on the ordination of women to be influenced by liberal thought, thereby excluding them from holding a fully Catholic position. On the other hand, the SSC's position opposing female priests and women in the episcopate means that they cannot be seen as affiliated in any way with the liberal strand of the Church of England. This positions them most securely within the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England. Indeed, the former chairman of Forward in Faith, Dr Colin Podmore, writes that The Society and the SSC represent what is left of the Catholic movement within the Church of England.[7]

---

[6] 'The Society of Catholic Priests, Our Vision', accessed 7 January 2021, https://www.societyofcatholicpriests.com/our-vision.

[7] Colin Podmore, 'Afterword: The Oxford Movement Today - "The Things That Remain"', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement*, ed. Brown et al. (Oxford University Press, 2017), 622–32.

Although the SSC and The Society are two distinct groups, the crossover of their memberships and affiliations is almost total. I chose The Society rather than the SSC as a suitable data pool for the following reasons: in the first instance, The Society is more recognisable within the wider Church of England than the SSC. In addition, those within a specific episcopal area offer a discrete group of potential research participants. This is in contrast to the arrangement of SSC chapters. The See of Fulham, for example, encompasses multiple SSC chapters. Moreover, the membership list of the SSC is not in the public domain, whereas I was able to access a list of Fulham parishes and thereby identify their priests to create a suitable research participant pool.

The Society is an ecclesial group governed by a council of bishops. Some bishops operate within the Church of England's usual diocesan structures. They are the bishop of all clergy in their episcopal area; others offer Alternative Episcopal Oversight exclusively to parishes who object to the ordination of women. The mix of bishops on The Society's Council exemplifies the group's position within the current Church of England: within the body yet a resisting presence.

The Society's self-defined purposes are as follows:

> to promote and maintain Catholic teaching and practice within the Church of England; to provide episcopal oversight to which churches, institutions and individuals will freely submit themselves; to guarantee a ministry in the historic apostolic succession in which they can have confidence.[8]

In practice, this statement's notable outworking is the 414 Church of England parishes receiving episcopal oversight by bishops of The Society. The research participants in this study are the priests of nine such parishes under the Bishop of Fulham's episcopal oversight.

---

[8] 'The Society', accessed 8 June 2019, https://www.sswsh.com/aboutus.php.

In November 1992, after a 'bitter and prolonged struggle',[9] each of the three Houses of the General Synod of the Church of England voted with the required two-thirds majority for women to be permitted to be ordained as priests. Within two weeks, Forward in Faith was established, uniting six predominantly Anglo-Catholic groups. This formation was a defensive move, as it campaigned for safeguards for those parishes and their priests not in agreement with the Synod's decision:

> In our view there will need to be an assured succession of bishops who do not ordain women to the priesthood or recognise them as priests; liberty for clergy and parishes to associate themselves for all sacramental and pastoral purposes with those bishops; and places of theological education and training for the priesthood which respect the position of those whom such bishops recommend.[10]

In response to this campaign and the perceived success of the London Plan, where Alternative Episcopal Oversight (AEO) was arranged for both traditional Catholics and conservative Evangelicals within the London Diocese, the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod of 1993 was passed. This allowed for appropriate arrangements for parishes whose Parochial Church Council would not receive a female priest's priestly ministry. The outworking of such appropriate arrangements came under AEO. For Anglo-Catholic parishes, this meant the pastoral care of a bishop affiliated with The Society. In May 2014, the House of Bishops published its Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests[11] in anticipation of the impending legislation enabling the consecration of women to the episcopate. This declaration effectively extended the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod (1993).

---

[9] William Oddie, *The Roman Option: Crisis and the Realignment of English-Speaking Christianity.* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 1.

[10] Cited in Alan Aldridge, 'Women Priests: From Exclusion to Accommodation', *The British Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 3 (September 1994): 501–10. 507.

[11]'House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Independent Reviewer)', accessed 19 November 2020, https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops.

The position of the bishops on The Society's Council epitomises that of clergy associated with the group within the current Church of England. The bishops of The Society are a mix of 'Flying Bishops' who provide AEO across diocesan boundaries and Diocesan Bishops whose oversight is held within the usual Church of England diocesan boundaries. In a similar way, priests in The Society operate within a Church of England that has made a decision that is fundamentally at odds with their ecclesiology and understanding of priesthood. They sit within diocesan structures, many attending deanery events alongside other clergy, despite being under AEO. Furthermore, those who were ordained more recently trained for ordained ministry alongside women and, as the data will show, have friends who are female priests. This minority group sits within the body of the Church of England, but as a resisting presence.

Indeed, this resisting presence extends beyond the ordination of women; it also pertains to current missiological trends within the Church of England. In this thesis, I seek to view the priests associated with The Society in a holistic manner, considering this minority group's self-understanding. Unsurprisingly, they are often reduced to their theological convictions opposing the ordination of women. However, despite the fact that they are grouped due to their opposition to the ordination of women, they are located within the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England, as opposed to conservative Evangelicals, who are also in opposition. Crucially, their placement within the Church of England's Anglo-Catholic tradition emphasises other beliefs and values beyond the ordination of women. Andrew Village identifies 'traditional Catholics', both lay and ordained, as placing a high value on having a large number of weekday services and rituals compared to other traditions within the Church of England.[12] He concludes that 'the Anglo-Catholic-Evangelical polarity continues to reflect important differences in attitudes, beliefs and practices.'[13] In this way, this thesis seeks to identify the missional self-understanding of priests in The Society. While their position on the

---

[12] Andrew Village, 'English Anglicanism: Construct Validity of a Scale of Anglo-Catholic versus Evangelical Self-Identification', in *Religious Identity and National Heritage* (BRILL, 2012), 91–122,. 103-104.

[13] Village, 93.

ordination of women has some bearing on the findings and analysis, I will pay particular attention to their missiology.

Thesis contributions

Although some research into priests in The Society exists,[14] the current data are not sufficient to answer this project's research question: What is the missional self-understanding of priests in The Society? In response, this thesis aims to close this gap in the understanding of this ecclesial group within the Church of England. An analysis of the current research, in addition to other empirical research on priests in the Church of England, is conducted in Chapter 1. As Andrew Village reflects on his research on English Anglican identities, 'Living with diversity is not a new option for the Church of England but a past and present reality.'[15] For the Church of England to live with diversity, a full picture of the spectrum of beliefs and practices within the Church of England is necessary. Such knowledge is required to inform discussions about the reality of living with diversity, and this thesis contributes to these vital discussions on two linked but distinct lines: the missiological conversation about the Church of England's missional approach and the Church of England's commitment to 'mutual flourishing', as outlined in the Five Guiding Principles.

Missiological conversations
The Church of England is still experiencing the effects of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report, which represents a sea-change in the Church's missional approach. This thesis considers the participant-priests' missiological self-understanding in relation to *Mission-Shaped Church* and its critical responses.[16] I demonstrate a

---

[14] Fry, 'Clergy, Capital, and Gender Inequality'; Sani and Reicher, 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups'; Tim Thorlby, *A Time to Sow. Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London* (London: The Centre for Theology & Community, 2017); John W B Tomlinson, 'Time to Sow in the North' (St John's College, Nottingham, April 2020), https://www.sswsh.com/uploads/Time_to_Sow_in_the_North_v3.pdf.

[15] Village, English Anglicanism. 114.

[16] Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank, *For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press, 2010); John Milbank, 'Stale Expressions: The Management-Shaped Church', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21, no. 1 (April 2008): 117–28; Martyn Percy, 'Old Tricks for New Dogs? : A Critique for Fresh Expressions', in *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church: Responses to the Changing Face of Ecclesiology in the Church of England*, ed. Louise Nelstrop and Martyn Percy (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008).

compatibility between the participant-priests' parish-focused missiology of representational presence and the missiology located in *Mission-Shaped Church.* In addition, I argue that the participant-priests offer a valuable challenge to the weaknesses intrinsic to the report. In these ways, this thesis contributes to the Church of England's current discussions around missiology.

Mutual flourishing

This thesis is set within the context of the Five Guiding Principles. 'Mutual flourishing', as described in the Five Guiding Principles, is identified by Gabrielle Thomas as a 'live wound' in the practice of the Church of England.[17] The Five Guiding Principles state that all three orders of ordained ministry are open to all. The fifth principle speaks of 'mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England', regardless of theological conviction on the ordination of women. Although the idea of 'flourishing' has positive connotations, the current chair of WATCH (Women and the Church), Emma Percy, labels it as a 'catchword', leading to an 'over reliance on the graciousness of women.'[18] In the same way that Thomas does not consider herself to be speaking on behalf of all female Anglican priests, instead seeing her task 'to record the voices of those who took part in the research', I too do not consider this thesis as representative of the position of all priests in The Society. Rather, my task is to be faithful in recording the voices of the participant-priests. Their voices, as with all people, are rich and complex. While the temptation may arise to reduce them to suit an agenda, being faithful to these as yet unheard voices requires a commitment to view them holistically.[19] As with Thomas's research, while not claiming to be a 'cure of all souls',[20] the articulation and recording of such voices contribute to a deeper conversation on how the Church of England may seek a full mutual flourishing.

---

[17] Gabrielle Thomas, '"Mutual Flourishing" in the Church of England: Learning Receptively from Saint Thomas Aquinas.', *Ecclesiology: The Journal of Ministry and Unity* 15, no. 3 (2019): 302–32.

[18] Emma Percy, 'Women, Ordination and the Church of England: An Ambiguous Welcome'', *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 1 (2017): 90–100. 97.

[19] Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu suggests in Flyvbjerg's words, "something essential may be lost" through the summarizing or generalization required by theory. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1997). 26.

[20] P311

Thesis argument

The main findings of this thesis are broadly situated within two themes: presence and isolation.

Presence

The participant-priests in this research articulate a homogenous missiology of presence. However, such homogeneity was only present when they spoke of mission in broad, non-specific terms. When speaking about mission in relation to specific examples identified from their diary entries, the participant-priests had a more diverse missiology of presence. Engaging with the Four Voices of Theology[21] model, I used it as an inductive model to clarify the dissonance and 'tensions'[22] that I was hearing. In this thesis, the terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' are used to identify this dissonance in the reflections of the participant-priests. Together, they demonstrated a homogenous missiology of presence, emphasising the parish as a geographical place, with the actions of mission being proclamation, transformation and dedication. However, both their reported practice and their reflections on said concrete practice were diverse.

This thesis presents this diversity on a cumulative scale of presence. This scale represents increasing levels of missional action. I identify five levels to this cumulative scale: first, being present at the Mass; second, being visibly present in their parishes while wearing clericals; third, conducting pastoral visits; fourth, being regularly present at their church schools; and finally, being on local committees seeking to affect positive social change. This is a cumulative scale because a priest who is present on local committees will also be present in the school, wear clericals, and regularly preside at the Mass, but another priest who regularly presides at Mass will not necessarily also be present in other settings. All the participant-priests understood their presence as representational. Signified by

---

[21] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 53-58.
[22] Cameron et al, Talking about God in Practice. 146.

their clerical collars, their presence was understood to represent the wider church community, moral authority and Christ.

<u>Isolation</u>
The second theme within this project's data is isolation. The participant-priests considered their parish-based approach to ministry to be undervalued by the wider Church of England. This was particularly evident in their view that evangelical missiology and spirituality lack the depth found in Anglo-Catholic approaches. Another viewpoint was that the current missional energy of the Church of England is located within the Evangelical tradition. This is linked to some of the participant-priests considering that financial and strategic decisions made at the diocesan and national levels do not favour Anglo-Catholics and instead prioritise large evangelical churches. This was set within the context of considering that the dominant theology of the Church of England was not compatible with a Catholic, sacramentally centred theology, as held by the participant-priests. Examples of this were a perceived lack of value placed on buildings as sacred spaces and a perceived lack of value for the sacramental nature of priesthood.

In addition to this belief that their ministry is undervalued by the wider Church of England, the participant-priests considered their affiliation with The Society to be causing difficulty in forming relationships. This was evident in how many of the participant-priests raised the topic of the ordination of women despite not being asked a question specific to this issue. This suggests a habit of being asked to defend their positions, leading them to preemptively explain their positions. It was notable that although many of the participant-priests had positive relationships with other priests within their current deaneries, they considered deaneries hostile places for priests in The Society. In contrast to their experience at the local deanery level, all but one of the participant-priests were affiliated with The Society of the Holy Cross (SSC). This devotional society provides a rule of life and fraternity for the participant-priests. This fraternity offers a secure space for the participant-priests to spend time with likeminded priests who share many of their theological convictions.

Thesis structure

This thesis is structured into five chapters. The first chapter establishes the historical and cultural contexts for the research project.

The second chapter explores in detail the Practical Theology framework for the project, along with related methodology and epistemological positioning. The qualitative research methods are established and justified in reference to the research aims. A detailed account of the fieldwork phase of the project is offered.

The third chapter brings together an account of the data collection. Rich and thick descriptions are formed in two sections: first, addressing the theme of presence in the participant-priests' missiological practice and reflection, and second, describing the theme of isolation held by the participant-priests.

The fourth chapter broadens the conversation in an analysis of these two themes, critiquing both the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence and their narrative of isolation. Conversation partners are brought in to engage with each theme.

In the fifth chapter, the thesis makes a normative turn, as I offer two proposals relating to the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence and their narrative of isolation to both The Society's Council of Bishops and the wider Church of England. I offer an assessment of what this project's data may indicate about The Society's future position within the Church of England. The thesis closes by bringing together the previously established arguments.

CHAPTER 1. ISOLATION THROUGH MARGINALISATION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I establish the historical and cultural contexts for this research project in four sections. First, the effect of the Church of England's decision to ordain women as priests is established, with attention paid to the resulting bereavement experienced by those opposed to the decision. The resulting divisions within the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England are briefly sketched to locate this project's participant-priests. Second, the chapter turns to the broader historical context of the participant-priests. Parochial practice in the three historical phases of Anglo-Catholicism – the Oxford Movement, the Victorian Ritualists and the inter-war period – is established. Alongside this, the theme of marginalisation is traced, providing a historical context of the participant-priests' hermeneutic of marginalisation and isolation. Third, the chapter considers the effect of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report on the cultural context of the Church of England, as well as the possible effects on the participant-priests. The final section of the chapter establishes the context of empirical research within which this thesis is situated.

This chapter provides the context for the following research questions, which seek to address the research objective of establishing the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society:

What is their missiological approach to parochial practice?

How does the historical theme of isolation still affect their self-understanding?

1.2 The Catholic movement today

I now turn to the Church of England's decision to ordain women as priests, the effect of bereavement on those priests who opposed the decision and the resulting divisions within the Anglo-Catholic movement.

a) Ordination of women

The ordination of women to the priesthood of the Church of England led to a sense of isolation and marginalisation among Anglo-Catholics who were opposed to the Synod's decision. I will not offer an in-depth historical overview of the whys and wherefores of what led the Church of England to affirm the ordination of women into the priesthood in 1992. Rather, to provide a clear context for my research, I offer an emotive history of this period from the perspective of those opposing the ordination of women. In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate the effect that such a sense of isolation has on the personal identity of this project's participant-priests. As Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry, wrote:

> The debates and decisions that opened the way to the ordination and consecration of women as bishops in the Church of England may not have resulted in the violence that disfigured the Church in the past, but many on every side of the argument felt violated by them. The procedures and processes of committees and synods did not just touch on fundamental areas of theology. They penetrated the centre of personal identity.[23]

The 18 years that the Church of England took to formally consider the issue of female ordination to the priesthood, and the 21 years between the first ordination and Elizabeth Lane's consecration as Bishop of Stockport, were undoubtedly painful, as will be explored below, but the emotional response to the decision must be understood within the context of the 'quarter century of hope'[24] that preceded it.

---

[23] Colin Podmore, ed., 'Foreword', in *Fathers in God? Resources for Reflection on Women in the Episcopate* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015). i.

[24] Geoffrey Rowell, 'Foreword', in *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of Women and Anglican Identity* (Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014). xii.

In the years between 1960 and 1985, there was a belief among many Anglo-Catholics (such as Roger Greenacre[25]) that the combination of a reformed, post-Second Vatican Council Roman Catholic Church and the efforts of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission could bring the Church of England into communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Today, such a reconciliation is almost unthinkable, but for a quarter-century, this was a deep hope for many Anglo-Catholics. However, such a communion did not come about. Internal changes within the Roman Catholic Church, in addition to the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood, put paid to such efforts. For some Anglo-Catholics who hoped for such a communion, the decision to ordain women to the priesthood was considered 'a unilateral step of divergence'.[26] The Vatican announced that it was 'a new and serious obstacle to the entire process of reconciliation' with Rome. The move was perceived as a rejection of Anglo-Catholic efforts to realise the potential of the Church of England's catholicity and enable communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The decision to ordain women demonstrated that Anglo-Catholics were at best undervalued and at worst rejected by the Church of England. As a result, this group of priests went from the heady heights of possible communion with Rome to the depths of despair in which both their hopes of communion were dashed and their ecclesiological understanding of ordination was rejected by the wider Church of England.

Anglo-Catholic opposition to the ordination of women to the priesthood can be attributed to three broad reasons. The first was the effect that such a change may have on ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The second was the Church of England's position within the 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church', and her ability to make such a decision without broader consensus. The third revolved around the specific roles of men and women concerning the priesthood. It is important to note that not all Anglo-Catholics in opposition held all three of these positions. For example, the Anglo-Catholic

---

[25] Roger Greenacre and Colin Podmore, *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of Women and Anglican Identity* (Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014).
[26] Colin Podmore, ed., 'Introduction', in *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of Women and Anglican Identity* (Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014). xxvii.

scholar and priest Roger Greenacre, while opposed to the ordination of women, was not an 'impossibilist'; he believed that it was possible, but also that the ecumenical and ecclesiological effects meant it was the wrong decision for the Church of England.[27] Despite opposition from a 'substantial minority of Anglicans',[28] women were ordained to the priesthood. Here, it is pertinent to hear the emotional response during the aftermath of the decision. Fr David Houlding, reflecting over a decade later, describes his emotional state in the aftermath of the Synod's decision:

> The next evening, I remember saying Mass at All Hallows for our regular Thursday evening celebration. I could hardly get through the eucharistic prayer. It seemed to me that everything I believed about the priesthood had been destroyed. Everything I believed I stood for had been removed. I felt desperate… We were all in a state of shock, incredulous at what had happened, and we went through many of the feelings that bereavement brings. We were bewildered and disillusioned. We were upset and broken. We were afraid and lost. We were angry.[29]

It is clear from Houlding's account that this was not a detached theological issue for him; the Church of England's decision to ordain women as priests influenced his self-understanding as a priest. However, he was not experiencing this alone. His account of the aftermath quickly broadens to demonstrate the corporate experience of bereavement – a sense of shared loss and marginalisation as traditional Anglo-Catholics. Just 11 days after the Synod vote, Dr Geoffrey Rowell, then chaplain of Keble College, Oxford, used similar language in his sermon at All Saints Margaret Street:

> I believe I can understand something of the pain that would have been occasioned to women deacons seeking a fuller ministry if the legislation

---

[27] Podmore. xii.

[28] Paul D. L Avis, *Anglican Orders and the Priesting of Women* (London: Darton Longman + Todd, 1999), 1-2.

[29] D Houlding, 'The Crisis of 1992 and Its Aftermath: A Personal Reflection'', in *In This Sign Conquer: A History of the Society of the Holy Cross (Societas Sanctae Crucis), 1855-2005*, ed. Owen Higgs (London ; New York: Continuum, 2006), 196–217., 198-9.

had been defeated. But that pain would not have been the deep grief which is now being experienced by many faithful priests and laypeople of the Church of England. You grieve when you are bereaved and that would not have been the position of women seeking ordination. That would have been a hurt not less real, but of another kind. It does no service to speak in a generalised way about pain. The whole Church of England has to see that grief for what it is, to recognise it as a deep trauma of bereavement, and to know what the grieving is for. I have contact with many parishes of which my college is patron, parishes which stand mostly within the Catholic tradition… Words like 'bereavement', 'divorce', 'semi-divorce' occur time and again. There is a deep sense of loss and bewilderment and numbness. There have been many tears.[30]

Here, Rowell compares two experiences of grief. One is the grief that women may have experienced, unable to fulfil their vocation of priesthood, and the other is that of male Anglo-Catholic priests who have lost a church that shares their ecclesiology. In Rowell's opinion, both are grief, but only one is bereavement. Such a distinction ought to be questioned: would women deacons not experience a bereavement of vocation? This distinction appears to dismiss or seek to reduce the pain experienced by women within the Church of England, including those unable to transition from the diaconate to the priesthood. Despite this criticism, the sense that the wider Church of England was not understanding or recognising the 'deep trauma of bereavement' being experienced by Traditional Anglo-Catholic priests is clear. Such a lack of understanding or recognition feeds the narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation within which this thesis is situated.

However, it was not just the grief of being on the 'losing side' at the Synod vote. The aftermath of the vote led to another bereavement. Many priests and laity were received by other denominations, primarily the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. As Podmore writes, 'The grief of bereavement at the loss of a whole way of understanding the Church of England's identity was compounded

---

[30] Podmore, 'Introduction'. xxxiii-xxxiv.

by the parting of friends.'[31] This combination of events – the Synod vote and the move of hundreds of Anglo-Catholic brethren to Rome – left the remaining Traditional Anglo-Catholics in a state of bereavement, feeling marginalised and homeless within the Church of England. A former Anglican priest, now a Roman Catholic layman, in giving his perspective on the aftermath of the vote, observed that 'pain and grief became a dominant element in the internal politics of the Church of England.'[32] However, Colin Podmore, former director of Forward in Faith, notes the difficulty of writing about this period of the Church of England.[33] It is neither the present nor the past. No historical analysis has been conducted on the cultural dynamics during this period. While some research has been conducted on the experiences of women ordained as priests in the Church of England,[34] there has been little study of the group of priests on the losing side of the Synod decision. This thesis addresses this absence by offering a picture of priests in The Society and their missional self-understanding, and this context of perceived marginalisation and isolation will be a key factor in my analysis. I now turn to the Catholic Movement in the Church of England today, establishing some of the different factions of the movement.

b) Divisions in the Anglo-Catholic Tradition

Decades of division across different fault-lines have led to a fragmented catholic movement within the Church of England. Two significant divisions are apparent, roughly caused by the ordination of women and the reception of the Church of England's missional strategy exemplified in *Mission-Shaped Church.* While there are dividing lines originating in the movement's history, I wish to focus on the broad brushstrokes to locate this project's participant-priests within the wider tradition.

---

[31] Podmore. xxxvi
[32] Oddie, 'The Roman Option,' 28.
[33] Podmore, 'Introduction'. xxxvi
[34] Gabrielle Thomas, *For The Good Of The Church: Women, Theology, and Ecumenical Practice.* (S.l.: SCM PRESS, 2021).

Affirming Catholicism is a movement that describes itself as existing to do two things: 'We affirm our confidence in Anglican heritage; and we seek to renew and promote the Catholic tradition within it.'[35] While the movement affirms the ordination of women, the group is divided in its response to the missional approach found in the *Mission-Shaped Church* report, which will be considered in more depth in Chapter 4. Some, including Stephen Cottrell and Rowan Williams, support the vision set out in *Mission-Shaped Church*. This position is best exemplified in *Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition.*[36] However, others, such as Martyn Percy,[37] have raised questions regarding the ecclesiology demonstrated in *Mission-Shaped Church.* While those within The Society would share Percy's convictions on *Mission-Shaped Church's* inadequacies, he stands in opposition to priests in The Society being made a diocesan bishop.[38] It is worth pointing out that the divisions caused by the ordination of women and the reception of *Mission-Shaped Church* are not clear-cut, as exemplified in an interview with Imogen Black at the consecration of Philip North. Speaking to the *Church Times*, Black describes herself as an Anglo-Catholic priest who is 'very close to traditionalists in many ways, apart from fact that I believe that women can be ordained.'[39] In this way, research into priests in The Society will resonate with other Anglo-Catholic priests, both male and female.

The effect of this division has been an immobilisation of Anglo-Catholic mission. This does not mean a complete absence but a hindering of the movement's missional action. As Angela Tilby writes, 'The fresh expressions movement is rather a painful wake-up call for Catholic-minded Anglicans like myself. Difficult though it

---

[35] Avis, *Anglican Orders and the Priesting of Women,* iii.

[36] Steven J. L Croft and Ian Mobsby, *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009).

[37] Percy has written in the Affirming Catholicism series of books, for example:
Martyn Percy and Affirming Catholicism (Organisation), *Introducing Richard Hooker and the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999).

[38] Martyn Percy, 'Questions of Ambiguity and Integrity?', *House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Independent Reviewer)*, February 2019, https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops., 9-15.

[39] Madeleine Davies, 'This Shows There's a Future for Us, Says New Traditionalist Bishop', *Church Times*, 3 February 2015, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/30-january/news/uk/this-shows-there-s-a-future-for-us-says-new-traditionalist-bishop.

is to admit it, our current record on mission is pretty dreadful.'[40] One cause that Tilby identifies for this record is the in-fighting about the ordination of women. Stephen Spencer and Susan Lucas have identified this 'recent sharp division' as compromising Anglo-Catholic missional practice.[41] However, in the acknowledgement of the division and its effects, an opportunity emerges to recover what is held in common by many Anglo-Catholics so that 'a new phase of renewal and growth may be launched'.[42] In Chapter 4, this thesis's data will be analysed in light of this new phase of Anglo-Catholic mission, which seeks to step beyond the divisions caused by the ordination of women and *Mission-Shaped Church*.

1.3 Marginalisation in Anglo-Catholic history

In their various accounts of the history of Anglo-Catholicism, different academics describe the movement's proponents in various ways. William Oddie refers to Anglo-Catholics who opposed the ordination of women as a 'dissident Anglican minority'[43] and those leaving the Anglican Church as 'disaffected'.[44] Francis Penhale, in his book *Catholics in Crisis*, refers to the movement at the turn of the 21st century as 'shrinking, divided and ageing'.[45] Ivan Clutterbuck argues that Anglo-Catholics have been threatened with exclusion while experiencing 'persecution'[46] during this period while presenting the most coherent case for a theme of marginalisation from the Oriel common room to the present day. He describes the movement as 'marginal' and 'silenced' within the Church of England.[47] Nigel Yates, in his comprehensive review of the Ritualist movement, presents a need for a critical reading of the 'myths' held about the Anglo-Catholic

---

[40] Angela Tilby, 'What Questions Does Catholic Ecclesiology Pose for Contemporary Mission and Fresh Expressions?', in *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), 78–89. 78.
[41] Spencer, 'Catholic Mission within Anglicanism - Identifying Core Principles', 125; Lucas, 'Introduction', xv.
[42] Spencer, 'Catholic Mission within Anglicanism', 126.
[43] Oddie, 'The Roman Option,' 225.
[44] Oddie, 'The Roman Option,' 3.
[45] Francis Penhale, The Anglican Church Today: Catholics in Crisis, Mowbray's Lambeth Series (London: Mowbray, 1986).
[46] Ivan Clutterbuck, Marginal Catholics: Anglo-Catholicism: A Further Chapter of Modern Church History (Leominster: Gracewing, 1994), 226.
[47] Ivan Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics', 29.

experience in this period.[48] William Pickering, rejecting the words 'paradox' and dialectic', uses the word 'ambiguity' to describe Anglo-Catholic identity.[49] Considering these various sources, I argue that 'marginalised' and 'isolated' are helpful words to describe a prominent narrative of Anglo-Catholics and their reading of the movement's history. As I will establish, not all the recalled examples of marginalisation and isolation can be taken at face value; however, the inherited narrative of these terms provides an important context for the participant-priests' experiences and self-understanding in the context of this research project.

I argue that marginalisation and isolation can be traced throughout the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England. The themes of marginalisation and isolation are connected to the missional self-understanding of priests in The Society because they provide an emotional and cultural context for the Church of England's more recent missional approach, as exemplified by the 2004 *Mission-Shaped Church* report and its reception.[50] To be an Anglo-Catholic of any stripe is to be an inheritor of the movement's history.[51] Using the key contemporary sources of historical analysis of Anglo-Catholicism. I will provide a concise overview of these themes of marginalisation and parochial practice in a chronological account.

i) The Oxford Movement's parochial practice

The birthplace of the Anglo-Catholic movement was Oxford in the early 1830s, with many pointing to John Keble's Assize Sermon in July 1833 as the moment of ignition. However, interpretations differ regarding the aim of the Oxford Movement, or the Tractarians, as the early proponents of the movement were known. William Pickering, priest and author of *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in*

---

[48] Nigel Yates, Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910 (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8.

[49] W. S. F Pickering, Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008), 4-5.

[50] Paul Bayes, *Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009).

[51] Podmore, 'Afterword: The Oxford Movement Today - "The Things That Remain"'. 630.

Religious Ambiguity, describes the aim of the movement as 'the catholicisation of the Church of England.'[52] Church historian George Herring disagrees with the lack of reference to continuity in Pickering's account: 'For the original Tractarians of the 1830s as for their successors in the following decades, their Church was *already* Catholic.'[53] The Tractarians were not seeking to introduce Catholicism to the Church of England. Instead, they intended to actualise the 'potential resources' already found within the Church of England but forgotten since the Reformation.[54]

In the absence of a central doctrinal statement of Tractarian belief, an examination of their parochial practices provides the best summary of their beliefs. Using the 90 *Tracts for Our Times* written by the movement's fathers, Peter Nockles attempts to identify a list of core doctrines:

> the apostolic succession, divine-right episcopacy, the authority of the Church as keeper of Holy Writ, the priesthood and ministerial commission, apostolic tradition and a Catholic consent of the fathers as interpretive of Scripture according to the rule of St Vincent of Lerins, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the Eucharistic sacrifice, baptismal regeneration, the power of the keys.[55]

These doctrinal positions form the foundation of Anglo-Catholic thought both during this early period and today. However, as many academics (including Owen Chadwick) point out, the Oxford Movement should not be reduced to a set of doctrinal positions; rather, its best description is found in its parochial practice.[56] Nonetheless, some debate remains as to whether the Oxford Movement at its core was theoretical or practically driven. While some, such as John Shelton Reed,

---

[52] Pickering, 'Anglo-Catholicism,' 267.

[53] George Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice: The Tractarian Parochial World from the 1830s to the 1870s*, First edtion (Oxford ; New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). iv.

[54] Alf Härdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist* (Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965), 341.

[55] Peter Nockles, ''Survivals or New Arrivals? The Oxford Movement and the Nineteenth-Century. Historical Construction of Anglicanism', in *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition: Continuity, Change and the Search for Communion*, ed. Stephen Platten (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003). 149.

[56] Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 1-2.

author of *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism*, depict the Oxford Movement as essentially theoretical, preparing the way for the Ritualists to apply the doctrine in the slums,[57] Herring argues that this is not the case. He contends that the Oxford Movement was 'always intended to be more than just an abstruse dialogue about the theoretical nature of Anglicanism.'[58]

Often, the parochial practice of the Tractarians is unwittingly viewed through the lens of their Ritualist successors. This is partly due to the notoriety of the great Ritualist slum priests and their parochial engagement with the abject poverty of England's Victorian cities. However, the Tractarians' parochial practice and the opposition it provoked should be read as distinct from the later Ritualist phase of the movement. Therefore, Herring's systematic assessment of the specific practice of the Tractarians aids this literature review. His stripping-back to the Tractarians' actions, attempting to view them without the lens of Ritualism, is valuable in ascertaining their parochial practice. Hence, I will use Herring's assessment to first understand Tractarian parochial practice and its resulting marginalisation.

The Oxford Movement was an intellectual movement at its inception, but it did not remain that way. Although examples exist of non-intellectual or clerical pursuits, such as Keble's poetry and Newman's sermons, the theological debate was predominantly conducted through tracts and discussed in academic or clerical settings. Herring writes that the Tractarian Fathers desired 'nothing short of a wholesale transformation of the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral life of the Church.'[59] Thus, it is important to note that the Anglo-Catholic movement was deeply practical from its inception.

As priests trained in Oxford left to take on parishes of their own, the liturgical practice introduced by John Keble and John Henry Newman was developed in those parishes. This led to new attention being placed on long-ignored rubrics

---

[57] One can see this in his chapter title, 'Into the World', inferring that the pre-ritualist days of the Oxford Movement were is some way closeted rather than integrated into parish life. John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (London: Tufton Books, 1998), ix.

[58] Herring, *The Oxford Movement in Practice,*' 1.

[59] Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?*, 75.

within the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP). For example, the Tractarians preached not wearing the customary black gowns but the BCP-prescribed surplices instead. Within 40 years of this revived reading of the Prayer Book Rubrics, preaching while wearing a surplice had become unexceptional almost everywhere in England.[60] It ought to be emphasised when considering this period of the 1840s and 1850s how controversial these practices were at the time. In this way, the liturgical changes instigated by the Tractarian clergy are a defining feature of their parochial practice. Such changes were centred on their high doctrine of the Eucharist and a rediscovery of or re-adherence to neglected Prayer Book rubrics. Although the introduction of more services was adopted by churchmen of other traditions, by the end of the century, the multiplication of services was 'considered as a party badge and to mark off the celebrant as a sympathiser with the Tractarians'.[61] All liturgical changes, such as the introduction of daily prayers, were secondary to the increase of Eucharist services on Sundays and Feast Days. In many Tractarian parishes, surpliced choirs sang Gregorian chants at Eucharist services, with additions such as lighted candles, Eucharistic vestments and, in some instances, the burning of incense.

The effect of such elaborate services on the wider parish is not easy to determine. The diaries of Tractarian priests during this time suggest that their overall parochial approach led to increased engagement with the social breadth of the parish.[62] They also note increased numbers of communicants, although it is not possible to ascertain whether they were residents of the parish. However, the local resistance that was experienced at the parish level does point to some sort of positive effect. As explored below, the nature of some of this resistance suggests that an increase in religious observance did occur, leading to a disruption of the social and economic dynamics of some rural parishes. However, a significant difference between the Tractarian approach to liturgical reform and their Ritualist successors is that the Tractarians introduced changes gradually and, as Herring argues, with

---

[60] Reed, 'Glorious Battle,' 16.
[61] Russell, 'The Clerical Profession,' 106.
[62] Cited in Pickering, 'Anglo-Catholicism,' 83. Wantage Diaries, 3 Feb 1850.

lay assent.[63] The broader effect of this more cautious introduction of liturgical changes is that it led to fewer severe conflicts with parishioners and the episcopacy than the Ritualists would later evoke.

This increased engagement with the breadth of parish residents is most apparent in the social action either organised or motivated by Tractarian priests. This signifies the beginning of a theme found throughout the Catholic movement's history. Tractarian priests and lay sympathisers made efforts to care for the vulnerable in their rural settings. Examples include Earl Beauchamp's significant financial donation towards the establishment of alms-houses for elderly agricultural labourers in Worcestershire[64] and Revd Thomas Stevens' supportive role in insisting his tenant farmers to pay their farmhands a fair wage.[65] Keble's own parish ministry offers an example of how Tractarian theology played out in practice. He was described as a 'committed and self-sacrificial'[66] parish priest who noted the realities of workhouses, the rising price of corn and the inadequate distribution of allotments in his Hampshire parish.[67] His reaction was practical, supporting the creation of additional allotments and founding a parish bank to allow poorer parishioners to save money. Such a response sought to address immediate needs and also to identify and remedy the root causes of poverty. As will be established in Chapter 3, this emphasis on social action is also present in the self-understanding of this project's participant-priests. In addition, the examples given in this review of Anglo-Catholic historical parochial practice provide a context for today's priests' understanding of what it means to be committed to a place, that is, dedicated to a parish.

For all of Pickering's in-depth research into Tractarian priests' parochial practice, he admits that it was 'surprisingly similar to that of their clerical brethren; where

---

[63] Herring, 'The Oxford Movement in Practice,' 215-217.

[64] Maria Trench, *James Skinner: A Memoir.* Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883, 202-3.

[65] Cited in Herring, 'The Oxford Movement in Practice,' 81. Thomas Stevens, Letter Books, 4 April 1850 and 26 March 1851.

[66] Spencer, 'Catholic Mission within Anglicanism - Identifying Core Principles'., 129.

[67] S. A. Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2004), 145.

differences do exist, they are normally of degree or emphasis.'[68] Their efforts to increase the frequency of Eucharist services and encourage those put off by social class dynamics to receive communion were shared by many priests.[69] The distinction comes in that Tractarian clergy advocated for weekly communion rather than the more common move towards monthly communion. The similarity of practice and parochial hopes between Tractarian priests and their fellow clergymen raises a question about the distinctness of the beginnings of the Catholic Movement within the Church of England. This question of distinctiveness is pertinent to the Catholic Movement today, particularly due to the adoption of many Catholic practices by the wider Church of England. However, the similarity of practice then and now does not negate the fact that such practice is and was an outworking of Catholic doctrine. Within this period, the centrality of the Eucharist in their theological approach led priests to seek to expand the eucharistic community within their parish. The fact that other priests also wanted to expand their parish's eucharistic communities does not mean that such practices are not authentically Anglo-Catholic. This will be pertinent when looking at how priests today understand their mission. It may well bear similarities to the understanding of priests from other traditions; however, this does not negate the fact that it is an authentically Anglo-Catholic approach. This is significant when considering the critique that the research participant-priests in this study do not exhibit a missiology distinct from their peers in more broad-church settings.

It is notable that this similarity of practice is not often communicated in contemporary conversations about Tractarian mission. This feeds into a narrative of the Anglo-Catholic movement being completely distinct from other positions within the Church of England, meaning that it has been and continues to be marginalised as a result. While it is unsurprising that Ivan Clutterbuck, author of the highly sympathetic *Marginal Catholics,* fails to place the Tractarians in the broader context of parochial reform, Reed also does not mention this context at

---

[68] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism,* 85.
[69] Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*, 1. paperback ed (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998). 202.

this early stage in the movement. Indeed, Pickering is unusual in pointing out the lack of distinctiveness in the Tractarian parochial approach. Such a portrayal of distinctiveness feeds into an accumulating narrative of marginalisation. The origins of this narrative are considered below. Ultimately, the blinkered reading of the parochial practice of the Tractarians provides an example of a hermeneutic of marginalisation within which priests in The Society are situated.

ii)   Opposition to the Oxford Movement

In the early days of the Oxford Movement, when the battle of ideas was confined to the Oriel common room, the Tractarians experienced marginalisation for the first time. At first, opposition was directed towards their Catholic doctrinal perspectives, as articulated through Tracts and sermons. Examples of this include the accusations made against the 'Jesuitical' Isaac Williams, who authored Tract 80 and was denied the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford in 1842 as a result.[70] Misjudged actions on the part of the Oxford Fathers also invited resistance. For example, the posthumous publishing of Hurrell Froude's diaries by Newman and Keble in 1838 had a detrimental effect on the movement's standing among evangelicals. Although it is not clear whether the publication was due to naivety or purposeful incitement, the inclusion of Froude's attacks on the Anglican Reformers did little to help the movement's reputation.

The liturgical actions of the Oxford Fathers later led to interventions and protestations from the episcopacy. One example of this involved Pusey anonymously funding the building of a church in Leeds. The Cambridge Camden Society was used to design the church building. This group of church architects and historians sought to reintroduce a pre-Reformation Gothic design to church buildings and interiors. Charles Longley, then Bishop of Ripon, opposed various architectural and liturgical proposals regarding the church.[71] Longley's

---

[70] Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 10.
[71] Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 23.

dissatisfaction with the introduction of Tractarian practices was not uncommon at the time. Indeed, such difficulties with the Church hierarchy would only increase during the Ritualist phase of the Catholic movement.

When the movement was disseminated into rural parishes, opposition continued but in a different vein. Some opposition came from Evangelical quarters of the Church of England. For example, the pamphlet 'Is Our Minister a Puseyite? A Dialogue for the Unlearned' warned against Tractarian priests and gave advice on how to spot them.[72] While some theological opposition to the presence of Tractarian priests was evident in the parishes, Shelton Reed notes that it was not the doctrinal position of clergy that disturbed parishioners; rather, resistance was raised when parish priests made practical changes regarding church fittings and forms of worship.[73] It would appear that congregations cared less about their clergymen's theological convictions than what changes they brought about. This lack of significant concern about the clergy's theological convictions can be seen in examples of complaints about liturgical changes.

In some cases, it appears that complaints about liturgical changes were a means to attack clergy for other reasons. The reasons were often political, influenced by both national and local political contexts. An example of this is the complaint made by Tractarian priest Fr Henry Newland's churchwardens to the Bishop of Chichester about the liturgical practice taking place in the parish of Westbourne. This complaint coincided not with the introduction of such practices, but appears to have been influenced by Prime Minister John Russell's public blaming of Tractarians for the 'Papal Aggression' of the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England, along with 'unabated' uproar among the public.[74] The Prime Minister's words and the general anti-Catholic sentiment at the time also provided the context for riots at St Barnabas Pimlico. Indeed, the incumbent of St Barnabas Pimlico, Revd William Bennett, also held the Prime Minister's words responsible

---

[72] 'Is Our Minister a Puseyite? A Dialogue for the Unlearned' (ca 1845), 5569, Pusey House.
[73] Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 29-30.
[74] J. G. Beckett, 'Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England. By E. R. Norman. Pp 240. London: Allen and Unwin. 1968. 35.', *Irish Historical Studies* 17, no. 66 (September 1970): 292–93., 64.

for riots in his parish.[75] It would not be correct to clearly label these complaints and riots as primarily theological resistance, rather than being caused by anti-Irish and anti-papist sentiments. Nevertheless, the Catholic theology of the Tractarians meant that they were aligned in the public perception with Roman Catholics.

The local political context also ought to be considered in the resistance to Tractarian priests within the rural parish. Herring attributes the disgruntlement from local tradesmen and farmers to the demand for increased piety from Tractarian clergymen, which caused a disruption of the local economy's status quo.[76] Tractarian clergy had an expectation that local shops would close for church festivals and encourage church attendance at the increased number of services. Although it could be said that the resulting conflict was due to the theological convictions of the priests, the representatives of local commerce primarily had an issue with how they would be economically affected rather than offering a theological critique. However, alliances were often forged between the disgruntled local tradesmen and farmers and Dissenters who opposed the Tractarians on theological grounds.[77] Unsurprisingly, members of the dissenting Christian sects were highly critical of Tractarian priests due to significant differences in their theological convictions. However, despite the role of Dissenters in local conflicts, the prominent causes of resistance against Tractarians at the parish level were their ritualist practices and their disruption of the parish's political and class dynamics. Therefore, it is not suitable to categorise such resistance and opposition as marginalisation, as it was neither systematic nor, for the most part, theological.

---

[75] Bennett William J.E., 'A First Letter to the Right Honourable Lord John Russell', 1850, https://archive.org/details/firstlettertorig00benn. 4-5.
[76] Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?*, 79.
[77] Herring, What Was the Oxford Movement?, 79.

iii) The Ritualists' parochial practice

The 1860s and 1870s saw an acceleration of ritualist practice representing a second wave of the Anglo-Catholic movement. Its proponents were referred to as the Ritualists. These priests, such as Fr Charles Lowder, Fr Alexander Mackonochie and Fr Arthur Tooth, inherited and retained a sense of the importance of the sacred nature of the Church and her sacraments. They continued the understanding of their Tractarian forefathers that the Eucharist was a commemorative sacrifice.[78] They understood themselves to be a continuation of the Church in England, recalling the pre-Reformation practices of the Church in England and reaffirming adherence to the *Book of Common Prayer*.

That said, disagreement emerged over whether the Ritualists could be seen as the successors of the Oxford Movement. At the end of the 19th Century, some critics of the movement viewed Ritualism as an 'overflow' from the 'broad stream of genuine Anglican Churchmanship'.[79] While some contemporary historians like Herring question a clear line of succession from the Oxford Movement Tractarians to the Ritualists, the majority perspective is that the Ritualists represent a generation of the Catholic movement emerging from the Oxford Movement. Regardless of the strength of any argument for or against continuity between the Tractarians and the Ritualists, it is the Ritualist movement that left a legacy of liturgical and social action that affected Anglo-Catholicism and the wider Church of England to this day. To this end, its inclusion in this literature review is pertinent because it offers a context for the self-understanding of priests in The Society today.

Whenever a conversation is raised about Anglo-Catholic mission, the slum priests of the Victorian era are sure to be mentioned. In London, the legacies of Fr Lowder

---

[78] Vernon Staley, *The Catholic Religion: A Manual of Instruction for Members of the Anglican Communion* (1904). Cited in J. E. B. Munson, 'The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Anglo-Catholic Clergy', *Church History* 44, no. 3 (September 1975): 382–95. 382.
[79] Letter from W.E. Bowen to The Spectator, 15 June 1901, cited in J. E. B. Munson, 'The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Anglo-Catholic Clergy', *Church History* 44, no. 3 (September 1975): 382–95.

and Fr Mackonochie loom large.[80] These Ritualist priests found themselves in parishes in deprived areas of the city, although there is some ambiguity about whether they sought these positions to give themselves more freedom to introduce Ritualist practices or whether they truly felt a call to the poor as an end in itself. Nevertheless, the slums were the context in which many of the Ritualists found themselves. My data demonstrate that the ministries of these priests are an example for many priests in The Society today. There is no doubt that many of the Ritualist priests in the slums of Victorian England worked industriously among the poor. These priests, alongside many religious sisters, sought to address both the spiritual and physical needs of their parishioners. Indeed, this practice was well regarded, even by their critics, as they enacted a social gospel of practical action in the slums.[81]

Both at the time and in more contemporary accounts of this period, a sense abounds that these slum priests were notable for their work with the poor.[82] Social action is identified as 'a constant foundation'[83] of the Catholic movement and distinct from other churchmen during this period.[84] Clutterbuck argues that where the Evangelicals worked *for* the poor, the Catholics worked *with* them. This distinction, Clutterbuck argues, still has a bearing on the respective approaches to mission today. The hagiographic image is that they were lone voices in the wilderness of the Victorian slums, alone in their efforts to provide relief to the poor. However, I argue that the distinction offered by Clutterbuck is more reflective of the myth perpetuated by Anglo-Catholics about their missional heritage than the reality on the ground in the Victorian slums. First, within the Church, Anglo-Catholic priests were not alone in their engagement with the urban poor. For every Fr Lowder, there was a Robert Vanderkiste who made regular visitations to the Cowcross district of Clerkenwell in 1846. As a missionary for the evangelical London City Mission, Vanderkiste visited homes where 'the police

---

[80] Tim Thorlby, *A Time to Sow. Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London* (London: The Centre for Theology & Community, 2017), 88-91.
[81] Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 149.
[82] Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics,' 35-36; Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 149.
[83] Spencer, 'Catholic Mission within Anglicanism - Identifying Core Principles', 138.
[84] *Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics,'* 35-36.

dared not go'; he also fed, clothed and established Ragged Schools for the residents.[85] The Ritualist slum priests were not unique in their attempts to address the raging poverty of Victorian England. Second, such efforts to address poverty were a key characteristic of Victorian social thought. Supporting the 'deserving poor' while reducing dependence from the 'undeserving poor' led to the introduction of legislation such as the New Poor Law, as well as investigations such as those into the treatment of the sick in workhouses, which also led to reforms.[86] While undoubtedly hard-working at significant personal cost, Anglo-Catholic priests and their religious sisters were not alone in their efforts to meet the needs of the urban poor.

Some, such as Clutterbuck, suggest that although they were not alone in working in the slums, the Anglo-Catholics were different in their approach. Clutterbuck writes that the Ritualists 'identified themselves with the poor in a way that other groups failed to do. This tradition has continued to the present day.'[87] He contrasts the Anglo-Catholic approach of being *with* the poor, as opposed to Evangelical churchmen who did social action *to* the poor. The theme of presence is evident here: with the Anglo-Catholics portrayed as being present with the poor as opposed to the tangential Evangelical approach. This is not an accurate portrayal, as Robert Vanderkiste exemplifies, but what is significant for this thesis is the narrative fed by such a portrayal. It is significant that the predominant modern Anglo-Catholic narrative of this period is that their forefathers had the moral high ground compared to their evangelical contemporaries. Towards the end of this chapter, I explore the interaction between the Evangelical-influenced *Mission-Shaped Church* report and those within the broad Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. This historical example provides a context for the contemporary belief among some Anglo-Catholics, including those within The

---

[85] Irene Howat, John Nicholls, and London City Mission, *Streets Paved with Gold: The Story of the London City Mission* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland; London: Christian Focus ; London City Mission, 2003), 38-39.

[86] Peter Jones and Steven King, *Pauper Voices, Public Opinion and Workhouse Reform in Mid-Victorian England: Bearing Witness* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 24-25.

[87] Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics,' 36.

Society, that their missional approach is unique, and perhaps even superior to that of Evangelicals.

In addition to social action, the ritualistic practice of the Ritualist priests is a key feature of their parochial practice. Like their Tractarian forefathers, the Eucharist was at the centre of the Ritualists' parochial practice. The 'vivid colour'[88] of the Ritualist practices was seen as a 'powerful principle'[89] that was highly attractional in the context of deprivation in Victorian cities. Even critics of the Ritualists, such as the evangelical Church Association,[90] considered their use of the visual to draw in and educate the poor a wise decision due to the perceived incapability of the poor to comprehend theological matters beyond the visual.[91] However, it is not certain that the urban poor were those who attended Ritualist churches.[92] Indeed, Reed proposes that it was the personality of priests rather than any Ritualist practice that engaged the urban poor.[93] However, as he writes, 'it may be less important whether the theory actually worked than that many people believed it did'.[94]

Although Victorian Anglo-Catholics and their contemporaries thought that extravagant liturgical practice attracted the poor, the modern reading is that it was not a successful missional approach. Even authors such as Clutterbuck, who reads this period generously, do not advocate this missional approach as a catholic approach today. However, this liturgically focused missiology developed in the interwar period with an emphasis on the transcendent in the worship of the

---

[88] R. F. Littledale, The Missionary Aspect of Ritualism,", Quoted in Orby Shipley, Church and the World*: Essays on Questions of the Day in 1866 (Classic Reprint).* (Forgotten Books, 2016), 33.

[89] Quoted in Orby Shipley, Church and the World*: Essays on Questions of the Day in 1866 (Classic Reprint).* (Forgotten Books, 2016), 524.

[90] Charles Bury A., 'The Church Association' (1873), Pusey House.

[91] J Masters, *The Form of Godliness: Being Some Remarks on Catholic Ritual, by a Priest of the Church of England*, 1867, https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_Form_of_Godliness_Being_Some_Remarks.html?id=8C9WAAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y. ,8.

[92] Reed paints a vivid picture of this with St Albans Holborn as a case study in John Shelton Reed, '"Ritualism Rampant in East London": Anglo-Catholicism and the Urban Poor', *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 3 (n.d.): 375–403, 384.

[93] Reed, *Glorious Battle,* 169.

[94] Reed, '"Ritualism Rampant in East London": Anglo-Catholicism and the Urban Poor'. 380.

congregation at the Mass. This idea can be found in the current discourse about mission.[95]

iv) <u>Hostility towards the Ritualists</u>

The Ritualist's liturgical practice may not have attracted the urban poor, but it certainly attracted controversy. Disturbance at parish level, bishops' attempts to use their powers to intervene in Ritualist parishes, and legal cases brought against Ritualist priests under the 1874 Public Worship Regulation Act are all examples of the resistance experienced during the Ritualist phase of the Anglo-Catholic movement. The opposition experienced by Ritualist priests also occurred within the wider setting of the Church of England. They met resistance from Evangelicals, who considered their reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles to be dishonest. Fuelled by both a level of homophobia and the unfortunate timing of anti-papist sentiment provoked by Pope Pius IX's 1851 restoration of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in England, Ritualists were considered both unmanly and un-English.[96] Although the Ritualists were not alone in drawing criticism from other factions within the Church of England, their aesthetic made them easy to identify. In addition, Evangelical organisations such as the Church Association galvanised political support for the 1874 Public Worship Regulation Act.

The Ritualists certainly felt resistance from protesting voices from within the Church of England, some of which came from within the Episcopate. Few bishops openly supported the Ritualists, with many intervening due to the introduction of Ritualist liturgical practice. Modern Anglo-Catholics such as Clutterbuck offer these episcopal interventions as evidence that the Ritualists were marginalised within the Church of England. Clearly, significant discontent arose due to the Ritualists' liturgical practice, but the claim of marginalisation is perhaps overstated. Indeed, they did receive rebukes and interventions from several bishops; however, they

---

[95] Alison Milbank, 'The Gift of the Trinity in Mission', in *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*, ed. Susan Lucas (Canterbury Press, 2020), 17–34, 21-23.

[96] Nigel Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 154.

were not alone in provoking reprimands from the bishops at the time. Examples of episcopal interventions in Evangelical affairs include the Bishop of London's attempt to ban his evangelical clergy from being involved in London City Mission's work due to tense relations between non-conformists and the Church of England. Anglo-Catholicism was not the only focus of the bishops' discontent. However, a narrative of a lack of support and, at times, outright hostility from bishops is not only evident in this period of history. Herring writes that the early Oxford Movement looked to the episcopacy for leadership, but was left unsatisfied by a failure to give hierarchical support to the Tractarian cause.[97] The introduction of the 1874 Public Worship Regulation Act added weight to the episcopal displeasure at Ritualist liturgical practice. Although few clergymen were convicted under the Act, its presence set much Ritualist practice outside of the Law. This situating of Ritualism is significant. To a certain extent, it did not matter that few were convicted. The effect on Anglo-Catholic self-identity was established: they were to be marginalised. One well-known prosecution under the Act was that of Fr Tooth, who was depicted in a *Vanity Fair* cartoon entitled 'The Christian Martyr',[98] while his actions can be described as 'a deliberate act of defiance of the court'.[99] Ultimately, the threat of the Public Worship Regulation Act and the experiences of clergymen, such as Fr Tooth, fed into a hermeneutic of marginalisation that is still present within Anglo-Catholicism today.

In this section, I have shown how the theme of marginalisation developed during the Ritualist period due to both local and national resistance to Ritualist liturgical practice. Before moving on to the interwar period, I would like to briefly introduce another associated theme: isolation and homelessness. During this Ritualist period, some priests within the Anglo-Catholic movement decided that their position within the Church of England had become untenable and moved to the Roman Catholic Church. Newman himself, in the early days of the movement, was received into the Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps inspired by Newman's actions,

---

[97] Herring, 'The Oxford Movement in Practice,' 57-58.
[98] Such cartoons of the Ritualists are now favoured among many Anglo-Catholic clergy today. *What Is Anglo-Catholicism?*, YouTube., https://youtu.be/HGwJzlpUd20.
[99] Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 255.

this theme of 'crossing the Tiber' was picked up by the following generation. A vivid example of this came in 1868, when all three of Fr Lowder's curates left for the Roman Catholic Church with no warning. The effect on Lowder was significant: as Robert Linklater observed, the act 'nearly killed Mr. Lowder'.[100] A sense of isolation or homelessness can be located in this story and others like it – a sense of remaining, of walking forward in the faith that the Church of England may fully rediscover its treasures, and yet being homeless and left by the wayside by their brother priests.

v) Parochial practice during the interwar period

The interwar period saw the solidification of the Anglo-Catholic movement within the Church of England, which led to a distinct parochial approach. The movement also grew in diversity, with Anglo-Catholics holding varying understandings of ritual practice and ecclesiology.[101] This diversification ought to be seen as a sign of maturity: that the Oxford Movement had influenced a wide range of priests to hold theology with Catholic characteristics. This led to an increase in the number of parishes with Anglo-Catholic clergy, with as many as one in five clergy identifying as Anglo-Catholic.[102] Although a natural diversity emerged in how they approached parish ministry, the period saw the development of a much more coherent parochial practice than that found since the conception of the Oxford Movement. The length of time that had elapsed since the Oxford Fathers allowed for a solidification of Anglo-Catholic belief and practice. Such a solidification was also due to the social context of the interwar period in English history. The First World War had left a scar across communities. The Spanish Flu of 1919 led to around 150,000 deaths in England and Wales. The nation was hurting, and the Church provided a framework for mourning and a sense of continuity. The National Church

---

[100] Cited in David Brown McIlhiney, *A Gentleman in Every Slum: Church of England Missions in East London, 1837-1914*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 16 (Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1988)., 29.
[101] John Gunstone, *Lift High the Cross: Anglo-Catholics and the Congress Movement* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010), 34-35.
[102] Gunstone, 'Lift High the Cross,' 37.

was of national importance. It is unsurprising that this era saw disagreements around funeral liturgy, which contributed to an increased sense of Catholic identity.[103] As a result, the social context of interwar England contributed to the solidification of Anglo-Catholicism.

The most significant sign of the movement's maturity can be seen in the Congresses held from 1920 to 1933. These gatherings of Anglo-Catholic clergy and followers took place at both the national and local levels. They came about because Anglo-Catholic clergy felt that their diocesan congresses – where the laity and clergy of a diocese gathered to discuss theological issues in light of their pastoral context – were no longer adequate. As John Gunstone, author of *Lift High the Cross,* explains: 'Catholics were sometimes invited to speak at the Church Congresses, but they felt they had no real opportunity in them to explain their beliefs and practices adequately.'[104] Under the vision of Fr Marcus Atlay, the first National Anglo-Catholic Congress was held. Such congresses signify a maturing of the movement, with speakers sharing papers on various topics, from moral theology to missionary practice.

The ideal parochial practice during the interwar period was a Eucharist-centred parish with multiple daily Masses. However, this was not the limit of a Catholic parish's efforts. An ideal parish would have several organisations catering for the whole community, from children to the elderly, in addition to branches of the English Church Union, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Guild of All Souls.[105] These organisations were both vehicles for devotional practice and social action. Nonetheless, the Eucharist remained at the very centre of the Anglo-Catholic parish, from which all liturgical practice and social action emanated.

While the social vision of Anglo-Catholic priests varied, the Catholic Social Movement was an influential voice during this period. Published decades before, Charles Gore's *Lux Mundi* helped popularise the link between Catholic identity and

---

[103] Gunstone, '*Lift High the Cross,*' 13.
[104] Gunstone, '*Lift High the Cross,*' 1.
[105] Gunstone, '*Lift High the Cross,*' 272.

social action.[106] This vision of a social gospel, in which the sacraments have tangible and fruitful implications for social life, found roots in the fertile soil of interwar England, where the post-war economic recession had led to rising unemployment and deprivation.

In his speech on 'Our Present Duty' at the 1923 Anglo-Catholic Congress, Frank Weston, the Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar, challenged his audience to move beyond Adoration and walk 'with Christ mystically present' in them. In Weston's view, the encounter with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament ought to open a Catholic's eyes to Jesus in their city or village. His famous line issues the challenge: 'You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the Tabernacle if you do not pity Jesus in the slum.'[107] Weston articulated the Catholic understanding that action is required in the face of suffering. Although not explicitly mentioned, the reference to Matthew 25:35–40 is apparent. How Christians treat their fellow humans should be with the same reverence as how they treat Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. A secondary reason for assisting the poor was pragmatic. It could not be expected that individuals could uphold moral standards when living in the pressurised environments of the slums. The provision of suitable housing would free individuals to attend to their spiritual lives. Fundamental care for fellow humans underpinned the Anglo-Catholic response to the housing crisis during this period. One example of this is Fr Basil Jellicoe's activity at St Mary's Somers Town, where Jellicoe and his associates formed the St Pancras House Improvement Society, a housing association that built flats and purchased and renovated houses. The use of funds from philanthropic donors led to the establishment of savings clubs and nursery schools; 'reformed' pubs were even founded.[108] Jellicoe's example has been used in attempts to inspire those within the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England to engage with

---

[106] Kenneth Leech, 'The Radical Anglo-Catholic Social Vision' (Centre for Theology and Public Issues, 13 March 1989). 3.

[107] Frank Weston, 'Our Present Duty: Concluding Address, Anglo-Catholic Congress.' (London: Society of SS Peter and Paul, 1923).

[108] London County Council. Housing and Public Health Committee, *London Housing* (London County Council, 1937), 209. Also, Sarah Flew demonstrates that the use of wealthy supporters was common within the Church of England at the time in Sarah Flew, *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856-1914*, Perspectives in Economic and Social History 37 (London ; Brookfield, Vermont: Pickering & Chatto, 2015).

Fresh Expressions. Stephen Cottrell refers to Jellicoe's actions as giving 'a genuine and liberating fresh expression to church life'.[109] His hope is to inspire contemporary Anglo-Catholics to consider bold visions of parish infrastructure positively impacting deprived communities.

Despite its origins in rural parishes when the Catholic Movement first left the confines of the Oxford common rooms, during the interwar period, the movement made faster progress in urban parishes than in rural environs. One reason for this is how difficult it was for rural priests to campaign for social action in the same way that their city-dwelling counterparts had done. Fr Briscoe, Rector of West Bagborough, a village in the Quantock Hills, spoke on this subject at the first Priests' Convention in Oxford in 1921:

> our mission today is to the squire and his family no less than the farmers and labourers. We must never be content until we see the squire and the farmers and the labourers kneeling side by side at Mass on Sunday, and coming to the sacraments.[110]

As Fr Briscoe explains, it was not that rural priests were less interested in social matters than their urban counterparts. However, rural parishes' social contexts led to a more diverse and yet interconnected socio-economic landscape where priests had to be wise in how they attempted to influence local matters. What this quotation from Briscoe highlights is the place of the Eucharist in the Catholic social vision, as well as a sense that unity in receiving the sacrament in the Eucharist may, in turn, achieve a positive social outcome. The positioning of the Eucharist at the heart of the social gospel can be seen in both Briscoe's rural context and the urban context of Weston's challenge in 'Our Present Duty'.

Approaches to liturgical change were similarly different between urban and rural clergy. This is exemplified in Briscoe's speech at the second Priests' Convention in

---

[109]Stephen Cottrell, 'Letting Your Actions Do the Talking: Mission and the Catholic Tradition', in *Ancient Faith, Furture Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (London: Canterbury Press, 2009), 66–80. 67.
[110] Report of the First Priest's Convention 1921, cited in Gunstone, *Lift High the Cross,* 180.

1932, in which he demonstrated that a rural priest must prioritise which Ritualist liturgical changes he wished to accomplish. The rural priest should lead by example rather than scold congregants for not adhering to Catholic practices, thus bringing a congregation along to a more catholic parochial approach. Although not all rural priests took this gentle approach, this difference between rural and urban congregations will resonate with priests today. The city often allows faster change across all sectors, not excluding liturgical practice.

A practice shared by both urban and rural Anglo-Catholic parishes during this interwar period was the development of the teaching of the Faithful. As Gunstone notes, 'Teaching the faith was regarded as the most important task of the parish priest after saying mass and administering the sacraments.'[111] Although teaching was present in Anglo-Catholic parishes before this point, it was during this period that it became a missional priority, leading to resources such as *Catholic Prayers for Church of England People*, *The Anglo-Catholic Prayer Book*, and *St Swithin's Prayer Book* being produced to aid priests in their efforts. Such publications guided people's prayers and equipped them to respond to questions from friends about Catholic practice. Variance within these publications reflected the spectrum of belief among Anglo-Catholic clergy. In the publication of these books and the approach of rural priests in exemplifying Ritualist liturgical practice, it can be seen how Anglo-Catholics during this period considered liturgical practice, with proper explanation, as missional. Both the education of the Faithful in helping them understand and engage with the Mass at a deeper level, as well as the effect this had on the overall atmosphere at Sunday worship, had missional consequences. Fr Williams explained this in his speech at the 1932 Priests' Convention: 'The ritual, combined with the obvious sincerity of those present, helped make visitors aware of the numinous in worship.'[112] While the effect of corporate adherence to Anglo-Catholic practice was powerful in creating an atmosphere conducive to worship for visitors to Anglo-Catholic parishes, according to priests such as Fr Sparrow Simpson, this simply was not enough: 'We sometimes hear of what is called the

---

[111] Gunstone, 'Lift High the Cross,' 281.
[112] Cited in Gunstone, 'Lift High the Cross,' 287.

magnetic power of the Eucharist as a great dramatic rite. It is, indeed, exceedingly impressive. But its meaning will not be properly apprehended without dogmatic instruction.'[113] Here, parochial practice can be seen as not only providing well-executed liturgical practice to enable people's experience of God through the numinous nature of Catholic ritual, but mission also being the catechetical teaching of the Faithful to enable them to understand what is occurring at the Mass.

Mission during this interwar period can be seen in the social action of Anglo-Catholic parishes in response to the unemployment and housing crises, as exemplified by Fr Jellicoe. This was motivated by the outworking of sacramental theology as informing the Christian response to poverty through a social gospel approach. Despite the disparity of approach between rural and urban parishes due to the different social dynamics present in each, I have demonstrated that the idea of the social gospel – that what occurs at the Mass ought to affect how the Church engages with the poor – was held by Anglo-Catholic priests in both urban and rural parishes. During this period, Ritualist liturgical practices continued to be seen as parish mission in that individuals could encounter Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, with Ritualist practice assisting such encounters. As I have shown, the congregation played a role in drawing those who lived in the parish but were not a part of its eucharistic life closer into that community of faith through eucharistic encounter. What this period saw was the development of teaching to aid this encounter.

vi) <u>Marginalisation during the interwar period</u>

Tracking the theme of marginalisation through this era is more ambiguous than in the previous periods. Anglo-Catholicism began to take a more established place within religious life in England. The death of Queen Victoria, known to dislike Anglo-Catholics, and the succession of King Edward VII were significant moments in the movement becoming associated with the Church establishment and no longer operating as a fringe group. King Edward, while Prince of Wales, was known

---

[113]W. S. J. Simpson, *Christ and the Church* (SPCK, 1936), 49.

to have worshipped at All Saints Margaret Street, a parish within the Anglo-Catholic tradition.[114] Despite this closer alignment, however, Anglo-Catholics continued to be unpopular. This can be seen in their depiction in secular publications, such as the popular magazine *Punch,* and in some novels[115] during this period. The pervading sense was that to be Anglo-Catholic was not to be truly English. The secular press only compounded what many Anglo-Catholics felt already; at least, that is the reading-back of this period conducted by Anglo-Catholic writers such as Clutterbuck, who writes,

> Catholics could be forgiven for thinking that their bishops were against them and seeking their undoing, for their record had not been good from the very beginning of the movement. The fact that they had stood aside and let their priests be prosecuted and sent to prison was not exactly encouraging.[116]

Although the congresses can be seen as a sign of the success of the Anglo-Catholic movement, the picture was not quite so simple. A certain degree of approval from the Church hierarchy is evident in the 1930 Congress having 28,873 delegates with 57 bishops in attendance and a greeting sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the occasion. However, on closer examination, the majority of the bishops in attendance came from overseas. Domestic bishops were, with a few exceptions, notably absent. Here, a theme of a lack of value begins to emerge; the Anglo-Catholic Movement, like their Ritualist practices, was only tolerated, not valued or seen to be a source of wisdom by their bishops.

The Anglo-Catholic movement had first emerged as a dissenting group, lacking support or leadership from within the Church hierarchy. Indeed, as set out above, it regularly experienced a distinct lack of support from its bishops. This placed them in a situation of duality, where their own diocesan bishop offered no support. In

---

[114] Peter Galloway and Christopher Rawll, *Good and Faithful Servants* (Worthing, West Sussex [England: Churchman Publishing, 1988). 95-96.

[115] Compton Mackenzie, *The Altar Steps*, 1922; Compton Mackenzie, *The Parson's Progress*, 1923; Compton Mackenzie, *The Heavenly Ladder*, 1924.

[116] Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics,' 70.

contrast, bishops from elsewhere in the Anglican Church became informal episcopal leaders of the movement. Today's priests in The Society are situated within a similar duality. During the interwar era, a sense of being marginalised was difficult for the movement to shake off even as it drew closer to the establishment of the Church of England – not so much rooted in a reality of opposition but in a group narrative of being let down by the Church hierarchy. Indeed, this narrative informs the group's interpretation of events, ever strengthening the sense of disenfranchisement. This is an important moment to note when considering the theme of marginalisation in the self-understanding of priests in The Society today. They are inheritors of this emotional response to the Church of England hierarchy.

Fewer formal clashes arose between Anglo-Catholic priests and their bishops during this interwar period. Indeed, many liturgical changes that had previously sparked much controversy were tolerated. This may have been due to the increased acceptability of Catholic Ritualist practices, but also to a change in approach by many parish priests. As explained above, Ritualist practice was increasingly introduced after significant teaching and explanation. Combined with the passing of time making Catholic practice less new, this meant that changes were more palatable to both congregations and their bishops. However, one theological disagreement that did continue into this period was regarding the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament. Some priests were banned from this practice, with the exception being in case of illness. For example, Clutterbuck recalls his parish of St George's Beckenham being 'forced'[117] to replace its tabernacle with an aumbry in its side chapel.

As frustrating as these interventions from bishops restricting Catholic practice may have been, I do not think it is fair to offer them as evidence of marginalisation. Marginalisation is too strong a word to describe the situation of Anglo-Catholics in relation to the wider Church of England. Rather, a sense of homelessness is evoked, with the Church of England not providing the fraternity and support required for priests to feel secure. This can be seen in the establishment of the Congresses.

---

[117] Clutterbuck, 'Marginal Catholics,' 90.

Despite the existence of Church Congresses at the diocesan level, Anglo-Catholics needed to gather with likeminded people. The aims of the first Congress were set out by the Chairman, Fr Atlay, in an article in the *Church Times* as threefold: to strengthen the Faithful, to extend delegates' knowledge and to make plain the Anglo-Catholic position as well as demonstrating its strength. At the same time, a need arose to hunker down and consolidate the movement to both encourage and educate. These efforts were largely due to the sense that this fraternity was not fulfilled in the established Church of England structures; something else was required.[118]

vii) <u>Reading of isolation</u>

Only scant analysis exists of the Anglo-Catholic movement's interpretation of its own history. Although recent publications have engaged with the history of the movement, little research has considered the present in relation to the past. Of the key texts in this area, the majority is focused on a specific period: the Oxford Movement,[119] the Victorian Ritualists[120] and the Congress Movement.[121] Others provide a broader sweep: Michael Yelton's *Anglican Papalism* covers 1990 to 1960,[122] William Oddie's *Roman Option*[123] addresses the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood, Clutterbuck's *Marginal Catholics* starts at the Oxford Fathers and concludes in 1994, and Pickering's *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity* covers the movement from its origins to the first edition's publication in 1989 (while the preface and postscript to the 2008 edition address the effects of the ordination of women to the priesthood). As a result, analysis of the later, more recent history of the Catholic movement in the Church of England is scarce. This is partly due to the difficulty of writing an account

---

[118] Gunstone, 'Lift High the Cross,' 6-7.
[119] Herring, 'The Oxford Movement in Practice.'
[120] Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910*; Reed, *Glorious Battle*.
[121] Gunstone, 'Lift High the Cross.'
[122] Michael Yelton, *Anglican Papalism: An Illustrated History 1900-1960* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008).
[123] Oddie, 'The Roman Option.'

of such recent events. As Podmore notes, we are currently in an 'interim period, when memory is lacking or dim yet definitive history remains unwritten.'[124] Pickering expresses his disappointment that his 1989 book did not provoke further academic conversation about Anglo-Catholicism, its history and its future, attributing such a lack of discourse to 'the contemporary intellectual weakness of Anglo-Catholicism'.[125] This 'intellectual weakness' observed by Pickering is significant because it affects the movement's reading of its own history, which directly influences its self-understanding today. As I have demonstrated, Anglo-Catholicism undoubtedly met resistance throughout this history, particularly during the earlier periods of the Oxford Movement and the Victorian Ritualists. However, this cannot be viewed as a unique marginalisation of Anglo-Catholics, because Evangelicals also experienced similar resistance from the Church hierarchy. Resistance to Anglo-Catholicism was also not often a theological effort, but due to other non-theological factors, particularly wider socio-political events. However, this is not the perspective put forth by Anglo-Catholic writers during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, who depict a narrative that Catholic Anglicans have been marginalised since the movement's inception.[126]

The writing of Clutterbuck exemplifies the predominant 20th-century reading of the history of Anglo-Catholicism by Anglo-Catholic writers. This reading projects a narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation onto the past, which in turn informs a narrative of marginalisation in the present. Yates notes how Ollard's 1915 study of the Oxford Movement[127] 'has exercised a very powerful influence over all those writing on the topic'.[128] Mirroring his reading, until the late 20th century, Anglican Church historians – many of whom were Anglo-Catholics – reinforced the narrative of the struggle of Ritualism in revitalising the Church of England. As Anglo-Catholic Ritualism became accepted within the Church of England, the need for this

---

[124] Podmore, 'Introduction'. xv.
[125] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism,* preface to the 2008 edition.
[126] Clutterbuck's Marginal Catholics would be an example of this.
[127] Sidney Leslie Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (Mowbray, 1915), https://archive.org/stream/ashorthistoryoft00ollauoft#page/n11/mode/1up.
[128] Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 8.

narrative as a binding story ended; yet, as Yates writes, 'old myths, once created, die hard.'[129]

Yates intends a 'revisionist study' of the Victorian period.[130] In a different vein, Pickering attempts to free the Tractarians from the Ritualist lens propagated by Ollard's work. Contemporary historians have recognised that Ollard's seminal text is more a product of its time than an accurate study of the past, for he did not think that the battle had been won. Referring to Ritualist priests such as Neale and Machonochie, Ollard wrote, 'it may be that in a few generations their names will be forgotten by all but students of Church History.'[131] Perhaps Ollard would be surprised by the reverence in which Anglo-Catholic ordinands hold these names today. This questioning of the effect of Ollard's work on the reading of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism occurred only from the 1960s onwards; indeed, as Yates writes, 'in some Anglo-Catholic circles, [it] is still not questioned.'[132] If Yates is correct, there may continue to be a lack of questioning of a historical narrative that reinforces the idea of an Anglo-Catholic struggle of being marginalised within the Church of England today.

Throughout Anglo-Catholic history, there have been instances of opposition and hostility towards Anglo-Catholics' theological and, in particular, liturgical convictions. As I have demonstrated, many of these instances need to be considered in their broader political and economic contexts. Also, consideration must be given to similar actions towards other church factions, including Evangelicals. Such consideration shows that this historical opposition cannot be viewed as marginalisation, even if Anglo-Catholics felt side-lined within the Church. This is because the opposition did not originate from a single source or conviction. Rather, many instances were influenced by England's foreign policy and economic norms. However, the absence of systemic marginalisation of Anglo-Catholics does not mean that this is not a powerful narrative for the movement – a narrative of

---

[129] Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 8.
[130] Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 4.
[131] Ollard, A Short History of the Oxford Movement. 113.
[132] Yates, 'Anglican Ritualism,' 6.

disenfranchisement due to a historical lack of episcopal leadership, leading to a sense of homelessness where the Church of England does not provide adequate space for fraternity. The attendance of the congresses demonstrates the hunger at the time for such a space. In the following section, the high attendance at a recent Anglo-Catholic mission conference demonstrates a similar eagerness today.

Those across the Anglo-Catholic spectrum experience this narrative of marginalisation. Priests in The Society are situated at a specific intersection between this broader Anglo-Catholic narrative and the perceived lack of value given to them as a group in the Church of England's decision to ordain women. The corporate bereavement and perceived lack of value of the ecclesiological work towards reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church were experienced in the wider context of the historical narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation. Indeed, the decision to ordain women to the priesthood fed into the same narrative of marginalisation and homelessness, which was only compounded by the departure of hundreds of Anglo-Catholic priests to the Roman Catholic Church. With this in mind, I now turn to the reception of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report by the participant-priests.

1.4 Mission and marginalisation in the 21st century

This third and final section of the chapter considers the missional emphasis of the Church of England since 2000 and how it interacts with a culture of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation. In doing so, it establishes the recent cultural and missional context of this project's participant-priests. Although the Church of England's mission practice has undergone a variety of changes over the last 30 years, with an increase in evangelistic courses such as Alpha and Christianity Explored in addition to a growth in missional communities, nothing represents a sea-change like the *Mission-Shaped Church* report. With this in mind, this thesis engages with this report as a representation of the Church of England's recent missional strategy.

i) *Mission-Shaped Church*

Over the last three decades, the focus of mission within the Church of England has taken a turn. Church planting, or establishing new worshipping communities, has been the missional strategy in vogue. Seen by many to be spearheaded by Evangelicals, this focus has resulted in the new language of a 'mixed economy' or 'mixed ecology', wherein both inherited forms of Church and Fresh Expressions coexist. As a result, Anglo-Catholics have often felt 'at odds with the language and presuppositions of this movement.'[133] Despite George Lings identifying 1980 as the start of the 'church planting movement',[134] it was in 1994 – within a context of decline in church attendance and an increase in unofficial church plants – that the House of Bishops commissioned a report to identify good practice in church planting and identify how church plants may sit in relation to the parish principle.

In the subsequent report, *Breaking New Ground*, church planting was described as 'a supplementary strategy which enhances the essential thrust of the parish principle.'[135] The report was an attempt to offer reassurance that church planting was not eroding the parish principle as a key feature of the Church of England's ecclesial identity. The parish principle is the commitment of the Church of England to be present in every community, with every inch of land in England falling within a parish's geographical boundaries. In the years that followed, church planting continued in evermore diverse manifestations, including church plants, grafts and worshipping communities within sub-cultures such as Goths or Surfers. This again raised the question of the assumptions of Anglican identity around congregational worship and, in particular, the parish model. In 2002, the Church of England's Board of Mission set up a group to review and develop the *Breaking New Ground* report. The group's report was published in 2004 under the title *Mission-Shaped Church*. The report's subtitle, 'church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context', highlights the sense of a change in how 'church' can exist. From the outset, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, sought to

---

[133] Lucas, Introduction, x.
[134] Lings, A History of Fresh Expressions, 161
[135] P.Harris (ed.), *Breaking New Ground* (London: Church House, 1994), p.vi.

reassure the reader that 'The challenge is not to force everything into the familiar mould; but neither is it to tear up the rulebook and start from scratch (as if that were ever possible or realistic).'[136]

The report starts by asking how the Church ought to respond to the changing context in which she finds herself. It outlines social and behavioural changes in an increasingly fragmented British society. It argues that individuals live within networks rather than being rooted in a locality. This poses challenges to the Church of England, whose missional approach is rooted in the local through its parochial system. In response, *Mission-Shaped Church* takes a step towards solidifying and affirming the existence of non-traditional models of church; in doing so, it sparked a heated debate within the Church of England about the very nature of local church. In the report, Fresh Expressions and church plants are offered as complementary models to traditional inherited forms of church. The report argues that the diverse forms of church were indeed church because they carried this same missional DNA; they were Fresh Expressions of the same Church. In questioning what this shared DNA is, it seeks to identify what the Church is and what it is for. The report identifies that a missionary church is Trinitarian, relational, incarnational, disciple-making and transformational.[137] These are the five values that all churches, whether Fresh Expressions or inherited, have in common.

ii)   Critiques of *Mission-Shaped Church*

Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank, John Milbank and Martyn Percy all offer critiques of *Mission-Shaped Church*, particularly taking issue with Fresh Expressions rather than church planting strategy in general. Their critiques broadly fall into three arguments: form cannot be divorced from substance, truth can be found in the Church's practice and the new should not be valued above the

---

[136] Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council, 'Mission-Shaped Church.' vii.
[137] Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council, 'Mission-Shaped Church.' 81-82.

received. Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank's *For the Parish* is the most comprehensive critique of Fresh Expressions. Unsurprisingly, given their academic backgrounds, they offer a critique of 'theological and philosophical grounds'.[138] They start with a Wittgensteinian philosophical objection that form cannot be separated from content: the form of church matters, and its substance cannot be separated from this form. In a similar way, here drawing from von Balthasar, Christ's form is the unity of his being:

> In Christ, all the elements of his life and person come together in his form. His person, actions and preaching are inseparable within this whole, as are his divinity and his humanity. Here the Church imitates the Head of which she is the Body. For her also, her identity and her forms of life, her actions and her message are all of a piece.[139]

This is the book's fundamental criticism: that the outward form of the Church cannot be discarded as a husk while retaining a kernel-like substance of its essence. The authors argue that this is a philosophical and theological impossibility, since form cannot be divorced from substance.

Because of this philosophical truth, as demonstrated in the Incarnation, church life (including worship) holds the gospel message within it. Truth can be found in the Church's practice. Davison and Milbank argue that the 'message and purpose of the Church are to be found in the way she lives and worships.'[140] A significant example of this is how the parish system speaks to the theological substance of the gospel of reconciliation.[141] Where Fresh Expressions are characterised as being for a homogenous subculture rather than the diversity of the parish, they fail to embody the gospel truth of reconciliation. *Mission-Shaped Church,* in Davison and Milbank's view, makes a grave theological misstep in divorcing form and substance and, in doing so, denies the truth of the Gospel that is held within the inherited

---

[138] Davison and Milbank, '*For the Parish,*' viii.
[139] Davison and Milbank, '*For the Parish,*' 7-8.
[140] Davison and Milbank, '*For the Parish,*' 9.
[141] Davison and Milbank, '*For the Parish*,' 68.

model of the local church: the parish. This leads to the third critique that the new should not be valued above the received.

This third critique – that *Mission-Shaped Church* values newness over the received model of church exemplified in the parish – is found in all three of the aforementioned publications. It is also the most impassioned of the three criticisms, taking multiple forms. *Mission-Shaped Church* is accused of pandering to 'capitalism',[142] 'managerialism',[143] 'pluralism'[144] and 'consumerism'.[145] The motivation, as viewed by its critics, is not mission but 'collusion'[146] with contemporary culture, post-institutional tendencies whereby individualism is valued above community and, for John Milbank, the managerialism adopted by Protestants in general.[147] According to Davison and Milbank, this succumbing to cultural pressures is caused by 'a failure of confidence, a denial of responsibility and a throughgoing underestimation of the revolutionary nature of the church.'[148] For Percy, the result is that 'God, religion and faith have become consumable commodities.'[149]

In their critiques, Davison and Milbank and Milbank and Percy make an assumption over the givenness of the parish system: that the parish model is inextricably linked to the parish principle. William Foulger offers a robust defence of Fresh Expressions as inhabiting the parish principle while not operating within the parish system.[150] (Foulger's work as a critique of the assumption of the givenness of the parish system will be further addressed in Chapter 4.) Therefore, *Mission-Shaped Church* ought to be considered within the historical context of previous significant changes and developments in Anglican ecclesial understanding and practice, as demonstrated in Avis's study of the development of the Anglican understanding of

---

[142] John Milbank p.118.
[143] John Milbank. P.117.
[144] Percy p.127
[145] Percy p.124.
[146] Percy, 'Old Tricks', p.123
[147] John Milbank p.118
[148] FTP p.81.
[149] Percy p.124.
[150] Will Foulger, Present in Every Place.

church.[151] What *Mission-Shaped Church* attempts to offer is the development of Anglican missional practice, not a scrapping of what has come before. Yet, despite such assurances, the critique has been that the report reflects a move towards rejecting the inherited in favour of the new.

iii)   The cultural effect of *Mission-Shaped Church*

In this thesis, the *Mission-Shaped Church* report is considered to broadly represent the Church of England's current missional approach. It is brought into dialogue with the participant-priests' reflections on their missiological practice, considering the compatibility of their practice and the effect that the report's reception has on their self-understanding as priests in The Society. I argue that the release of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report signified a broad shift in the Church of England's missiological approach. However, the missiology of the Church of England in the 21st century has not been uniform, and *Mission-Shaped Church* is undoubtedly a contested document.

Although *Mission-Shaped Church* was published over 20 years ago, it could be considered the most influential missiological text produced by the Church of England in recent history. This is because although the resulting missional practice of many dioceses and parishes is not exactly what the report envisaged, the current practice of considering a parish's worshipping community to number beyond its Sunday congregation, along with a more recent emphasis on resource churches, is directly influenced by the broadening work achieved in the *Mission-Shaped Church* report. Where the Parish Communion movement can be credited for an emphasis on Sunday Eucharist services rather than morning or evening prayer, *Mission-Shaped Church* can be credited for emphasising a diversity of models of church as valid and indeed necessary for ministering in a post-Christian England. The far-reaching effect of the report can be attributed to the resources committed to it by the Church of England. Nonetheless, the report was considered a starting point, not the destination. Following the publication of *Mission-Shaped Church* in 2004, a series of books was released that considered the principles set

---

[151] P. Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church* (London:SPCK, 2000)

51

out in *Mission-Shaped Church* as a 'journey'[152] that would affect every area of church life and explored the report's implications in different missional settings, including parish,[153] rural,[154] spirituality,[155] youth[156] and children.[157] The effects of the report reached further than the Church of England's missiological congregation, as evidenced in the report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party, *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church*.[158] Furthermore, in the wake of the critiques outlined above, defences of the report were produced.[159]

However, the flurry of publications from Church House Publishing between 2004 and 2010 is not the sum of the literary effect of *Mission-Shaped Church*. More recently, various publications have invoked the *Mission-Shaped Church* moniker. These books, not published by the Church of England, signify the place that the *Mission-Shaped Church* report holds in the consciousness of the Church of England. While many of these publications are broadly in line with the missiological approach outlined in the report, a similar phenomenon can be observed in those opposing the report. The adoption of the flagship title critiquing *Mission-Shaped Church*, entitled *For the Parish*, for a campaign to defend the parochial system of the Church of England signifies the report's long-lasting and far-reaching effects.

Therefore, despite the time that has passed since its publication, *Mission-Shaped Church* is a suitable dialogue partner for the participant-priests' missiological reflections in this project. This is because of the permeating effect that the report has had on the psyche of the Church of England. No other missiological text has

---

[152] Paul Bayes, Time Sledge, Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing World, Church House Publishing 2009. v.

[153] Paul Bayes, Time Sledge, Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing World, Church House Publishing 2009.

[154] Sally Gaze, Graham James, Mission-shaped and Rural: Growing Churches in the Countryside. Church House Publishing, 2011.

[155] Susan Hope, Mission-Shaped Spirituality: The Transforming Power of Mission, Church House Publishing, 2006.

[156] Graham Cray, Tim Sudworth, Chris Russell, Mission-Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and Church, Church House Publishing, 2007.

[157] Margaret Withers, Mission-Shaped Children: Moving Towards a Child-centered Church, Church House Publishing 2010

[158] Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church: Report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party, Church House Publishing, 2012.

[159] Steven Croft, Loveday Alexander, Martyn Atkins, Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church, Church House Publishing, 2022.

infiltrated Church of England culture in the same way, with over 13 titles responding or seeking to contextualise the report. Here, a line could be drawn between the report and the Church of England's vision for the 2020s: 'Missionary disciples: Jesus centred and shaped in the whole of life.'[160] While academics quickly move on, seeking to engage with the next ideological zeitgeist, the lived effects of *Mission-Shaped Church* must be considered, specifically its opening of the gateway for resource churches and its apparent devaluing of the parish, which continue to have an unsettling effect on the self-understanding of this project's participant-priests. Furthermore, the content of the report, particularly in its lack of reference to priestly presence at the Eucharist as a central missional tool, is a significant idea with which to engage the reflections of the participant-priests. While we are certainly in a post-*Mission-Shaped Church* world, with far more emphasis on multiple congregations rather than fresh expressions and with church planting out of resource churches as a prominent strategy, it was *Mission-Shaped Church* that cleared the decks and set the scene for any current missiological discourse, including this thesis. As a report, it crystallises a major shift, the effects of which the participant-priests are currently living. Therefore, while over two decades old, *Mission-Shaped Church* remains a suitable representative document for the Church of England's current missiological trajectory.

The critique that the modern Church of England, as represented by *Mission-Shaped Church*, values the new over the received and the chosen over the given is significant for identifying the current cultural context of the Church of England. This critique of the Church of England's missional approach is significant because it not only represents a theological difference but also the perceived value given to different priests' work. For all the theological discussions, which are of course suitable and necessary, there is something deeply personal about this debate. This is due to the intensely personal nature of vocation. As such, the perceived undervaluing of a particular outworking of the priestly vocation shifts this debate

---

[160]   https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/GS%20MIsc%201307%20for%20Missionary%20Disciples%20Workshop.pdf

beyond the purely theoretical and the theological and into the personal. The question becomes: Whose ministry is valued and whose is not?

The personal nature of this debate can be demonstrated by the language used by each of the four critical authors. Their tone is particularly adversarial, demonstrating the heat in the debate within the Church of England around these matters. An example of this is Davison and Milbank's editorial decision to inform the reader that Fresh Expressions shares its name with an American brand of scented cat litter. It is unclear how such a detail supports their theological argument. Likewise, in claiming that *Mission-Shaped Church* and Fresh Expressions are 'a clear conspiracy against the parish',[161] John Milbank uses adversarial rhetoric. Where Martyn Percy's language is less overtly adversarial, it is hard to believe his claim to 'not mean to offer a cynical or even critical perspective'.[162] In reading the literature, something visceral is evident in this debate. I am not commenting on the rightness or wrongness of these editorial decisions; rather, I highlight them to offer a picture of the climate of debate within the Church of England.

It would be naive to suggest that this debate is limited to mission strategy meetings. This debate, and the fault lines it has been fought across, has permeated almost every aspect of communication within the Church of England. The personal nature of this debate – questioning the value of priests based on their missional approach – frames other conversations. One such example that proved particularly volatile was the reaction to the guidance from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for priests to not live-stream 'private prayer',[163] which was interpreted as including private celebration of the Eucharist from their church buildings due to COVID-19 social-distancing restrictions. To be properly understood, this debate – which will be returned to in Chapters 3 and 4 – must be viewed in the context of

---

[161] John Milbank, 'Stale Expressions: The Management-Shaped Church', *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 21 (2008), 117-128. P.124.

[162] {Citation}Percy, 'Old Dogs,' 30.

[163] Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, 'Letter from Archbishops', 24 March 2020, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/20200324%20Letter%20from%20Archbishops%20and%20bishops_0.pdf.ra

the fallout caused by *Mission-Shaped Church* and, indeed, the perceived support given to this missional strategy by both Welby and Sentamu, who come from the Evangelical tradition of the Church of England.

Davison and Milbank summarise the effect that *Mission-Shaped Church* has had on some sub-cultures within the Church of England as follows:

> [There is] a strong feeling of disenfranchisement, of a disconnect between classic Anglicanism and the growing orthodoxy of Fresh Expressions, and, in particular, of the way in which the 'mixed economy' idea sanctions part of the Church floating free from Anglican norms.[164]

The report and the tensions surrounding it have set the tone for missional discourse within the Church of England over the last two decades. It is within this context that any discussion of mission in the Church of England is situated, and this thesis is no exception. In addition, the participant-priests are situated within the historical context established above – of both the Anglo-Catholic mission of ritualist liturgy and social action and the narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation. Furthermore, this group of priests is likely to be experiencing both 'a strong feeling of disenfranchisement' due to the missional zeitgeist of the Church of England and a sense of bereavement due to the ordination of women to the priesthood. Of course, some variance in experience is likely, but this is nonetheless the overarching cultural context of traditional Catholics within the Church of England today. As shown above, the personal nature of these two debates should not be underestimated. The sense of a Church of England striving for the vision set out in *Mission-Shaped Church* – and the perceived undervaluing of the ministry of run-of-the-mill parish priests – has occurred in the decades following the debate around female ordination, a debate which 'penetrated to the centre of personal identity'.[165]

---

[164] Davison and Milbank, '*For the Parish,*' *Introduction.*
[165] Christopher Cocksworth, Foreword of Fathers in God ed Podmore. P.i.

1.5 Research context

Having established both the historical context of marginalisation and isolation for this project's participant-priests and the missional context of the Church of England's *Mission-Shaped Church* report, I now turn to the empirical research context.

i)   Anglo-Catholic missiology

A growing body of research has considered missional approaches in the Church of England, the majority of which concerns the Evangelical tradition.[166] However, mirroring the recent growth of Anglo-Catholic missional engagement online and the joint Forward in Faith / Anglican Catholic Futures 2017 conference, qualitative research into Anglo-Catholic mission is increasing. My DThM colleague, John Wallace, is currently conducting congregational studies into Anglo-Catholic parishes using church planting methods. While his research demonstrates their practices and underlying beliefs, only one of his participant congregations is Traditional Catholic.

A Time to Sow[167] profiles seven parishes within the Greater London area, in the Dioceses of London and in Southwark. Three of the parishes are Traditional Catholic and under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. As such, their priests are within my broad research pool, although they are not necessarily participant priests. Each parish demonstrates growth in Sunday attendance. The report identifies seven characteristics of this growth:

1. Growth-minded priests

2. Maximising resources

3. Building leadership capacity

---

[166] Ric Thorpe, city centre resource churches, John Valentine, Theological formation for church planters
[167] Thorlby, *A Time to Sow. Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London*.

4. Hospitality

5. Children welcome

6. Open to working with local partners

7. Midweek encounters.[168]

The report contains in-depth profiles of each parish, with some reference to the parish priest. However, it does not offer 'thick' descriptions of the priest's self-understanding of their practice.

Time to Sow North[169] is a response to the London-focused original *Time to Sow* report with a broader spread of parishes. Two of the report's recommendations are to support growth-minded priests and to develop the Theology of the Liturgy.[170] However, little suggestion has been given to how this could look in practice. A more in-depth data set from Traditionalist Anglo-Catholic priests on their self-understanding could inform discussion around applying these recommendations.

A notable theme in the recent literature on Anglo-Catholic mission is that of confidence. This is in keeping with the assessed growth in Anglo-Catholic missional discourse. In her foreword to *A Time to Sow*, Alison Milbank refers to the Anglo-Catholic tradition suffering a 'crisis of confidence'.[171] Davison refers to a 'truly confident Anglo-Catholicism'[172] being one that is open to learning from other traditions of the Church of England, implying that this is a confidence he would encourage. This theme of confidence also appears in the findings of the *Time to Sow North* report, which identifies a 'growing confidence' among traditional Catholic priests ordained in the last decade.[173] According to the report, 'This

---

[168] Thorlby, Time to Sow. 77-78.
[169] Tomlinson, 'Time to Sow in the North'.
[170] Tomlinson, Time to Sow North. 30-33.
[171] Thorlby, *Time to Sow*. iii.
[172] Andrew Davison, '"With God There Is No Zero-Sum": A Sermon for the Closing Mass of the Anglican Catholic Future / Forward in Faith Conference 20 September 2018', in *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission* (Canterbury Press, 2020), 118–21. 121.
[173] Tomlinson, Time to Sow North. 15.

confidence has freed them to be more energised and hopeful.'[174] Although confidence was not frequently mentioned in my data, the constant language around a mission of presence implied a clear self-understanding among the research participants. In turn, this thesis casts light on this observation of increased confidence and answers the question: confident to do what?

ii)   Studies of priests

This thesis is situated within a broad range of other sociological studies of priests in the Church of England. The majority of this research is in the area of mental health and well-being of clergy,[175] including specific risks associated with their work.[176] The experience of clergy in rural contexts has also been explored in several empirical studies.[177] Similarly, studies of Roman Catholic secular priests in England also focus on their well-being,[178] in addition to issues specific to Roman Catholic clergy.[179] However, mental health and well-being were not emerging themes in my data.

---

[174] Tomlinson, Time to Sow North. 15.

[175] Examples of this include: Michael E. Clinton, Neil Conway, and Jane Sturges, '"It's Tough Hanging-up a Call": The Relationships between Calling and Work Hours, Psychological Detachment, Sleep Quality, and Morning Vigor.', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 22, no. 1 (January 2017): 28–39. ;Nigel Peyton and Caroline Gatrell, *Managing Clergy Lives: Obedience, Sacrifice, Intimacy* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).; Lorraine Turner, 'Help and Hindrance: Clergy Talking about Bullying', *Practical Theology* 11, no. 5 (20 October 2018): 450–61.; David S. Walker, David W. Lankshear, and Cherry E. Vann, 'How Are You, Vicar? A Study in Scripture, Psychology and Clergy Wellbeing in an English Diocese', *Rural Theology* 16, no. 2 (3 July 2018): 80–92.

[176] David Denney, Jonathan Gabe, and Maria O'Beirne, 'Anglican Clergy as Victims of Routinized Violent Activities in Urban and Rural Localities', *Sociology* 42, no. 1 (February 2008): 83–99.

[177] Examples of this include: Anthony Russell and George Herbert, *The Country Parson* (London: SPCK, 1993)..;Bill Stuart-White et al., 'Isolation among Rural Clergy: Exploring Experiences and Solutions in One Diocese', *Rural Theology* 16, no. 2 (3 July 2018): 65–79.; Harold G. Koenig, 'Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications', *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012 (16 December 2012): 1–33.

[178] Examples of this include: Christopher Fallon, 'Who Do We Think We Are? A Study of the Self-Understanding of Priests in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool' (Durham University, 2013).;Leslie J. Francis, Stephen H. Louden, and Christopher J. F. Rutledge, 'Burnout among Roman Catholic Parochial Clergy in England and Wales: Myth or Reality?', *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 1 (September 2004): 5., Barry O'Sullivan, 'Priests under Pressure - the Less-Heard Voices', *The Furrow* 67, no. 6 (2016): 337–45.

[179] Brian Gogan, 'Clerical Celibacy', *The Furrow* 61, no. 1 (2010): 52–61.

Since the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood, a significant body of research has emerged about female clergy. Some studies investigate their experiences,[180] others their distinctiveness in relation to male priests.[181] However, very little research has been conducted on those who oppose the ordination of women and their experiences within a Church of England that made the decision to affirm the ordination of women as priests. While some initial research has considered the expectations of women's ordination prior to the Synod decision,[182] studies have been scarce around those who were left on the 'defeated' side of the debate.

What empirical research has been conducted on those opposing the ordination of women has focused on their gender attitudes or ecclesiology rather than considering them in a holistic manner as priests with a self-understanding beyond their views on women's ordination. In 1987, Nancy Nason-Clark conducted sociological research into those opposing the ordination of women within the Church of England. She argued that their opposition was due to 'a more pervasive conservative sex role ideology'[183] rather than the theological interpretation

---

[180] Examples of this include: Helen Thorne, *Journey to Priesthood: An in-Depth Study of the First Women Priests in the Church of England*, CCSRG Monograph Series 5 (Bristol: Centre for Comparative Studies in Religion and Gender, University of Bristol, 2000).; Barbara Bagilhole, 'Not a Glass Ceiling More a Lead Roof: Experiences of Pioneer Women Priests in the Church of England', *Equal Opportunities International* 25, no. 2 (February 2006): 109–25.; Adrian Madden, Catherine Bailey, and Reverend Canon Jean Kerr, '"For This I Was Made": Conflict and Calling in the Role of a Woman Priest', *Work, Employment and Society* 29, no. 5 (October 2015): 866–74.;
Sarah-Jane Page, 'Negotiating Sacred Roles: A Sociological Exploration of Priests Who Are Mothers', *Feminist Review* 97, no. 1 (March 2011): 92–109.; Mandy Robbins and Anne-marie Greene, 'Clergywomen's Experience of Ministry in the Church of England', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 5 July 2017, 1–11.

[181] Examples of this include: Barbara Bagilhole, 'Prospects for Change? Structural, Cultural and Action Dimensions of the Careers of Pioneer Women Priests in the Church of England', *Gender, Work and Organization* 10, no. 3 (June 2003): 361–77.; Leslie J. Francis et al., 'The Personality Profile of Female Anglican Clergy in Britain and Ireland: A Study Employing the Eysenck Personality Profiler', *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 25, no. 1 (January 2003): 222–31.; Christina Rees, Martyn Percy, and Jenny Gaffin, *Apostolic Women, Apostolic Authority: Transfiguring Leadership in Todays Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010).; Mandy Robbins and Leslie J. Francis, 'Work-Related Psychological Health and Psychological Type among Church of England Clergywomen', *Review of Religious Research* 52, no. 1 (2010): 57–71.; Rosie Ward, *Growing Women Leaders: Nurturing Women's Leadership in the Church* (Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008).

[182] Ian Jones, 'Earrings behind the Altar? Anglican Expectations of the Ordination of Women as Priests', *Nederlands Archief Voor Kerkgeschiedenis/ Dutch Review of Church History* 83 (2003): 462–456.

[183] Nancy Nason-Clark, 'Ordaining Women as Priests: Religious vs. Sexist Explanations for Clerical Attitudes', *Sociological Analysis* 48, no. 3 (1987): 259.

referenced by those in opposition. However, the ordination of women to the priesthood and the consecration of women as bishops will likely have changed the narrative around sex within the Church of England.[184] Alan Aldridge found 'clerical ambivalence'[185] among male clergy in the 1980s. He identified the cause of this as the fact that male clergy could avoid being directly impacted by the ordination of women. However, since the consecration of women as bishops within the Church of England, the default position of male clergy has not been one of distance. Indeed, proactive measures must be taken by male clergy to avoid being impacted.

Sani and Reicher[186] have conducted an analysis of early literature from Forward in Faith, an organisation with a close, supportive relationship with The Society. Using self-categorisation theory, they argue that the perception that the ordination of women would threaten the identity of the Church of England led to schismatic behaviour. Although the authors offer a psychological perspective that will benefit my discussion of isolation in my data analysis, their analysis is of early documents from over two decades ago; thus, it does not offer a suitable picture of the group today. In addition, their research does not consider the other characteristics of the group beyond their opposition to the ordination of women. Alex Fry has posited that the gender attitudes of evangelical clergy who oppose the ordination of women are best identified as postfeminist, shaped by the wider evangelical tradition, in addition to their perception of the change in Anglican identity due to the ordination of women. Although Fry's study is contemporary, situated after the decision to consecrate women as bishops within the Church of England, his published data are from Evangelical clergy, not Anglo-Catholics. In addition, his approach, along with the previously mentioned literature from Nason-Clark, Aldridge and Sani and Reicher, is arguably reductive. In response, the need arises to consider priests in The Society in a holistic manner, not limiting analyses of them to their views on the ordination of women but viewing them in a complex manner.

---

[184] Nancy Nason-Clark, 'Are Women Changing the Image of Ministry? A Comparison of British and American Realities', *Review of Religious Research* 28, no. 4 (June 1987): 330.
[185] Alan Aldridge, 'Men, Women, and Clergymen: Opinion and Authority in a Sacred Organization', *The Sociological Review* 37, no. 1 (1989): 43–64.
[186] Sani and Reicher, 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups,' 95–112.

Andrew Village offers a more holistic picture of this group. His analysis of data from both lay and ordained members of the Church of England demonstrates that 'Anglo-Catholic-Evangelical polarity' is a suitable term for representing the observed differences in attitudes, beliefs and practices.[187] Village's research confirms the continued importance of ritual in services and frequent weekday services to those Anglo-Catholics who stand against the ordination of women as priests.[188] However, although the study touches on mission with the predictor 'discussing my faith', it otherwise lacks a missiological perspective. A more vivid picture of Traditionalist Anglo-Catholic priests is required, one that would inform the discussion that Village argues is necessary. As he concludes, 'Living with diversity is not a new option for the Church of England but a past and present reality.'[189] In this way, a full picture of the full spectrum of belief and practice within the Church of England is necessary to inform discussions about the reality of living with diversity.

1.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that context is everything. To ask the right questions to establish the missional self-understanding of the priests in The Society, the historical and cultural contexts must first be considered. The distinct missional practice with the liturgically adorned Eucharist at its centre can be traced throughout the movement's history. The practice of social action, particularly assisting the poor, can also be identified as a defining practice of Anglo-Catholicism. Surrounding these practices is a narrative of marginalisation. However contested by Yates as an invalid historical interpretation, it is within this narrative context that this project's participant-priests – and, indeed, all Anglo-Catholics – are situated. It is also within this context that the decision to ordain women as priests occurred. As established above, priests in The Society are situated at a

---

[187] Andrew Village, 'English Anglicanism: Construct Validity of a Scale of Anglo-Catholic versus Evangelical Self-Identification', in *Religious Identity and National Heritage* (BRILL, 2012), 91–122, 93.

[188] Village, English Anglicanism. 103-4.

[189] Village, English Anglicanism. 114.

juxtaposition of two narratives of marginalisation: first, the broad Anglo-Catholic narrative of historical marginalisation, and second, a specific feeling of marginalisation caused by being on the 'losing' side of the decision to ordain women as priests. This juxtaposition of marginalisation narratives, compounded by the flight to Rome by traditionalist Anglo-Catholics, created a narrative of isolation. It is within this context that *Mission-Shaped Church* has been received – a report purportedly preferring the new over the old and again devaluing priests with more traditional attitudes, including those within The Society. In turn, this project's objective to establish the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society must be considered in the context of these historical and cultural narratives. This is because the theological beliefs of the participant-priests are located in their understanding of their location in the historical timeline of catholicity in the Church of England, and their parish-based, social-action-focused missiology is not merely theoretical; it is deeply personal. Any question of self-understanding must fully consider these historical and cultural narratives.

Despite all of this context and existing knowledge on these narratives, the question remains of the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society. Although studies have considered the Synod decision of 1994, and some empirical research has been carried out regarding priests in The Society, the question of the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society remains unanswered. As such, research is required to investigate the missiological self-understanding of these priests. This chapter has informed the following research questions, which require answers to address the research objective:

What is their missiological approach to their parochial practice?

How does the historical theme of isolation still affect their self-understanding?

This research argues that priests in The Society have a coherent missiological approach to their parochial practice. Being situated after the consecration of women as bishops in the Church of England, this research offers a timelier and

more holistic picture of how this minority group of priests understand themselves in relation to their missional practice, thereby offering insights into the isolation experienced by priests in The Society. In doing so, it provides a significant challenge to the wider Church of England, arguing that it has something to learn from the missiological approach that these priests have towards their parochial practice.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Identifying research questions

This research project's objective is to identify the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society. To achieve this objective, two research questions were identified:

What is the participant-priests' missiological approach to their parochial practice?

How does the historical theme of isolation still affect their self-understanding?

These questions provide the limits and focus of the research.

2.2 Practical Theology methodologies

In this thesis, I use the Practical Theology methodologies of Swinton and Mowat's critical faithfulness, the ecumenical approach of Receptive Ecumenism, and Theology Action Research's Theology in Four Voices to inform the interpretive framework. However, these are situated within the wider field of Practical Theology's various other methodological approaches competing for use. My chosen interpretive framework and methodological approach will be outlined and justified in the next two sections, but first I turn to the broader field of Practical Theology to position this thesis within it.

This thesis is located in the field of Practical Theology because it seeks to establish the missiological approach of priests in The Society and to explore how this affects their broader self-understanding. In doing so, it seeks to identify the theology embedded in the practice and self-reflection of these members of the Christian community. Ballard and Pritchard describe four models of Practical Theology: applied theory, critical correlation, praxis and habitus.[190] I will describe each in turn

---

[190] Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996). 58–70.

here. Applied theory considers practice to be a form of applied theory. When using a deductive approach, this raises the question of which theory to apply to practice. Alternatively, when using an inductive approach, it asks which theory is implicit in the practice. Critical correlation refers to the pairing of theology with the social sciences to illuminate human experience. Theology is then used to reflect on how this behaviour relates to God. James Whyte considers this to be a threefold engagement.[191] The praxis model draws from the Marxism-inspired area of liberation theology. Indeed, it is considered by Ballard and Pritchard to be the 'practical heart of liberation theology'.[192] Focused on the examination of actions as not neutral but ethics-embedded acts, the desired end of this model is transformative actions.[193] Finally, the habitus/virtue model is based on the idea in ethics that virtues are good habits borne out of habitually practising good ethical acts. Such acts become so ingrained that they are no longer conscious ethical choices. The habitus model seeks to train the Christian heart and soul in ethical disciplines so that the body of Christ may be virtuous.[194] Ballard and Pritchard do not present these four models as exclusive. Indeed, they consider choosing one model over the others to be restrictive to the theological process. Rather than being viewed as 'disparate', the four models are considered 'strands' that can be integrated in an effective way.[195]

This research aims to consider the participant-priests' practice theologically to establish the current situation to make a positive difference in the life of the Church. The intention of this research to lead to transformative actions within the Church suggests that a methodology situated within Ballard and Pritchard's praxis model of Practical Theology would best achieve the research aims.

A range of models of theological reflections is available. Pastoral cycles are intended to aid a process of reflection to inform transformative practice. Originating in the Roman Catholic Church, Joseph Cardijn's 'see-judge-act'

---

[191] Ballard and Pritchard, '*Practical Theology in Action,*' 62.
[192] Ballard and Pritchard, '*Practical Theology in Action,*' 71.
[193] Ballard and Pritchard, '*Practical Theology in Action,*' 67.
[194] Ballard and Pritchard, '*Practical Theology in Action,*' 68.
[195] Ballard and Pritchard, '*Practical Theology in Action,*' 57.

model[196] was formed to support ministry in industrial settings. This three-fold model allows for reflection on concrete situations within the Roman Catholic Church's teaching, informing the resulting action. Paulo Freire developed this model in his Brazilian context with a theory of 'conscientisation', intended to aid oppressed groups in examining the 'very condition of existence'.[197] The influence of this language of conscientisation can be found in various theologies of liberation, from Gustavo Gutiérrez's *Theology of Liberation*[198] in South America to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness in Apartheid South Africa.[199] In addition to its use in theologies of liberation, the pastoral cycle has a home in theories of education through the work of Daniel Kolb. Arguing that learning cannot be achieved through experience alone, Kolb established that a process of reflection and conceptualisation is required for learning. The field of Practical Theology has developed numerous models of the pastoral cycle, including that of Richard Osmer, as outlined below.

Osmer's model, presented in *Practical Theology: An Introduction,*[200] consists of four tasks that form a pastoral cycle. The first question, *'What is going on?'* is the descriptive-empirical task and is concerned with information-gathering. The congregation leader gathers information to identify patterns of behaviour or dynamics in a given situation. Osmer then invites the congregational leader to step back from the situation in question to ask, *'Why is this going on?'* This interpretive task draws upon non-theological theories, such as psychology and sociology, to better understand the information gathered in the descriptive-empirical task. These theories can be drawn upon to understand the contributing causes of the situation. Once helpful 'secular' theories have been established, the next question is, *'What ought to be going on?'* This normative task steps beyond asking what ideal human behaviour ought to look like in secular terms. Instead, it applies

---

[196] Simon Cuff, *Love in Action: Catholic Social Teaching for Every Church*, 2019. 11.

[197] Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 80-81.

[198] Gustavo Gutiérrez, Caridad Inda, and John Eagleson, *A theology of liberation: history, politics and salvation* (London: SCM, 1988).

[199] Steve Biko and Aelred Stubbs, *I Write What I like: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[200] Richard Robert Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2008).

Niebuhr's model for theological interpretation, with an emphasis on responding in a way that is fitting rather than purely obedient to moral law.[201] This approach places a high value on human action by relating all human action to the Divine, thereby adding weight to the normative task. Osmer separates this stage into three parts. First, theological concepts (such as the Trinity as a hermeneutic device[202]) are used to interpret the situation. Second, relevant ethical principles are identified. Third, areas where the Church's Tradition may provide guidance are explored. Once this normative task has been completed, the congregational leader is invited to ask, *'How might we respond?'* This pragmatic task determines the course of action to influence the relevant results identified in the normative task.

While the pastoral cycle offers clarity, it tends to focus on specific negative phenomena rather than on theological reflection as an opportunity for affirmation of the good and the presence of theology embedded in experience. In addition, despite Osmer's intention to the contrary, the pastoral cycle causes a disengagement between the life of the Church and theological reflection. Instead, reflection ought to be constant. In *The Reflective Practitioner,*[203] Donald Schön offers a more embedded idea of theological reflection. Rather than using a rigid pastoral cycle, Schön considers reflection to occur in a variety of ways, sometimes after the event, but most frequently in the midst of action. For Schön, reflection is the posture of an engaged professional practitioner and not a tool to be pulled out in times of conflict. The isolating of theology as one stage of the pastoral cycle is another criticism of this approach. Claire Watkins makes an indirect critique of the pastoral cycle by emphasising how Theology Action Research is 'theological all the way through'.[204] Kathleen Cahalan and James Nieman make a more direct criticism of the pastoral cycle as reducing theology to one stage in the cycle. They argue that

---

[201] H Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 126.

[202] Viewing this approach as a hermeneutic device is in reference to Osmer's use of Anton Boison's naming individual's lives and practices as "Living human documents." Osmer, *Practical Theology,* 32.

[203] Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[204] *Watkins, 'Disclosing Church.' 39.*

theology is embedded in practice, and Practical Theology ought to approach research in light of this rather than reducing it as an external normative moment.

Despite his own reservations about the strict use of the pastoral cycle, Peter Ward notes that one of its strengths is its teachability. A helpful way to view this is to consider the pastoral cycle as a model to teach practical theologians the virtue of reflective practice; once learned, the cycle becomes embedded as a good habit, no longer requiring the conscious choice to reflect. While examples exist of theological reflection that do not use the pastoral cycle methodology, in the case of John Swinton and Harriet Mowat examined below, I wonder if this is an example of the embedded practice of the pastoral cycle leading to theological reflection as a virtue in these veteran researchers. As a result, I am drawn to Swinton and Mowat's model of theological reflection by complexifying practice, because I find it most true to the complex nature of faith and practice. As a naturally linear thinker, I found their approach uncomfortable at times, but took heart from Ward's advice that 'some ambiguity is to be expected [because] theological reflection is not straightforward'.[205] As outlined later in this chapter, I used Swinton and Mowat's approach of critical faithfulness when forming this thesis's interpretive framework.

i)   Swinton and Mowat

Swinton and Mowat define Practical Theology as:

> theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world.[206]

This definition has three key characteristics. Practical Theology is critical, theological and not limited to 'the Church'. Swinton and Mowat's understanding of the discipline is that it does not merely apply theology to situations; it considers

---

[205] Pete Ward, *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church* (London: SCM, 2008), 114.
[206] Swinton and Mowat, *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research.'* 7.

what questions experience asks of Scripture and tradition. However, this does not imply that such experience is a new source of divine revelation. Rather, for Swinton and Mowat, theological truth is the primary source of knowledge and provides the hermeneutical framework for Practical Theology. While the theological task is central to their approach to Practical Theology, they do not consider the discipline as limited to 'the Church'.

For Swinton and Mowat, Practical Theology is 'fundamentally hermeneutical, correlational, critical and theological.'[207] It is hermeneutical because it holds that interpretation is how humans understand their interactions in the world. It is correlational because the discipline attempts to correlate different perspectives on the same phenomena to create a greater understanding. These perspectives are often the situation, Scripture and the Christian Tradition, and knowledge from the social sciences. It is critical because it takes the effect of sin on creation seriously and therefore approaches the world and interpretations of the Christian traditions with a 'hermeneutic of suspicion'.[208] Through such an approach, the practical theologian is aware of the bearing of the complexities of structures and narratives on a particular situation. Finally, it is theological because it is located in a worldview in light of the Gospel accounts. Knowing truth, however partially, is possible due to God's ongoing revelation of himself in creation, Scripture and, most fully, in the person of Jesus Christ. Any Practical Theology using Swinton and Mowat's approach, such as this project, must hold these four dimensions in equipoise. However, this inevitably leads to epistemological questions, which I will now explore.

A strength of Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology methodology is the interpretive paradigm within which it sits. It seeks to work across a variety of situations where different voices are present: Scripture, tradition, practice and input from the social sciences. This raises questions about the location and knowability of truth. Swinton and Mowat work in idiographic knowledge, which

---

[207] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 73.
[208] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 73.

claims that 'meaningful knowledge can be discovered in unique, non-replicable experiences'.[209] The interdisciplinary nature of Swinton and Mowat's approach requires consideration of the weighting of the various voices at play. The authors are clear that 'the overarching methodological framework within which Practical Theology takes place is theology.'[210] However, as they admit, this inevitably leads to conflict with other utilised methodologies, including the above-mentioned interpretive paradigm. Such conflict occurs when a methodology originating from the social sciences holds the philosophical perspective of logical positivism. Such a philosophical position's epistemological assumptions are that knowledge cannot be located in revelation. This is problematic for a Practical Theology project that holds that truth is located both in the Church's Scriptures and tradition and the Holy Spirit's revelation today. Swinton and Mowat respond to this conflict inherent in Practical Theology by utilising a model of mutual critical correlation. Such a method allows the practical theological to hold in tension the four characteristics of Practical Theology as hermetical, correlational, critical and theological: 'Mutual critical correlation sees the practical-theological task as bringing situations into dialectical conversations with insights from the Christian tradition and perspectives drawn from other sources of knowledge.'[211]

Swinton and Mowat acknowledge the integration between theory and practice by drawing on Browning's phrase 'theory-laden'.[212] Acknowledging the epistemological tensions within the interdisciplinary approach of Practical Theology, they develop a method of mutual critical correlation, embedded within an 'interpretive paradigm'.[213] Here, the task of Practical Theology is seen as bringing experiences into dialectical conversations. Such conversation partners include the Christian tradition and insights from the social sciences. This approach draws from and modifies Paul Tillich's method of correlation. Tillich's identification of the questions of humanity finding their answers in the symbols of Christianity

---

[209] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 41.
[210] Swinton and Mowat. '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 72.
[211] Swinton and Mowat. '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 73.
[212] D.S. Browning, *Practical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983). 6.
[213] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 72.

opens a dialogue between 'secular' experience and Christianity.[214] However, as Swinton and Mowat note, this one-directional model seeks to apply Christian truth to the world without attending to its questions of that truth. They draw on David Tracy's expansion of Tillich's model into a dialectic model with mutual correlative and critical interaction between Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. This allows Christian Scripture, tradition and practice to enter a mutually constructive critical dialogue with other forms of theory and practice. This position of mutuality is highlighted in this thesis's use of Receptive Ecumenism.

Swinton and Mowat's epistemological model of mutual critical correlation requires hospitality, conversion and critical faithfulness.[215] Hospitality is a fundamental Christian practice that welcomes the stranger and guests.[216] Here, this practice is considered within Practical Theology as it welcomes qualitative research methods with hospitality. However, such a welcome occurs within the context of the researcher being a Christian theologian without compromising that position within the Christian tradition. For this to be achieved, the practical theologian must establish how such methods can be used faithfully within a piece of Practical Theology research. Swinton and Mowat refer to this process as 'conversion'. Evoking the process of a person's turning away from sin to new life in Christ, this process is applied to social science research methods. The authors describe this process as grafting a previously endless or goalless social science methodology into 'God's redemptive intentions for the world'.[217] An example of this is the movement of a methodology holding a philosophical position of logical positivism towards critical realism. This approach is Swinton and Mowat's attempt not to subjugate the methodology brought from the social sciences as subordinate to theology, but to convert it so it is all within the context of God's purpose. The new knowledge gained from the hospitality and conversion of social science research methods is

---

[214] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951). 62.
[215] *Swinton and Mowat, 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research.'* 86-89.
[216] Hebrews 13:1-3
[217] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research.'* 87.

then used by Swinton and Mowat to challenge with critical faithfulness. As they summarise,

> Such a form of faithfulness acknowledges the divine givenness of Scripture and the genuine working of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of what is given, while at the same time taking seriously the interpretive dimensions of the process of understanding revelation and ensuring the faithful practices of individuals and communities.[218]

Thus, the hospitality and sanctification given to qualitative research methods enables a critical dialogue between different situations, the Christian tradition and knowledge gained through qualitative research. This returns to the authors' definition of Practical Theology as 'critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world.'[219] This is achieved through a practice of complexification – with interpretation as analysis.

Swinton and Mowat's approach of interpretation as analysis is based on the concept of complexification. This involves taking a situation or context that appears familiar and understandable and demonstrating through analysis that it is complex. They explain that situations are 'complex, multi-faceted entities which need to be examined with care, rigour and discernment if they are to be effectively understood.'[220] The use of social scientific methods from empirical research, specifically qualitative methods, allows the exploration of situations in a careful and rigorous manner, allowing the formation of rich descriptions of experience. Swinton and Mowat's approach to data analysis can be understood as interpretation as analysis. They write, 'The analysis should always be firmly linked to the research question and carried out simultaneously with the collection of the data.'[221] This 'dialogical process' within analysis starts from the first toe-dip into

---

[218] Swinton and Mowat. *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,'* 89.
[219] Swinton and Mowat. *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,'* 7.
[220] Swinton and Mowat. *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,'* 13.
[221] Swinton and Mowat. *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,'* 165.

the participants' world and follows through the review of literature and informal conversations. This approach of interpretation as analysis requires researchers to 'immerse' themselves in the data, leading to 'familiarity'. The research's task is then to 'make sense' of what patterns and tensions emerge. Swinton and Mowat summarise this as follows:

> The intellectual job of the researcher participating in such a process of analysis is to *make sense* of the emerging categories and to make sure that the categories are derived from the data rather than imposed upon the data (reflexivity).[222]

This is supported by triangulation, a method of capturing data about the same phenomenon by different means, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of the situation. Swinton and Mowat offer emerging insights as 'bread on the waters'; the act of 'casting out' to both feed and encourage the Church is likened to a baker returning to the farmer who provided the wheat for the bread's flour. The researcher has taken the raw data and, through faithful analysis, offers his or her interpretation.[223] Thus, Swinton and Mowat's epistemology of critical faithfulness and interpretive approach of interpretation as analysis provide the main interpretive framework for this thesis. This approach, in addition to Receptive Ecumenism and TAR's Four Voices of Theology, has informed my choice of empirical research methods, thereby enabling the most helpful data to be gathered to address the research question and reflect the epistemological positioning of the established Practical Theological methodologies.

2.3 Chosen interpretative framework

In this thesis, I draw heavily from Swinton and Mowat's approach to Practical Theology. In addition to Swinton and Mowat's compelling approach of interpretation as analysis, their approach's ability to coherently interact with different voices is significant in the context of this thesis. Specifically, to answer

---

[222] Swinton and Mowat. '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 166.
[223] Swinton and Mowat. ''*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 274.

the project's research question, the participants' voices must interact with the field of missiology.

This thesis uses *Mission-Shaped Church*[224] as representative of the Church of England's current missiology. In doing so, this raises an epistemological question of the priority given to the different voices within this thesis: the participant-priests, the formal theology of the Church of England, the historical interpretations of Church historians, formal voices within the Anglo-Catholic tradition today and my voice as a researcher. Here, Swinton and Mowat's concept of critical faithfulness comes to bear. As outlined above, critical faithfulness recognises the 'givenness' of Scripture in addition to the Holy Spirit's working in the human task of interpretation.[225] This refers to the 'givenness' of Scripture for me as the researcher rather than the theological position of the project's participant-priests. In addition, this approach raises questions about the givenness of interpretations. The acknowledgement of the givenness of Scripture ensures faithfulness, and the questioning of interpretations provides a critique. This practice aims to further the faithful practice of individuals and the Christian community.

Within this thesis, the practice of critical faithfulness is applied. The givenness of Scripture is held, in addition to the belief of pneumatological workings in interpretation. This ensures that this thesis remains faithful to the Christian tradition. However, this thesis simultaneously takes seriously the interpretive dimension of understanding what faithful practice ought to be derived from Scripture. The use of qualitative research methods allows me to establish the participant-priests' missiological self-understanding and bring it into critical dialogue with other interpretations of the Christian tradition. After establishing the participant-priests' missiological self-understanding in Chapter 3, the practice of critical faithfulness is used in the analysis of Chapter 4. This thesis's critical dialogue ends with a set of normative proposals presented in Chapter 5. This chapter draws from Osmer's final normative task, asking *'What ought to be going on?'* and how

---

[224] Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*.
[225] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, Second edition (London: SCM Press, 2016). 89.

The Society and the wider Church of England could respond. Swinton and Mowat utilise Gadamer's reflective cycle in their data analysis.[226] In this way, an amalgamation of their model of Practical Theology and qualitative research with Osmer's reflective cycle finds a precedent. Drawing from Swinton and Mowat's approach, within this thesis, the process of analysis is not isolated into one chapter but is present throughout.

In addition to the use of Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology approach of critical faithfulness, I draw upon the theological approach of Receptive Ecumenism, particularly when forming the thesis's normative proposals in Chapter 5. As the name suggests, Receptive Ecumenism originates in the field of Ecumenism. In cases where ecumenical dialogues are in danger of focusing critically on the differences between Christian denominations, Receptive Ecumenism takes a positive approach. It assumes that any formal move towards increasing sacramental unity is only possible when the focus moves from requiring change from the other tradition to a posture of learning from the other denomination. Paul Murray summarises this movement as where

> each tradition moves from asking how other traditions need to change and focuses instead on its own difficulties and tensions and consequent need to learn, or receive, from the best discernible practice and associated understanding in other traditions.[227]

This positive approach fits well with Swinton and Mowat's critical faithfulness because it guides the direction of the critical faithfulness in a positive direction. Rather than producing negative critique, Receptive Ecumenism allows the listener to be positively challenged by the practices of another denomination or church tradition. While usually used across denominational divides, Receptive Ecumenism is suitable for this project, given the stark differences between different theological positions held within the Church of England. Indeed, this approach resonates with Michael Ramsey's words: 'Let those who are glad to be Catholics or

---

[226] Swinton and Mowat. 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research' 273.
[227] Paul D. Murray, 'Introducing Receptive Ecumenism', *The Ecumenist* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1–8. 4.

Evangelicals or Liberals set themselves to learn all they can from one another…'[228] While culminating in the formation of the normative proposals in Chapter 5, this approach can be observed in my posture as a researcher. In my interactions with the participant-priests, I was a woman training towards ordained ministry within an Evangelical context. As evident in the questions I asked and in my open manner as a researcher, my posture was neither accusatory nor seeking to forward my own views of where their tradition requires change. Instead, I sought to identify the ways in which the participant-priests could positively contribute to the wider Church of England's difficulties and tensions, particularly regarding the missiology held within *Mission-Shaped Church*.

In addition to the use of Swinton and Mowat's approach of critical faithfulness in Practical Theology and the posture of Receptive Ecumenism, this thesis draws on TAR's Theology in Four Voices. This will be used to aid the analysis in the presentation of the qualitative research data and the subsequent analysis in Chapters 3 and 4. This use of the Four Voices of Theology in a discrete manner, rather than integrated within the TAR methodology, may raise some questions. However, in my fieldwork account below, I justify the use of the framework inductively rather than as a deductive model brought to bear on the data.

Situated within TAR, the Four Voices of Theology model aids in the identification of the 'hidden infrastructure'[229] of research participants' disclosed theology. The Four Voices of Theology are distinct, yet intersecting:

1. Operant theology – theology located within practice;

2. Espoused theology – theology located within articulation of belief;

3. Normative theology – theology located within the official teachings and liturgies of a faith community, including scriptures and the creed;

---

[228] Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008). 72.
[229] Clare Watkins, *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice*, 2020. 41.

4. Formal theology – theology as produced by theologians.[230]

According to Cameron et al., attending to the hidden voices within different articulations is a 'fairly straightforward way of disclosing important tensions.'[231] As will be established, my chosen qualitative research methods seek to reveal the tensions within the participant-priests' missiological self-understanding. At the analysis stage of this thesis, including the presentation of the data, I use the Four Voices of Theology model to communicate these tensions. Furthermore, I develop the analysis aided by the Four Voices framework and introduce a new phraseology for Practical Theology: 'abstract theology' and 'concrete theology'. I use these terms in Chapter 4 to describe the dissonance between the participant-priests' missiology when speaking about their general thoughts on parish mission and their reflections on their actual practice. This is not intended to situate additional voices in the Four Voices model; rather, the terms explain the subject about which the participant-priests are speaking. Using TAR language, 'concrete theology' denotes the espoused theological reflection on their operant theology, whereas 'abstract theology' describes the espoused theological reflection when speaking about parish mission in non-specific terms that may draw on formal or normative theologies. As will be established in Chapters 3 and 4, the dissonance between the participant-priests' abstract and concrete theologies is a significant hindrance to their ability to share their missiology of priestly presence. This will be addressed in Chapter 5's normative propositions.

In the next section, I explain and justify this thesis's chosen empirical research methods.

2.4 Developing research design

It is important that this project's research design reflects both the project's research objectives[232] and the Practical Theology methodological underpinnings established above. Therefore, I constructed a research design that aligns with the

---

[230] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 53-58.
[231] Cameron et al, Talking about God in Practice. 146.
[232] Jamie Harding, *Qualitative Data Analysis from Start to Finish* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2013). 27.

established methodological framework and captures how the participant-priests understand their missional practice. While a small amount of research has focused on priests in The Society, as demonstrated in the Introduction, it does not provide relevant data to test a missiology-focused hypothesis. In the absence of other research in this area, and considering Swinton and Mowat's epistemological position of seeking idiographic knowledge, an inductive, exploratory methodology was identified to generate theories about priestly missiological practice and experience to address the research objective. Such idiographic data were identified through researcher-driven diaries and two sets of semi-structured interviews, the data from which can be found in Chapter 3. Following Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology approach, in Chapter 4, these theories are then considered an interpretation of the Christian tradition and entered into a critical dialogue with other interpretations of the tradition.

The research design expounded below hinges on Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology methodology in that it is critical, theological and not limited to the Church.[233] The project uses empirical research methods originating in the social sciences in a hospitable manner, baptising them for use in God's 'redemptive intentions'.[234] Holding true to Swinton and Mowat's approach, the process of analysing the project's data was present throughout the research design.

The influence of TAR's Four Voices is evident in the research design in the decision to form interview questions linked to specific diary entries, as opposed to generalised questions about priestly ministry. This is also reflected in the presentation of the project's data in Chapter 3. Moreover, the inductive structure of the Four Voices informs the normative proposals presented in Chapter 5, which respond to the analysis in Chapter 4. These proposals seek to address the dissonance between the priests' espoused and operant theologies.

Receptive Ecumenism is a less prominent influence, but can be noticed in both my posture as a researcher and the normative proposals in Chapter 5. Drawing on the

---

[233] *Swinton and Mowat, 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 7.
[234] Swinton and Mowat, *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 87.

values of Receptive Ecumenism, I have endeavoured to hold a posture of openness towards the participant-priests. Rather than considering them as idiosyncratic, I view them positively as a group with something to offer the wider Church of England. This is most clearly evident in the questions asked of the participant-priests that do not pertain to the ordination of women. Furthermore, the approach used to form and present the normative proposals in Chapter 5 is influenced by Receptive Ecumenism, as it identifies not only where the participant-priests may need to change their missiological practice, but also where such practice should be considered a gift to the wider Church of England.

I will now outline the considerations and complexities pertinent to this research project before moving on to the fieldwork account, within which I will note in further detail the influence of the methodological framework established in this section.

i)   Considerations and complexities

Considering the existing research on priests in The Society, as discussed in the Introduction, the research design needs to avoid a reductive account of the participant-priests. This can be achieved by viewing them in a holistic manner. Therefore, a requirement for the research design was the ability to capture complexifiable data.[235] This requirement fits within Swinton and Mowat's model of theological reflection. As established above, they seek to rigorously examine complexified practice so that it can be effectively understood.[236] Qualitative research is usually based on a holistic approach, which makes it a suitable research approach here.[237] That said, a weakness of qualitative research is that, unlike quantitative research, it does not lead to reproducible results.[238] However, the results found and the theories identified may be transferable and valuable beyond

---

[235] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 15.
[236] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 13.
[237] Harding, *Qualitative Data Analysis from Start to Finish*. 10.
[238] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 45.

the limited data set. Qualitative interviews are an effective method for identifying meaning attributed to experience, motivations for behaviour and drawing out individual accounts of sensitive issues and events. Swinton and Mowat describe qualitative research as a method of discovering how individuals encounter their world; it is a process of 'seeing and discovering' this encounter through reflective interpretation.[239] For this project, although not revealing objective data, qualitative research can reveal the meaning that the participant-priests attribute to their parochial practice, which can then be analysed with reference to *Mission-Shaped Church* as an indicator of a shift in the Church of England's formal missiology. In addition, a broad view of the participant-priests fits within the methodological framework of Receptive Ecumenism. Rather than viewing the participant-priests in a critical manner (i.e., focusing on their views on women's ordination), Receptive Ecumenism challenged me as a researcher to approach the participant-priests as Christians to be learned from. In rejecting a reductive reading of the participant-priests, the posture of this research is open to being challenged through the data emerging from their accounts and reflections on their practice.

Consideration must be given to the possible issues arising around talking about mission. Speaking about mission is not simple. Therefore, four considerations must be made. First, while utilising social science research methods, this thesis is a piece of theology. Therefore, in line with Swinton and Mowat's epistemological statement that 'the overarching methodological framework within which Practical Theology takes place is theology',[240] this thesis takes seriously the mission of God, culminating in his self-revelation in Christ Jesus. Second, this thesis defines mission in broad terms. It acknowledges that Christianity is inherently missional. Like Islam and Buddhism, it is a missional religion in that it holds 'to some great "unveiling" of ultimate truth believed to be of universal import'.[241] In his seminal text *Transforming Mission*, Bosch distinguishes between *mission* and *missions*.[242]

---

[239] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 38.
[240] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 72.
[241] Max Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). 189.
[242] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16 (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991). 10.

Mission in the singular is God's own mission. *Missio Dei*, God's mission, is God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ; missions in the plural are the Church's particular participations in this *missio Dei*. This thesis uses Bosch's definition of mission, drawing on Davies,[243] Hoekendijk[244] and Rütti,[245] as '*Missions* (the *missiones ecclesiae:* the missionary ventures of the church) refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei*.[246] However, this definition was not shared with the participant-priests so as not to influence their own definitions in the data. Third, it is important to note that this research captures a specific moment in time. It cannot offer a comprehensive picture of the participant-priests' practice or reflection on mission development over time. Graham Gardner's study on memory suggests that this project's interviews will likely gather data on the participant-priests' current feelings about mission. One positive outcome of the COVID-19 disruption on this project, as described below, is the additional dimension of another set of interviews with the same participant-priests to gather data about their practice and reflection at another distinct moment in time. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, the second set of interviews elucidated further data on the theme of marginalisation, as the participant-priests reflected on a recent statement from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.[247] Fourth, another problem with speaking about mission is that the participant-priests are all relative experts in their field. They have all received a theological education, with missiological theories as a component. In addition, they are all practised in speaking about theology at length. Considering TAR's Four Voices of Theology, a concern was that if they were asked about mission in general, the data gathered would disproportionately represent the participant-priests' formal and espoused theologies of mission rather than reflections on their actual, recent practice. In response to this concern and in the absence of the time

---

[243] W.D. Davies, *Worship and Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1966). 33.

[244] J.C Hoekendijk, *Kirche Und Volk in Der Deutschen Missionwissenschaft* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967). 346.

[245] Ludwig Rütti, *Zur Theologie Der Mission: Kritische Analysen Und Neue Orientierungen* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972). 232.

[246] Bosch, '*Transforming Mission*.' 10.

[247] Welby and Cottrell, 'Letter from Archbishops', 24 March 2020.

and funding required to apply ethnographic research methods, it was decided that researcher-driven diaries would be added to the project's research methods.

In light of these issues around talking about mission and the weaknesses of single-event semi-structured interviews compared to an ethnographic approach, in addition to the methodological need to produce data capable of being complexified, I considered the utilisation of researcher-driven diaries. Combining two qualitative approaches forms a 'validating triangulation factor'[248] that enables a more comprehensive articulation of the priests' missiological self-understanding. Again, this falls within Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology approach of complexifying situations. Indeed, they utilise triangulation as a data-gathering technique to gather complexifiable data in their research project 'What Do Chaplains Do?'.[249] The use of triangulation in my thesis, where the diary data can inform the interview questions, extends the breadth of the project. Concurrent mixed-method approaches create a challenge in the 'weighting'[250] of the analysis. However, the timing of this project allowed the diary to precede and therefore inform the initial interviews, with greater weight being placed on the initial interviews.

A focused, standardised approach was devised to ensure the outcome of a standardised set of data to enable the analysis process.[251] The participant-priests would all be approached in the same manner. All would be required to complete a researcher-driven diary, which led to some individuals withdrawing from participation. All would be asked identical opening questions, with the following questions all referencing a similar pattern of topics. Where examples of specific ministry types were absent in the researcher-driven diary, focused questions were asked to gather comparable data.

---

[248] Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, Eighth edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2018). 141.
[249] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,*' 148-179.
[250] Creswell, '*Research Design,*' 206.
[251] Neil J. Salkind, ed., *Encyclopedia of Research Design* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2010).

Research limitations

The social distancing measures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted this project's research phase. While the implementation of a second set of interviews to increase the depth of data collected had a positive effect on this thesis's ability to speak to the participant-priests' practice and reflection during a time of stress, having a small research group of nine priests brings inevitable limitations, especially relating to the claims I can make based on data derived from such a small sample. However, this does not have the same impact on every claim made in this thesis; some claims are affected more than others. In this thesis, I make claims in three main areas: the isolation experienced by the participant-priests, their missiological practice and the potential for said practice to be received as a gift to the wider Church of England. Regarding the first claim of isolation, the reliability of this claim is impacted by the limited data set, especially regarding any claims of the generalisability of the participants' experience to the wider group of priests in The Society nationally. However, the presence of this theme in the literature surrounding this ecclesial group, both historically and in the contemporary literature, strengthens the case that their experience of isolation could be reliably generalised to the wider group. As I argue in the Conclusion (Chapter 5), rather than making a definitive claim of a generalisable experience of isolation, this thesis highlights this as a potential area of further research to benefit the Church of England.

The second claim – of the participant-priests' missiological practice being set within a cumulative scale of presence – is significantly affected by the reduced data set. While each priest's reported practice touched upon different aspects of the cumulative scale of presence, the complexity of the scale, its description of missiological practice and the directional relationship between different practice make any generalised claim that this is necessarily a wider practice less certain. However, a more general claim of a missiological approach informed by representational presence can be more certainly affirmed, as this was a clear theme across each participant-priest's reflections. Again, in the Conclusion, I point to this being a fruitful area for further research.

The third claim – that the missiological approach of representational presence can be received as a gift by the wider Church of England – can be firmly stated regardless of the size of the data set, as it does not require a large data set to argue for the compatibility of the theological approach with the *Mission-Shaped Church* report.

While I argue for the strengths of semi-structured interviews as a significant part of the data-gathering for this project, they also come with certain limitations. Three of the disadvantages raised by Kenneth Bailey in *Methods of Social Research*[252] are interview bias, no opportunity to consult records and less anonymity. Although the participant-priests appeared to be open and friendly during the interviews, it must be considered that their responses could be affected by their reaction to me as the interviewer. They will have formed a judgement of me based on their assessment of me physically, my age, sex and physical appearance, in addition to any research they conducted on me prior to the interview. Affected by this judgement, the participant-priests may have adjusted their responses to say what they thought I wanted to hear rather than offering their true thoughts and reflections.

2.5 Fieldwork accounts

The objective of this doctoral study is to establish the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society. This is done to contribute to a more holistic picture of this minority group of priests concerning their missiological practice and in the hope of offering such findings to the wider Church of England. In addition, this research seeks to provide insights into the isolation experienced by priests in The Society. In the previous section, the considerations and complexities of the research design were summarised. Here, the discussion moves on to consider in detail how the research developed while noting key ethics issues. General concerns about data collection and analysis are also discussed. Each stage is described in detail, with the methods discussed and associated inadequacies noted. Furthermore, each stage is situated within the previously established

---

[252]Bailey, Kenneth, Methods of Social Research, Simon and Schuster 1995, 175.

methodological framework. By detailing and defending the project's research methods, I intend to establish the credibility of its findings.[253]

The original objective of the research was to explore the missiological self-understanding of priests in The Society. Alongside this, patterns of missiological practice were studied, noting the differences between those ordained as deacons between 1980 and 1990 and those ordained as deacons between 2000 and 2015.

As previously established, this research is situated in the field of Practical Theology, utilising Swinton and Mowat's critical faithfulness as a methodological approach to qualitative research. The research phase was marked by five stages, a summary of which is outlined below. I will then present the project's ethical concerns before conducting a more detailed account of the project's data collection.

Stage 1   Attending Catholic mission conference and informal conversations with gatekeepers

Stage 2   Identifying research participants, obtaining informed consent

Stage 3   Analysing researcher-driven diaries to form interview questions

Stage 4   Conducting semi-structured interviews and undertaking initial coding

Stage 5   Conducting follow-up telephone interviews and undertaking final coding.

Nine priests completed one-week researcher-driven diaries and participated in one hour-long semi-structured face-to-face interview and one semi-structured telephone interview lasting 20 minutes.

---

[253] Ines Steinke, 'Quality Criteria in Qualitative Research', in *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2004), 194–202. 187.

i) <u>Ethics and consent</u>

Issues of ethics and consent were considered in relation to this research. This research project did not produce any obvious harmful effects. However, the development of the research in response to the COVID-19 social distancing measures of Spring 2020 led to an additional consideration of ensuring that the psychological well-being of the research participants was not adversely affected by the research. In response, the request to participate in an additional interview was clearly framed as optional so that no additional pressure was caused during a time of corporate trauma.

The participant-priests all gave their informed consent to participate. Information sheets were included with each invitation to participate. It was made clear to the participant-priests that they could withdraw from the project at any time, with their data being removed from the data set.

Confidentiality was maintained by giving the participant-priests pseudonyms. Their parish names and locality have also been generalised. However, it was explained to the priests that due to the small nature of the data pool, it would be prudent to assume that some of their peers may be able to identify them from the data. All data were stored following Durham University's data protection policy. With the use of a locked box in my study and a password-protected computer, in addition to using identifying codes for each participant, the privacy and anonymity of each priest was maintained.

2.6 Reflexivity

The act of reflexivity refers to the researcher examining his or her own beliefs, background and experience and considering how they directly or indirectly impact the research undertaken. This act of critical self-reflection on my 'contribution to

the proceedings'[254] does not remove or reduce bias but accepts the inevitability of my presence as a researcher in my research. However, it is a recognition that 'knowledge claims are conditioned and partial'.[255] With this in mind, I consider my position as a researcher in this piece of qualitative research below.

In many respects, I am an unlikely researcher for this topic: I am female and ordained as a transitional deacon in the Church of England. For the majority of the time spent conducting the research and writing this thesis, I was an ordinand training towards ordination. Although I am now ministering in a charismatic evangelical church that affirms women's ordained ministry, I spent my childhood in churches, both Anglican and the house church movement, which did not affirm women's leadership positions over men. I have no personal friends who are priests in The Society, but I do have acquaintances in the conservative Evangelical tradition of the Church of England. In addition, I have a close friend who is a Roman Catholic priest. As a minister in the Church of England, I have my own practice and experience of local church that is grounded in my evangelical theological beliefs. I have experience and views of parish ministry in multi-ethnic areas, but I have not ministered in inner-city areas with high deprivation, where some of this project's participant-priests are ministering. My husband is a parish priest and, although now situated at an evangelical church, spent much of his twenties in Anglo-Catholic parishes, including a parish with a priest in The Society.

This situatedness has been a constant point of reflection throughout this research project. I have been struck by how much I personally liked each of the priests whom I interviewed. This position of viewing and liking each individual encouraged me that my own situatedness as a woman training towards ordination, worshipping within the Evangelical wing of the Church of England, had not led to any underlying animosity towards the participant-priests. This has particularly come to bear when my analysis observed that the participant-priests drew the conversation to the ordination of women, despite my questioning not specifically

---

[254] Swinton and Mowat, '*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,*' 57.
[255] Lichterman, Paul. "Interpretive Reflexivity in Ethnography." Ethnography, vol. 18, no. 1, 2017, pp. 35–45. P36

asking about the topic. Perhaps if I had been a male researcher, the participant-priests may not have mentioned women's ordination with such frequency; however, this does not mean that this project's research findings are not valid. I do not think that my own situatedness has led me to interpret the data differently, and if my presence as a woman has led to such a reaction, this suggests that such defensiveness was not far below the surface of the participants' own self-understanding.

ii)   Detailed fieldwork accounts

Stage 1 – Attending Catholic mission conference and informal conversations with gatekeepers

I attended the Catholic Mission Conference in September 2018. The event was co-sponsored by Forward in Faith, an organisation with close links to The Society and Anglican Catholic Future. It was a significant coming-together of Anglo-Catholics across the divide caused by the ordination of women. I took notes during the main sessions and seminars; these notes were then written in a field notes diary. I also attended a lecture by Dr William Jacob at All Saints Margaret Street on 'Anglo-Catholic Church Planting in the 19th Century'. Dr Jacobs also generously offered his time for a further conversation about the historical context for Anglo-Catholic mission. The notes from the lecture and the conversation that followed were also documented in my field notes diary.

At the invitation of the Bishop of Fulham, I attended the Fulham Lay Congress, 'Tools for Mission', at St Alban's Holborn in October 2019, where I took notes for my field notes diary. In addition, I met with a priest in The Society to hear about his ministry, his thoughts on mission and suggested contacts for the research. This priest was removed as a potential participant in my research due to this early conversation. I also met with two gatekeepers. The first was Dr Colin Podmore,

then Director of Forward in Faith, to explain who I was and my intentions in contacting priests affiliated with Forward in Faith and The Society. The second was Rt Rev Jonathan Baker, the Bishop of Fulham, to seek his blessing for my research and to hear his perspective as a bishop in The Society. Notes from these meetings were also added to the field notes diary. Swinton and Mowat's concept of interpretation as analysis informed this early stage of the research process.

Another reason for attending the conferences, lectures and holding such conversations was because of the methodology of Receptive Ecumenism. In seeking to view the participant-priests in a holistic manner, rather than just considering them in relation to their views on the ordination of women, it was valuable to observe them with other likeminded priests, in addition to hearing the common themes shared by both Anglo-Catholics affirming and those opposing the ordination of women in the Church of England. Considering them in this holistic manner, while allowing interpretation to take place to inform interview questions, opened up the possibility of their accounts and reflections of their missional practice being received in a positive manner. My analysis as research took place from the first conference and subsequent conversations, after which I coded the field notes diary using an inductive approach.[256] These emerging themes informed my interview questions during the empirical research phase. The emerging themes were as follows: mission, the wider Church of England, personal holiness, the Catholic movement, the Eucharist and invitation.

Stage 2 – Identifying research participants, obtaining informed consent

Using a list of parishes under the AEO of bishops in The Society generously provided by Forward in Faith, I had the means to identify possible participants.

---

[256] David R. Thomas, 'A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data', *American Journal of Evaluation* 27, no. 2 (June 2006): 237–46.; Richard E. Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998); Juliet M. Corbin and Anselm L. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Fourth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015).

Using the Crockford Clerical Directory, I identified possible participant-priests who, being located within the London and Southwark Dioceses, receive AEO from the Bishop of Fulham. Two lists were compiled: priests ordained deacon between 1980 and 1990, and those ordained deacon between 2000 and 2015. Letters were sent, including a letter from the Bishop of Fulham encouraging their engagement with the project and a consent form (Appendices 1 & 2). Some accepted the invitation to participate; others declined. Upon receiving the responses, 13 interview dates were set.

Too London-centric?

The reason for identifying and selecting the See of Fulham was largely practical. At the time of conducting the research, I lived in the Southwark Diocese, and the Bishop of Fulham provides AEO in both Southwark and London Dioceses. This meant that transport to potential participants, although still lengthy, was practical. In addition to this, the Bishop of Fulham, Jonathan Baker, was broadly supportive of my research. As a key stakeholder, his willingness to affirm my project opened the door for many of the clergy to participate.

Restricting the research pool to the Fulham episcopal area may lead some to criticise this research for being too London-focused. To a certain extent, this critique is valid. This research is focused on priests within the Fulham episcopal area, and the specific nature of how the Bishop of Fulham is allowed to operate should be taken into account when considering how this research can be understood with respect to other priests in The Society within the Church of England. The Bishop of Fulham operates within the 'London Plan', established under Bishop Richard Chartres and renewed under Bishop Sarah Mullally. Although the Bishop of Fulham is an episcopal visitor in the diocese, the relationship between the See of Fulham and London Diocese is positive. The Bishop of Fulham is included in the senior staff to a much higher degree than other dioceses. One reason for this is the number of dioceses that other provincial episcopal visitors

cover. For example, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet covers much of the south of England, from Birmingham down to Exeter. Such a broad geographical area makes it impractical for him to be involved in many of the decision-making processes of the various dioceses that his area of responsibility covers.

Another factor that needs to be considered when analysing data from priests under the Bishop of Fulham who are situated within London Diocese is that the former Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, who occupied the position between 1995 and 2017, took a traditionalist view on the ordination of women to the priesthood. He ordained both women and men to the diaconate, but refrained from ordaining anyone to the priesthood. In his words, 'that is simply because my principal job is making sure that the diocese of London is united'.[257] This historical context may affect the experience of priests within London Diocese. For example, it may mean that their experience as priests in The Society is more embedded within London Diocese compared to priests in The Society situated in other dioceses. This may have an impact on their experience in relation to other priests in the diocese. This and other effects will need to be considered when viewing this project's data and emerging theory in relation to other dioceses.

I have done three things to mitigate criticism of this research as too London-focused and therefore of minimal relevance to the general Church of England discourse. First, London Diocese has the largest percentage of stipendiary clergy under 40 years old.[258] The risk of my data set being disproportionately young is that the research participants will not be relatable to the majority of other Church of England dioceses. In response, I created a research pool of priests in two cohorts: six ordained within the last 15 years, and six ordained between 30 and 40 years ago. This intention did not fully come to pass, as will be explained below. The aim here was to provide a balance of age representation. In addition, this would mean that the priests had a diversity of training, with those more recently ordained

---

[257] 'BBC Breakfast with Frost Interview: Rt Rev Richard Chartres Bishop of London', BBC, 10 November 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast_with_frost/2437895.stm.
[258] 'Ministry Statistics 2019' (The Church of England: Research and Statistics, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ), https://www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats.

having trained alongside women. The participants also had differing circumstances of becoming a Society priest, with those ordained between 30 and 40 years ago not being fully aware that they would be in a minority position within the Church of England and requiring AEO. Second, priests in London Diocese may have a particular experience of operating within a diocese under AEO. The London Plan, and the only recent appointment of a Bishop of London willing to ordain both men and women as priests, may have created a unique situation whereby their experiences have little in common with Society priests elsewhere in the Church of England. I attempted to mitigate this by ensuring that my research pool was not solely made up of priests under the Bishop of Fulham, but a mix from both London and Southwark Dioceses. Southwark Diocese's approach, while having a seemingly positive relationship with the See of Fulham, is more representative of other Society bishops' relationships with dioceses in the geographical areas where they provide AEO. Third, interviewing priests rather than conducting a congregational study allowed a spread of parishes represented. As a sole researcher, I did not have the capacity to conduct a larger number of congregational studies, but I did have the capacity to interview multiple priests. The participant-priests were situated in parishes with varying socio-economic conditions. In addition to considering the socio-economic diversity of the parishes represented, the majority of the parishes were the only Society parish in their deanery, which is the common state of affairs nationally. By having a larger pool of priests, with multiple parish situations represented, there is potential for the findings to resonate with Anglo-Catholic priests in other situations within the Church of England.

Stage 3 – Analysing researcher-driven diaries to form interview questions

I asked each participant to complete a researcher-driven diary. This method was chosen above a self-completion questionnaire to allow the data to be used to generate 'thick' descriptions. Self-completion questionnaires with closed questions would not have produced the openness required to obtain such data. Corti makes a distinction between 'structured diaries' that, as the names suggest,

offer a structure for the diaries' content and 'free-text diaries' that offer no structure, allowing the participant to write whatever they wish.[259] Diaries can also be used to log time use. Such 'time use diaries' are a more accurate measure of time than questionnaires, as participants in questionnaires tend to round their time up or down.[260] The diaries requested from the participant-priests were structured, and their time use was also requested.

Broad academic consensus dictates that the data about the time use and sequencing of behaviours produced by diaries are more reliable than those produced by questionnaires or interviews.[261] Because diaries become less reliable over time due to a decrease in diligence, I requested that the diary be kept for one week only. The diary was what H. Elliott[262] identifies as a 'researcher-driven diary' in that, like a questionnaire, it is not a spontaneously written piece; instead, it is completed at the request of the researcher. Therefore, I asked the participant-priests to complete a diary structured around time use (Appendix I). This is because structured diaries allow more standardisation across the data set, and the time use gave more accurate data on time spent on different tasks than would be gained at the interview. The form of the diary was influenced by Corti's recommendations for structured diary preparation. It included unambiguous instructions, clarity about the time period of the diary and an example checklist of 'items, events or behaviour' to prompt entries. The diaries were completed prior to the semi-structured interview to allow time for the responses to inform the interview questions in a 'diary-interview'[263] manner.

Below is an example entry from the researcher-driven diaries:

---

[259] L Corti, 'Using Diaries in Social Research', *Social Research Update* 2 (1993).

[260] K Fisher and R Layte, 'Measuring Work-Life Balance Using Diary Data', *Electronic International Journal of Time Use Research* 1 (2004): 1–13.

[261] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). 243.

[262] H Elliott, 'The Use of Diaries in Sociological Research on Health Experience', *Sociological Research Online*, no. 2 (1997).

[263] D. H. Zimmerman and D. L. Weider, 'The Diary: Diary-Interview Method', *Urban Life*, no. 5 (1977): 479–98.

Morning prayer

Preparation for morning Eucharist service

Homily preparation

Pastoral meeting

Picked daughter up from school and took to swimming

Evening prayer

Walk the dog

Reading[264]

The reason for the inclusion of non-liturgical or not strictly 'church'-related activity came from the thesis's methodological underpinning that Practical Theology is not limited to the Church. Although an initial consideration of the research question would seek an answer purely limited to their liturgical or 'church'-related activities, I wanted to consider their life beyond the strict boundaries of the Church. This is for three reasons. First, it is consistent with Swinton and Mowat's methodological approach that underpins this thesis. Second, it allows for more data that may offer significant insight into the participant-priests' ministry. Third, Anglo-Catholic theology of the priesthood – indeed, their theology of the Christian vocation – is holistic, not dividing between the liturgical and 'secular' life of the priest and Christian. For these four reasons, the example entry invited the participant-priests to share beyond their strictly 'church'-related activity.

The diaries were analysed using the emerging themes from the first stage (mission, the wider Church of England, personal holiness, the Catholic movement, the Eucharist and invitation). It became clear that the participant-priests had similar regular activities. This shared practice included: daily Eucharist, visiting the sick, visits linked to occasional offices, schools' ministry and days off. To standardise the

---

[264] Appendix I

data produced to enable a stronger data set, in cases where such examples were absent in the diary, a question was directed at that type of practice. For example, 'I see that you did not conduct a baptism visit in this particular week? Is that something you regularly do? If so, could you recall the last baptism visit you conducted and tell me about it?'

Stage 4 – Conducting semi-structured interviews and undertaking initial coding

As established above, the majority of the interview questions were informed by these researcher-driven diary entries. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain the data necessary to form 'rich and thick'[265] descriptions to answer the research question. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the data through a systematic, conversational and situational approach, the *Interview Guide Approach*[266] informed the conduct of the interviews. In addition to the initial letter sent out to recruit participants, prior to each interview, the participant-priests were verbally informed of the motive, plan and purpose of the research project. Their written consent was obtained prior to their voluntary participation. Each of the seven interviews lasted about one hour, with participants being given a chance to redact or seek to clarify their responses either at the time or upon reflection in the days thereafter. Verbal permission was obtained to audio-record each interview. Where possible, I attended a Eucharist service at the participant-priests' parish churches prior to the interviews. This was due to the project's methodological approach of critical faithfulness. The act of participating in the Eucharist continually rooted the research phase in the life of the Church. It served as a reminder to both me as researcher and the participant-priests that I am seeking to be faithful in my practice as a Practical Theologian. While the project uses research methods from the social sciences, they are used in the context of the Eucharist. In other words, they are baptised and submitted to God's purposes.

---

[265] Lincoln and Guba, '*Naturalistic Inquiry,*' 316
[266] Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, '*Research Methods in Education,*' 353.

Analysis of interview data

This section suggests that data analysis was a discrete research phase, but this was not the case. Rather, reflecting the project's methodological approach, the analysis was present throughout the research phase, including during the interviews themselves, informing follow-up questions. Transcripts were written up afterwards, offering an opportunity to re-hear answers and gain additional insights free from the distractions of the interview setting. I attended a parish Mass prior to the interview, with the interviews themselves taking place in the church building or, usually, at the priest's vicarage.

Care was taken to preserve the integrity of the data collection and analysis process. Heeding the warning of Cohen, Marion and Morison, I made efforts to avoid 'the selective use of data, unfair telescoping of data or neglecting the negative while accentuating the positive'.[267] Audio recordings of the interviews were carefully transcribed, which allowed insights and observations to be well-ordered. The emerging themes are discussed later in Chapter 3. Having completed the initial interviews and transcribed the audio recordings, I coded the data. The overall themes of mission, presence, isolation and fraternity emerged.

Theology in Four Voices

The main reason for using the dual method of researcher-driven diaries plus interviews was to create a space for the participant-priests to reflect on their practice. I was concerned that the priests, all theologically educated and well-practised in speaking about theology at length, would postulate about mission rather than disclose their practice. I wanted to hear their reported practice and their reflections thereon. This was successful.

---

[267] Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, '*Research Methods*,' 145-146.

As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, a difference was observed between the data from the initial broad questions about parish mission and the data from the questions about specific diary entries. The evidence for this is found in the uniformity of the answers given in response to the first question interview: 'What do the words "parish mission" mean to you?'. In other words, the striking similarity in the priests' answers is in contrast to the diversity of answers to questions emerging from the researcher-driven diary entries. In response to this first question, nearly all the priests gave a variation on the same answer: first distinguishing between historical parish missions as evangelistic events, and then parish mission being mission-rooted in the geographical area of the parish, with the themes of particularity, commitment and presence mentioned. In listening to the disclosure of the participant-priests, I began to hear this dissonance between a shared abstract missiology of presence and their accounts of practice.

Moreover, this dissonance was less due to a disintegration between theology and practice; it was because for each of the participant-priests, the theme of presence existed in both their broad discussion of parish mission and their specific accounts of practice. Indeed, I have identified the dissonance as being within the group's use of the language of presence and the practice to which it is attributed. The priests use the same language, but are not talking about the same thing. Here, I found TAR's Four Voices model[268] helpful in identifying the 'hidden infrastructure'[269] within the group's disclosed theology, located in both the researcher-driven diaries and the interviews. Rather than a model I have brought to bear on my data, this disparity was something that emerged from the data, with the Four Voices model serving as a helpful inductive model to clarify what I was already hearing in the participant-priests' disclosures. This is why I lead on two of the Four Voices because I have not performed a deductive application of the model on the priests' disclosures.

---

[268] Cameron, '*Talking about God in Practice,*' 53-58.
[269] Watkins, '*Disclosing Church,*' 41.

On reflection, as a researcher, I have observed examples of the participant-priests' context of the wider Anglo-Catholic tradition at the Catholic Mission Conference, often containing formal theologies associated with the group. I also attended Mass prior to the majority of the interviews, which located some of the liturgical (or normative) theological contexts of the participant-priests. In the interviews, all four voices are identifiable in the priests' articulations, but the dissonance within the group was most clearly identifiable between their espoused and operant theologies. Indeed, I do not think that a neat divide exists between the participant-priests' answers when speaking about general parish mission (espoused) and their reflections on their reported practice (operant). As Watkins writes, this approach 'is not a framework to be objectified and applied',[270] but a means of interpretation. For this project, in Chapter 4, I suggest that the terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' are more helpful. They do not seek to assume exclusivity, nor do they seek to identify the type of theology being spoken. Rather, the terms denote the subject about which the participant-priests are speaking and allow a theological analysis of possible disparities to occur as a separate stage. This particularly comes to bear in Chapter 5's normative proposals.

The practice of the various participant-priests is similar enough for the disparities to escape detection. It was only through careful listening that the disparity between the group's missiological practices and their homogenous abstract missiology became identifiable. Indeed, the participant-priests may deny such a disparity. However, I am hopeful that through reflective practice, the participant-priests will be able to address this disparity. In light of the observable dissonance between the participant-priests' articulations, the following chapters take on a threefold shape. Each attends to and analyses the participant-priests' abstract theology of presence in the first instance, their concrete theology of presence in the second and their experiences of isolation in the third.

---

[270] Watkins, '*Disclosing Church,*' 41.

Stage 5 – Conducting follow-up telephone interviews and undertaking final coding

The social distancing measures implemented in response to the escalating coronavirus pandemic on 16th March 2020 meant that I had to adapt my research method for this project. At that point, I had already completed seven face-to-face interviews. Two of the remaining interviewees were able to move their interviews onto the telephone. Although this was not ideal, as it removed the possibility of attending a weekday Mass and observing the body language of the participant-priests, it was a pragmatic solution.

When the national restrictions came into place, I was in the process of recruiting a further four participants. However, the effect of the pandemic was such that it became increasingly difficult for priests to speak about their usual practice without the impact of the current pandemic influencing their answers. For this reason, and due to the increasing span of time between usual practice and what many were calling the 'new normal', I made the decision to stop recruiting more participant-priests. To add depth to my smaller-than-planned data set, I adapted my research project to consider how the social distancing measures were affecting a group of priests whose approach to parish ministry emphasised presence. Specifically, I asked how they were attempting to maintain their presence during this time of disruption. During the initial interviews, many of the priests had signalled their availability should I wish to contact them again. Upon requesting their participation in a follow-up interview, all nine responded, and I conducted brief telephone interviews two weeks after Easter 2020. These interviews provided an opportunity for both further gathering of data and member checks. The member check, or respondent validation, allowed me to confirm my initial interpretation of presence as a missiological approach. Each priest provided affirmation of the validity and accuracy of this finding.

Analysis of second set of interview data

The second set of interviews was transcribed and analysed using a similar method utilised with the first set of data. The initial emerging themes of mission, the wider

Church of England, personal holiness, the Catholic movement, the Eucharist and invitation were used to code the data. Again, the themes of mission, presence, isolation and fraternity were all present, albeit with a different emphasis from the first set of interviews.

Adjustments due to COVID-19

The initial plan for this research project was to interview 14 participant-priests. However, due to the introduction of social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this plan was interrupted. As established in Chapter 2's section on considerations and complexities, as time passed, the accuracy of any potential participant-priests' decreased as their usual practice was replaced by a disturbed practice caused by these social distancing measures. In response to this change, the research project was adjusted to increase the depth of focus on a smaller research pool of nine participant-priests. This was achieved by conducting an additional telephone interview, plus observations of their liturgical practice online (where applicable).

Summary of data collection

Pseudonym	Field notes code[271]	Duration of first interview (mins)	Hours represented in diary	Duration of second interview (mins)	Location of first interview
Fr James	P101	62	84	30	Presbytery after Mass

---

[271] The omitted numbers represent priests in Southwark Diocese who, due to the COVID pandemic social distancing measures could not participant in the research phase

Fr John	P102	83	84	27	Presbytery after Mass
Fr Robert	P103	67	84	24	Presbytery after Mass
Fr Peter	P104	57	84	23	Presbytery after Mass
Fr William	P105	58	84	19	Presbytery after Mass
Fr Simon	P106	60	84	17	Presbytery
Fr Nicholas	P110	33	84	20	Telephone
Fr Alan	P112	39	84	33	Telephone
Fr George	P113	45	84	18	Church after Mass

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have established the methodological foundation of the thesis's Practical Theology approach, utilising both theological and empirical research methods. I have argued that Swinton and Mowat offer an epistemologically rigorous approach suitable for this project. The qualitative research methods of researcher-driven diaries and semi-structured interviews have also been established, with justification for this dual approach. This thesis is concerned with the missiological self-understanding of the participant-priests in relation to the wider Church of England's missiological stance as held within *Mission-Shaped Church*. My goal is to consider the articulations of the participant-priests (Chapter 3) within the historical context (Chapter 1). In the following chapter, I give voice to the participant-priests, with analysis to follow in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3. PRESENCE AND ISOLATION

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I collate and analyse the data collected through interviews with nine priests belonging to The Society under the episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Fulham. In the interviews, the participants described their missional practice and reflected theologically on that practice in response to the following question:

> What is the missiological approach to the parochial practice of priests in The Society?

They also described their experiences of isolation and fraternity in response to the following question:

> How does the historical theme of isolation still affect their self-understanding?

This chapter's data collection draws heavily on Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theological approach of critical faithfulness.[272] The idiographic data were gathered using 'validating triangulation'[273] with researcher-driven diaries and two sets of interviews. The data are presented in this chapter in a complexified form.[274] TAR has aided the process of complexification by offering an inductive model of interpretation.[275] This TAR model revealed an underlying tension[276] within the data, which is outlined further in this chapter and then analysed in Chapter 4.

As I collated the data, two key themes emerged from the interviews: first, a theology of presence, whether academic or operant; second, a context of isolation from the Church of England as a whole. The first two sections of this chapter

---

[272] *Swinton and Mowat, 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research.'* 86-89.
[273] Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, '*Research Methods in Education,*' 141.
[274] Swinton and Mowat. *'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,'* 13.
[275] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 53-58.
[276] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 146.

explore the theme of presence in the missiological approach of the priests' parochial practice. The third section considers the context of isolation.

In the first section, I briefly draw from my field diary and sketch my interaction with each participant-priest. I then describe their beliefs, starting with their abstract theology of parish mission. This shows a strong sense of place, particularity and commitment; the shared missiological approach of presence as a coherent, homogeneous theology of mission emerges from their descriptions. In the second section, I contrast the priests' abstract missiology with their reflections on their diary entries, indicating a scale of presence in the priests' practice. In the third section, I describe the isolation experienced by the participant-priests and consider the contrast between their narrative of isolation and their positive relationships with female clergy.

The social distancing restrictions implemented by the UK government in the Spring of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic created a situation in which priests in the Church of England were guided not to celebrate the Eucharist in their church buildings. Throughout this chapter, I note the effects of the COVID-19 social distancing measures on the participant-priests' missional approach to demonstrate this group's priorities when encountering significant interruption to their usual approach to ministry. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the participant-priests, their colleagues and their parishioners.

3.2 Research-participant priests

Fr James

Ordained deacon in the 2000s, Fr James is in the first half of his ministry and serves as an incumbent in a parish in London Diocese. His parish is notably multicultural, with high levels of deprivation. In addition to his role as incumbent, he also serves as Area Dean. Fr James has served as incumbent in this parish within London Diocese for almost a decade; he previously served his title post outside of the London area.

Fr John

Fr John has been Priest in Charge in an affluent central London parish for around five years. Ordained in the 2000s, he has had a long association with the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, while also serving as a vicar and Area Dean at another parish within London Diocese. He is in the first half of his ministry.

Fr Robert

Ordained in the 1980s, Fr Robert is in the second half of his ministry. Previously ministering within the Church in Wales, he has experience within hospital chaplaincy and parish ministry. He has been Rector in his current parish in London Diocese since the late 2000s.

Fr Peter

Since serving two curacies in London Diocese, Fr Peter has been incumbent at his current central London parish since the early 2010s. Currently in his first incumbent post, Fr Peter was ordained deacon in the 2000s. He is in the first half of his ministry.

Fr William

Having served two curacies, Fr William is now serving his first incumbency at a central London parish in the Diocese of London. Ordained deacon in the 2010s, Fr William is in the first half of his ordained ministry.

Fr Simon

With previous experience of both hospital chaplaincy and parish ministry in the Church in Wales, Fr Simon has been vicar at his current parish In London Diocese for almost 10 years. Ordained deacon in the 1980s, Fr Simon is in the second half of his priestly ministry.

Fr Nicholas

Fr Nicholas has been Vicar in his parish in Southwark Diocese for over 10 years. Ordained deacon in the 1980s, he has extensive experience of parish ministry. With his retirement imminent, Fr Nicholas is in the second half of his ministry.

Fr Alan

Ordained in the 1980s, Fr Alan is in the second half of his ministry. After the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood, he was received by the Roman Catholic Church. Six years later, he returned to the Church of England. He has been incumbent in his parish in London Diocese for over 10 years while also serving as chaplain to a local secondary school.

Fr George

Although Fr George was ordained deacon in the 1980s and is in the second half of his ministry, his current post is only his second since his curacy. This is because he has been vicar in his parish in Southwark Diocese for over 25 years.

Participant-Priests

Participant-priest	Field notes code[277]	Decade ordained deacon	Diocese
Fr James	P101	2000s	London
Fr John	P102	2000s	London
Fr Robert	P103	1980s	London
Fr Peter	P104	2000s	London
Fr William	P105	2010s	London

---

[277] The omitted numbers represent priests in Southwark Diocese who, due to the COVID pandemic social distancing measures could not participant in the research phase

Fr Simon	P106	1980s	London
Fr Nicholas	P110	1980s	Southwark
Fr Alan	P112	1980s	London
Fr George	P113	1980s	Southwark

3.3 Abstract theology of presence

When analysing the participant-priests' articulations of their abstract theology of parish mission, a homogenous theology of presence emerged. Presence is the overarching theme in the priests' responses to what parish mission means to them. An examination of the remaining data demonstrates that, while these priests had a common abstract theology of mission, their concrete theologies did not share such similarities.

A sense of being confined to the geographical, defined space of the parish emerged in the priests' initial answers about how they understood parish mission. Fr John, when asked to describe what the words 'parish mission' meant to him, responded as follows: 'mission that is rooted in place [...] the starting point for parish mission is just that sense of territory'.[278] The other priests expressed a similar understanding, reflected in their use of geographical words and phrases such as 'particular place'[279], 'every square inch of the country is covered'[280] and 'local'[281]. This sense of the parish as the geographical place for mission is best encapsulated in one statement from Fr Simon: 'the parish, the geographical area which one is set in is your place to do mission'.[282] At its most basic, then, parish mission is mission conducted in the geographical area of the parish. The significance of the geographical area of the parish was not the terrain itself, but the people who live

---

[278] P102
[279] P103
[280] P112
[281] P104
[282] P106

and work within the parish boundary. Fr William articulated this by explaining that 'we are church for everyone who lives in a particular place.'[283] Here, he was not only referring to his parish but also to his understanding of the Church of England's ecclesiological vision held within the parish system. However, Fr William did not stop at the residents of each parish but went on to refer to non-residents who work in the parish as being included within the concept of the parish, explaining that 'we are about the transformation of the whole parish of everyone who lives and works in that space.'[284]

London has a diverse demographic, but many of the priests interviewed served in parishes with particularly high levels of diversity. Indeed, for a small number of the priests' parishes, according to self-identification in the National Census data, Christianity was a minority faith. Despite the absence of Christian normativity in his parish, Fr Simon commented that 'every person can look to their parish church'.[285] In essence, the priests considered the residents and those who work within their parish's geographical boundaries, all faiths or none, to be encompassed by the parish's mission. As Fr James said, 'We have a mission to them all.'[286] Fr George described how this mission is truly for all: 'Firstly, there is the mission to the people that are in the parish church, so the regular worshippers. And then, more importantly, with them the mission to those outside, to those who live in the parish.'[287]

The participant-priests also emphasised the particularity of each parish. Fr Peter described this as follows: 'It is not just "one size fits all", different parishes will have different needs and different demographics, and parish mission will look different wherever you go.'[288] In addition to the particularity caused by geographical location, there was an acknowledgement of the particularity caused by a parish's location in time. In contrast to previous years, missional approaches such as

---

[283] P105
[284] P105
[285] P106
[286] P101
[287] P113
[288] P104

traditional Parish Missions were not considered by some of the participant-priests to be suitable in today's London parishes. As Fr Nicholas, one of the older priests interviewed, explained, 'Since I came to London, you really wouldn't want to be doing processions and public speaking and so on nowadays, it just wouldn't be the thing at all.'[289]

Having discussed the priests' concrete understanding of parish mission as located in their parish boundaries, I now turn to discussing the action that the participant-priests attributed to parish mission: proclamation, transformation and dedication.

Proclamation of the gospel was frequently mentioned by the priests as the primary action of parish mission. Fr Alan mentioned the imperative to 'share faith'[290]; along with Fr Simon, he explained, 'Parish mission means that the parish, the geographical area which one is set in, is your place to do the mission, which is to tell people the Good News of Jesus Christ.'[291] Furthermore, Fr William said, 'Really it's about awakening the people who live and work in that parish to the presence and love of God, and inviting them to become part of his Church.'[292]

Some of the priests spoke about transformation as the work of parish mission. Transformation refers to both social transformation and the building up of the worshipping community of the parish church. Fr William observed that work towards social transformation may not appear missional to me as the researcher; yet, from his perspective, transformation of the whole parish is mission:

> A lot of stuff in my diary is not necessarily explicitly church stuff, a lot of it is more broadly speaking community stuff because we are about the transformation of the whole parish of everyone who lives and works in that space.[293]

---

[289] P110
[290] P112
[291] P106
[292] P105
[293] P105

Fr William sees the parish church as the locus of social and spiritual transformation for that geographical area. Fr Nicholas, who was nearing retirement, shared that, in his experience, 'mission has been building up congregations, really.'[294] Fr Alan also referred to the need to 'draw people in and share faith'.[295] In this sense, 'building up congregations' has a dual meaning: to increase service attendance, and to build up the faith of the people. Although only some of the priests interviewed made explicit mention of transformation, as described above, the same notions were implicit within the activities of the other priests, as described in their diaries.

The final action of parish mission to be highlighted was that of dedication. Such dedication, or commitment to the place of the parish and its inhabitants, was stated both explicitly and implicitly. Fr John, drawing together the characteristics of place (with its particularities) and of dedication, explicitly referred to parish mission as a 'commitment to place, commitment to the locality, commitment to the people who live in it, commitment to the challenges of the life of that community, commitment to the hopes, aspirations and dreams and challenges of life there.'[296] While the other priests did not explicitly mention commitment, it was implied in how they talked about their own rhythm of life being based in the geographical boundaries of the parish. For example, Fr James stated, 'Parish mission is what we do every day. It's the mission of the Church. We are here: living, moving, having our being in a parish. We share our life with all the people living in our parish.'[297]

Dedication also creates the context necessary for the proclamation of the gospel and God's own dedication to the parish. As Fr Alan explained, 'One of the best definitions of mission I found, I read by a Mill Hill missionary, is: sharing your faith with trusted friends. So, I see the building up of relationship as very important.'[298] Dedication to a parish and the individuals within it forms a context for proclaiming

---

[294] P110
[295] P112
[296] P102
[297] P101
[298] P112

the gospel. In addition to providing opportunities to share the gospel, the priests also understood their dedication to their parishes as communicating a theological truth of God's faithfulness to that particular community. Fr William described parish mission as 'incarnational, it's about God's commitment in any particular time and place in Jesus Christ.'[299]

In this section, I have demonstrated the homogenous theology of presence that the participant-priests articulated when referring to parish mission in abstract terms. While the priests emphasised various characteristics of place, as well as proclamation, transformation and commitment, all of their articulations culminated in a theology of presence. In the next section, I establish the participant-priests' theology of presence when reflecting on their concrete reported practice.

3.4 A concrete theology of presence

Despite the participant-priests' shared language of presence about parish mission, their concrete theology parish mission varied. This 'concrete theology' refers to their practice as described in their researcher-driven diaries and their reflections on that practice. I find their practice to be on a cumulative scale of presence representing increasing levels of missional action. More specifically, I have identified five general levels to this cumulative scale: first, being present at the Mass; second, being visibly present in their parish while wearing clericals; third, conducting pastoral visits; fourth, being regularly present at their church school; and fifth, being on local committees seeking to affect positive social change. The reason that this is a cumulative scale is because a priest who is present on local committees will also be present in the school, wear clericals and regularly preside at the Mass, whereas another priest who regularly presides at Mass will not necessarily also be present in other settings.

Cumulative Scale of Presence

---

[299] P105

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Celebrating the Mass	*Wearing a clerical collar*	*Conducting pastoral visits*	*Visiting local schools*	*Participating in local conversations for social change*

i) Stage 1 – Celebrating the Mass

The participant-priests' missiology is rooted in their identity as priests. This is due to their ontological understanding of the effect of ordination on the individual, and it is also found in this data because they were aware of the research topic being the missiology of parish priests in The Society. The bedrock of the participant-priests' priestly identity is presiding at the Mass. The SSC's Rule of Life gives pre-eminent importance to daily Mass, and all the participant-priests bar one (who was not affiliated with the SSC) were faithful to this Rule of Life. The importance placed upon the Mass is twofold. First, they believe that it is the central way in which they serve their communities. Second, it is an act of personal devotion that feeds the rest of their ministry. I discuss these two facets in turn below.

The participant-priests used language of their presence at the Mass as central to their priestly identity. The idea of their presence being representational was alluded to here. While the theology of *in persona Christi* is prominent in Anglo-Catholic sacramental thought, Fr Peter was the only one to refer to it specifically: 'you are the person of Christ; you are representing Christ to them. I mean, in the Mass we stand there for those minutes of the consecration *in persona Christi'*.[300] The idea of the priests acting *in persona Christi* was prominent in their descriptions of both regularly celebrating the Mass and their priestly ministry in general. Their presence at the altar as mediating between God and the congregation, as Christ is mediator, was particularly evident during the COVID-19 social distancing measures, as will be explained below.

---

[300] P104

The priests also placed significant importance on celebrating the Mass as an act of personal devotion. Attending or celebrating the Mass is a central tenet of the SSC's Rule of Life, to which all bar one of the participant-priests adhere. Such regular celebration forms part of their devotion to the holy cross of Christ. Many of the priests spoke of the joy that they experienced while celebrating the Eucharist. Fr Robert said, 'When I say Mass here, oh, it's the most glorious privilege.'[301] Fr James spoke of how it keeps him 'nourished spiritually' to do the physical work of his job. He added, 'It keeps me fresh, and it keeps me going. It's the life of the Church and it's the central point of my day.'[302]

Clearly, then, celebrating the Eucharist was the central and foundational action for the participant-priests. They understood it as their act of service to both their congregation and parish and also drew personal pleasure and spiritual nourishment from this regular act.

COVID-19 and presence at Mass

COVID-19 brought the participant-priests' theology of presence in the Mass to the fore. While some practice had to be reduced or removed, their sacramental practice remained – only slightly reimagined. Fr Peter described during our interview how his pattern of prayer and celebrating the Eucharist continued at the height of the social distancing measures of Spring 2020: 'I've been trying to stick to something like the usual pattern.' Because his vicarage was attached to the church building, he utilised the internal route in and out of the church. This allowed him to maintain his practice of going to church for morning and evening prayer and to celebrate the Mass 'most days'.[303] Fr Peter's practice is indicative of the general practice of the participant-priests during this time.

---

[301] P103
[302] P101
[303] P104

Although the idea that the priests were saying Mass on behalf of their congregations was something that was already held prior to COVID-19, the social distancing measures re-emphasised this theological belief. They continued to celebrate the Mass regularly, even when there were no congregants, demonstrating the foundational nature of their belief that celebrating the Eucharist was a non-negotiable and central role of their priestly ministry. Not only do the priests understand themselves as *in persona Christi* but also as representing their congregations vicariously when presiding. Referring to his liturgical practice, Fr William said, 'everything else happens in church, for and on behalf of the parishes.'[304] Fr William was not alone in holding the view that his continued celebration of the Mass was not just for himself, but the wider parish. Fr Alan expressed a similar idea: 'I can say Mass in the church, which I do for all sorts of reasons: for my own good and the good of the Parish. I do it for the Parish and the people who can't be there.' Fr George summarised the view articulated by all the priests that their priestly role is to say the Mass on behalf of their church communities:

> Saying the Mass is one of the most important things I do every day and the liturgy does have a life of its own. People are deeply supported by the fact that they know I am still offering the Mass, on their behalf, on a daily basis in the vicarage.[305]

The responses also showed a sense of maintaining and fostering the worshipping community during a trying time. The communication and invitation to participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist in a remote way, utilising both livestream technology and the liturgy of 'An Act of Spiritual Communion', demonstrate both the importance of the priest's presence at the altar and an understanding that this action creates a community around the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Fr Nicholas described his understanding of his priestly role during this particular time as 'trying to keep people together and to just keep morale up a little.' When

---

[304] P105
[305] P113

asked to expand on what he meant by 'keeping it together', he replied as follows: 'Keeping the congregation feeling as though we are still part of a community.' He was aware that, with the church building being closed, if there was no contact being made, it would be 'very easy to fall off the edge' of the community. He considered his role to be keeping 'our community spirit going' by giving his congregation reason to still consider themselves to be 'part of it'. To him, encouraging his congregation to make an Act of Spiritual Communion was significant in maintaining a sense of community. He also referred his congregation to the Bishop of Fulham's livestreamed Masses on Sundays and major feast days. This allowed his congregation to 'sort of spiritually link in', both at the usual Mass times and following the livestreams.

The priests made sure to communicate with their parishioners when they would be celebrating the Eucharist. Fr John explained that he told his regular parishioners, 'every day at midday, I will be praying the Angelus and I'll be saying the Mass, so if you want to join in with that spiritual offering […]'. The priests had a broadly unified understanding of what it means for absent parishioners to 'join in with that spiritual offering'. All of them mentioned the liturgy of 'An Act of Spiritual Communion'. This liturgy, shared by the Bishop of Fulham, contains the following prayer:

>My Jesus,
>
>I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
>
>I love You above all things,
>
>and I desire to receive You into my soul.
>
>Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
>
>come at least spiritually into my heart.
>
>I embrace You as if You were already there
>
>and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Fr James explained the theological concept of making spiritual communion as 'the intent to receive the embodiment of Christ'. Where individuals cannot attend Mass for a serious reason, yet in their hearts they 'desire and yearn to be there', they can make spiritual communion. In turn, as Fr James summarised, 'the lack of physical presence is made up for by your spiritual desire to receive communion.'[306]

The participant-priests' reported practice and subsequent reflection during both a 'typical' week and at the height of the COVID-19 social distancing measures of Spring 2020 demonstrate their belief that celebrating the Mass is the foundational action for a parish priest. They understood it as a missional act of service to their congregation and parish, in that they were present in a representative role and served as a source of personal spiritual nourishment. Thus, the priest's regular presence at the Eucharist is the first stage of the cumulative scale of presence.

ii)   Stage 2 – Wearing a clerical collar

The wearing of clerical collars – and, for some, cassocks – was a common practice among the participant-priests. This uniform was worn during all the face-to-face interviews, and, as they explained, they wear their clerical wear, most commonly a clerical collar, while going about their day-to-day life in their parish. They regarded clerical wear as important, as they believe it makes them identifiable and therefore present. Fr George explained his usual practice of wearing the cassock as he walks around the parish, 'so that I am easily identifiable'. His intention is that doing so does not 'separate' him from people; instead, 'it makes them know' who he is. For him, it is about being 'readily identifiable', just like other professions,

---

[306] P101

such as postal workers. Considering an argument made against clerical wear, he said, 'being unidentifiable doesn't put you alongside people, it just makes you invisible.'[307] Being identifiable is important because it facilitates the two main reasons that the priests habitually wear clerical wear: it allows mundane activities to have missional potential, and it makes their physical presence in their parish representational.

Some of the priests were clear in their belief that wearing a collar opens up the possibility of interactions that may not usually be possible. It charges what may otherwise be a mundane activity, such as grocery shopping, with missional potential. Some of the priests offered examples in which their clerical wear had, in their assessment, led to missional interactions. Fr Robert shared how, in his local supermarket ('near the milk'), a woman approached him and asked if he could bless her rosary. He did so. Reflecting on the missional opportunity enabled by his wearing a clerical collar, he said, 'Now, if I had just walked around without a collar on…'.[308] He considers that, had he not been wearing his clerical collar, this specific interaction would not have occurred. He shared another occasion when he was wearing a cassock while on a public road:

> On one occasion, I had just come back from church, I don't normally walk around the parish in a cassock, but I had come back from church and was going to the post box so I just kept my cassock on. What do you know? More people stopped to speak to me with my cassock on than when I've got my collar on! So that's all part and parcel of the mission.[309]

For Fr Robert, the wearing of clericals is 'part and parcel' of his priestly mission within his parish. While transcribing Fr Robert's reflection that wearing a cassock rather than just a clerical shirt led to more unexpected encounters, I questioned – if clericals are worn explicitly for their missional potential, and cassocks are more effective than collars – why cassocks are not more widely worn in public. Although

---

[307] P113
[308] P103
[309] P103

some examples were offered by the priests of clerical wear leading to interactions, these seemed anecdotal and infrequent. This led me to conclude that the missional value of clerical wear was possibly overstated by the participant-priests.

In contrast to their positive comments, clerical wear had not always led to positive encounters. The visibility that they attributed to leading to positive encounters also led to some instances of abuse. Fr George shared how 'at the height of the child abuse' scandal some time ago, he was 'abused physically and verbally', with people shouting out abuse. He explained, 'they just assume everybody in a dog collar is not being properly behaved.' The possibility of unexpected negative encounters is one negative effect experienced by some of the priests. In addition to overtly negative experiences, the identifiable nature of clerical wear diminishes priests' privacy when going about their day-to-day lives. Fr Robert's habit of wearing his collar on his regular trip to the local supermarket has raised eyebrows among his fellow clergy: 'I always go shopping with a collar on. I know some people who won't. One priest said to me, "I don't want people seeing me buying toilet rolls."' Fr Robert laughed, 'it doesn't bother me at all!'[310] However, despite the potential negative reactions and the lack of privacy that wearing clericals can create, all of the priests continue to wear them habitually.

While some of the priests spoke of wearing collars with the intention of inducing missional encounters, the overriding value that the priests placed on clerical wear was to establish their physical presence in their communities as a representational presence. In this way, their identifiability has a deliberate missional purpose. Being recognisable offers the opportunity for a stranger to approach them for a conversation, blessing or enquiry, but it also embeds simple interactions with a deeper meaning. A smile or a wave becomes not just the smile of a stranger walking down the street but a smile or a wave from a priest. As such, it is embedded with meaning.

---

[310] P103

The missional potential of clerical dress, as described by the priests, seems plausible in the first instance, and their anecdotes indicate that this is the case. However, important considerations were missing from their analysis that influence whether clerical dress is as effective as they imply. First, real confirmation of its effectiveness is absent, as we do not hear the other persons in these stories, which makes them vulnerable to confirmation bias.[311] Second, it is plausible that clerical dress has a detrimental effect in certain circumstances, as the negative anecdotes make clear.[312] Third, it is also plausible that clerical dress has little or no lasting effect whatsoever.

What for Fr James was an unplanned, incidental encounter provoked by his wearing a cassock, although fitting within his perspective of mission as requiring his representational presence in his parish, for Fr Robert became a more considered action. Caused by the crisis of priestly practice following the social distancing measures of Spring 2020, many of the priests talked about trying to maintain a level of physical presence in the community. Fr Robert shared how he regularly went out for a walk while wearing his collar with an intention for 'people to see me out and about'. He offered a 'cheery greeting' when he passed people and, 'more often than not, I get a big cheery greeting back.' He observed that, since the social distancing restrictions, 'people seem to be rather more prepared to smile and say hello.' His intention in being visible while walking around his parish while wearing his collar was to be a 'physical presence around the community.'[313]

While prior to COVID-19, both engagements and cordial acknowledgements in the street were caused by the broadly passive actions of the priests, in that they were merely going about their day-to-day lives without the express intention of invoking encounters, the social distancing measures led Fr Robert to consider them in a

---

[311] Raymond S. Nickerson, 'Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises', *Review of General Psychology* 2, no. 2 (June 1998): 175–220.

[312] Similar examples are recorded by Roman Catholic priests, for example: Gerard Moloney, 'A Look at a Priest's Life', *The Furrow* 64, no. 1 (January 2013): 10–17. 12.

[313] P103

more proactive way. As a result, he left the house with the express purpose of being a representational presence in his parish.

The participant-priests all wore clerical wear with the understanding that it made them identifiable as a priest. They considered it to be infusing mundane action with missional potential. Indeed, they believe it makes their presence representational. Where this belief was often described in passive terms, the social distancing measures of Spring 2020 made some of the participant-priests consider this practice with more intention. Thus, the wearing of clerical wear is the second stage of the cumulative scale of presence.

iii) Stage 3 – Conducting pastoral visits

In addition to regularly presiding at the Mass and wearing clerical dress, all the priests conduct numerous pastoral visits. They understood their presence during pastoral visits as representational. The practice of wearing clerical wear, as already established, was understood as reminding both the individuals they are visiting and, at times, themselves of their role and purpose. Fr James finds that the cassock justifies his presence and explains his role in situations to which he would otherwise not be invited. He recalled a pastoral visit to a family whose daughter was seriously ill:

> There were people crammed in the flat, people standing around the walls and on the floor. We were having plastic bowls of food. I was the only non-West Indian person there – and the only one wearing a cassock! So, it's fairly obvious what you're there for, again physically. Spiritually? If they invite you, they are not inviting me. They are inviting someone to come and comfort them, using words of scripture and to pray for them and pray for their daughter.[314]

---

[314] P101

His words demonstrate a representational understanding of his presence: it is not him, James, being invited, but Fr James, a priest. Speaking about another pastoral visit, Fr James stated, 'I have a job to do. I have a role to play.' Rather than being solely a personal invitation, he is invited to fulfil the role of a priest and all that represents in the given situation.

The participant-priests spoke of their presence being representational in three ways: representing the wider church community, spiritual or moral authority and God's presence. I will discuss these in turn below.

a) Priestly presence as representing the wider church community

The participant-priests understood their presence during pastoral visits as representative of the wider church community. This was especially acute during pastoral visits to the sick. The priest's visit communicates to the individuals concerned that they are valued, that their absence at the Sunday service was noticed and that they have not been forgotten. Fr Peter, considering a recent visit where a person could not attend congregational worship, reflected, 'it's me saying, "you can't be with us on a Sunday or a weekday, but you do matter enough for me to come and find you."'[315] Similarly, Fr William shared about a congregation member who was in hospital at the time of the interview:

> Either I, or my colleague *Fr Greg,* try and go at least every second day if we can, even if we are only there for 10 to 15 mins; it's a change to the monotony, it's a sign they're not forgotten, it's a reminder that they are prayed for.[316]

In this way, the priests understood their pastoral visits, particularly when visiting the sick and those unable to attend regular worship, as representing the wider church community to those individuals.

---

[315] P104
[316] P105

b) Priestly presence as representing authority

The priests also represent figures of authority on matters of faith when conducting pastoral visits. How this authority is understood by congregation members or even parish residents in contact with the priest for occasional offices is beyond the scope of this research. However, the priests understood their presence during pastoral visits to have a certain level of authority, which they believed came from their priesthood rather than their own personal qualities. Their authority was spiritual, in their sacramental role as priest, but also doctrinal and moral. Although not every priest spoke directly about their authority during pastoral visits, it was raised directly by both Fr Simon and Fr Nicholas and indirectly by Fr Peter and Fr William.

Fr Simon explained how he does not 'get many funerals here'. He put this down to the 'makeup of the population – 80% Hindi'. This means that he considers that those who request a Christian minister to conduct a funeral are aware that 'they're going to get obviously some Christianity attached to it.'' He takes it as an opportunity not to preach judgement in a 'sort of Ian Paisley sort of thing' but to talk about the judgement 'facing all of us'.[317] His practice of talking about the Christian doctrine of judgement denotes an authority to impart such truth during pastoral visits. Similarly, Fr George shared two experiences of communicating the Christian value of the sanctity of life. He recalled a visit to a Sri Lankan family that had twins, one of whom had Down's syndrome. He explained how 'the family weren't keen on having her baptised because of the deformity.' His response to the family was to affirm the child and say, 'No, that's perfectly alright. We'll baptise her.' This use of his authority was clearly important to Fr George, as he shared another similar instance in which he encouraged a family to have their disabled child confirmed, despite their hesitation. Both accounts demonstrate that the priests' perception of their authority does not originate in their academic

---

[317] P106

qualifications or through a pre-existing relationship with the individuals concerned, but in their role as a priest.

Some of the younger priests seemed wary or at least critically aware of the potential power dynamics at play during such visits. However, rather than as a repudiation of their authority, they demonstrated a consideration of the potential negative effects of using said authority. Fr Peter explained that he would, wherever possible, conduct baptism visits in the home of the family, although he understood why this may not be achievable due to possible embarrassment about 'what their home is like, or where it is, or who else lives there'. When he arranges a visit, he gives this as an option, but emphasises him coming to their home: 'I don't force that, I mean, you can't force it.' His prior experience showed that during meetings hosted at his vicarage, a 'largish house' for an area where many people live in flats, his guests tend to just say 'yes' to most things he asks. He notes that such a dynamic is not conducive to a 'meaningful relationship of trust', which he hopes to build 'even if they don't come every Sunday'. Therefore, he concluded, provided that 'they aren't embarrassed for any reason', hosting meetings in the other person's home 'helps undermine a power dynamic' that may be present if they were to come to the vicarage.[318] Fr William shared a similar approach: 'It is great to be able to go to the [person's] home if you can. Sometimes people don't want you in the home. And that's something you need to ask yourself why, ask yourself why that might be.''

c) Priestly presence as representing Christ

In addition to their presence representing the parish and authority, the participant-priests understood their presence as representing Christ. This representation of Christ was considered to signify God's presence outside the church building. This was primarily evident in pastoral visits to people's homes when discussing occasional offices and also when visiting the sick either in hospital or in their

---

[318] P104

homes. In both situations, the priest's presence denotes God's presence in that place and situation.

When reflecting on pastoral visits, the participant-priests understood their presence as speaking of faith being present at or in the person's home. This was particularly notable during pastoral visits connected with occasional offices, where they understood their presence as signifying that the occasional office is not just something abstract, happening in the church building and separate from day-to-day life, but something embedded in the life of the home. When asked to expand on why he preferred, where possible, to conduct occasional office visits in the individual's home, Fr John answered:

> I am not walking faith, I'm not that. But if the priest goes into a home, it brings church to the home. It says that this is not something that we simply go to, we don't go to church to do faith; actually, it's something that can happen here as well.[319]

In addition to the priest's presence signifying God's presence in the home, their presence denotes God's presence in the context of difficulties such as ill health or bereavement. Fr John reflected on his presence as representational here:

> It's about a sense of God is with you in this, and going into that home, going into that situation, into this set of challenges, not just as me, *John*, but also as the priest, as someone who in some sense is representing the Church and Christ. The sense of 'Christ is with you.'[320]

Fr Peter shared something similar, and when asked what broader entity he represents when conducting visits, he explained:

> Well, you are the person of Christ; you are representing Christ to them. I mean, in the Mass, we stand there for those minutes of the consecration *in persona Christi.* We are there saying his words, we are, for that moment,

---

[319] P105
[320] P102

acting for him, and it's the same, I think, when you go out when you meet people in the parish. You're there; you're given the cure of souls, so there's that particular responsibility for people's eternal salvation, and it's a particular role which isn't given... I mean, a curate will share that ministry, of course, and to a degree, a lay worker will share that ministry, but you're the one who has been set apart through ordination to do specific things, to administer the sacraments.[321]

Fr Peter's words denote the idea of representational presence as not just limited to more formal encounters, such as pastoral visits, but as a whole approach to parish ministry. As he said, as when the parish priest is *in persona Christi* at the consecration of the Eucharist, 'it's the same, I think, when you go out when you meet people in the parish.' Ultimately, then, the priests represent Christ whenever they are present in their parish.

iv) Stage 4 – Visiting local schools

While all the priests exhibited the practices at the start of the cumulative scale of presence (regularly presiding at the Mass, wearing a clerical collar and conducting pastoral visits), it is at the next stage – work in schools – where their practice diverges. Nearly all the priests are involved in some kind of schools' work: some in the church schools associated with the parish, others at non-church schools situated within their parish. Some are governors, while others simply provide support in teaching RE and leading assemblies. Where the school is associated with the parish and a Church of England school, the priests preside over school Eucharist services. Due to the small geographical size of some central London parishes, some of the priests do not have numerous schools, let alone a church school within their parish boundaries. However, even these priests (such as Fr Peter and Fr John) have some interaction with local schools. The absence of data on engagements with schools does not mean that these priests do not conduct such ministry, just that

---

[321] P104

this ministry was not part of a 'typical week' as communicated through the researcher-driven diaries.

The baseline of engagement here was conducting assemblies in local schools. At this point, their clerical collar or cassock denoted additional meaning as part of their presence. Fr George, after working on improving the church's relationship with two previously hostile local schools, now goes to both 'to lead assemblies now and again and various things in classes.'[322] Fr Robert is not involved in a local school in a formal capacity, but he has developed a significant relationship with a special school within his parish, travelling there every Tuesday wearing his clerical collar. He described how he 'can't separate' out his role as the parish priest and his playing the piano. He summarises the duality as 'the parish priest is going to play the piano'. In the end, the frequency of his visits over an eight-year period has led to his being seen as a member of staff: 'because I go in there a lot, the staff all get to know me, and it's almost like being a chaplain there.' Indeed, three years ago, when he was offered the opportunity to join the board of governors of the school, he replied, '"No thank you" because if I'd become a governor, that would've changed the dynamic completely, because a number of members of staff will have a conversation with me knowing that I can't do anything about it…'.

The school Mass is a central part of schools' ministry for these priests when they have an affiliated church school. In this priestly role, they are present at the altar while wearing clerical wear. In addition to being present in a sacramental capacity, their presence also denotes a moral authority as they communicate the school's teaching themes or values. Such communication occurs in school Masses and assemblies and also through classroom content.

The priest who has the most engagement with a local school is Fr Alan, who holds a chaplaincy role at a large Church of England secondary school. As a priest in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, he experiences a level of difficulty because pupils and staff with a high understanding of the priesthood tend to be

---

[322] P113

Roman Catholics, while those who are Pentecostals or Evangelicals see 'a Catholic doctrine of priesthood as a little bit of an anomaly.' He describes his predicament as if he were to 'slightly fall between two stools as a priest.' However, Fr Alan has responded to this difficulty by diversifying his engagement at the school. For example, he produces a weekly 'thought for the day' reflection on PowerPoint, which is used by the staff during tutor groups. He describes how it is often a reflection 'from a theological point of view', drawing on the school's weekly themes. He also makes a habit of exercising a ministry of presence by 'just being around and being involved with students who have got problems.'[323]

Fr James leads a weekly school mass held at the school, and the pupils and staff come to the church building at the beginning and end of term and for 'big festivals'. He uses a 'shortened version' of the Mass, during which he integrates the monthly theme used by the school. These themes or values include 'worth, justice, love, mercy, peace, etc.' When asked to reflect upon his ministry at a school where the majority of children are not baptised, Fr James explained how the theme 'permeates every assembly and every daily prayer in the classroom and every weekly Mass in the school.' While he places importance on using his priestly authority to teach Christian values through these school themes, hoping that if non-Christian children 'aren't picking up on the religion, they are picking up on the theme', it is the Mass that is central to his missional vision for the school. Considering the Eucharist itself in relation to non-Christian children, he reflected, 'if you believe, as I do, that here you are in school, and the Incarnation is happening before your eyes, this is not a bad thing.'[324]

Church school as a microcosm of the parish

The priests' engagement with local schools can be viewed using the framework of the cumulative scale of presence. Their presence always involves them wearing clerical wear with all the intentions of being identifiable, infusing their presence with missional potential, but ultimately that their presence is representational of

---

[323] P112
[324] P101

the wider church community, a level of authority and even of Christ himself. To this end, for those with a school, how the priests engage with local schools mirrors their general engagement in the wider parish. The priests who exercise simpler levels of the cumulative scale of presence operate in a similar way in the school. In the same way, priests who operate across the full breadth of the cumulative scale of presence operate in the same holistic manner in their schools' ministry. The two priests who demonstrate this practice most clearly are Fr James and Fr William, who are the Chairs of Governors of their respective local church schools. They engage with their schools by being active on those boards, which mirrors their active representation presence in local committees in the wider parish.

In addition to presiding at school Masses, Fr James regularly frequents the secondary school in his role as Chair of Governors. He explained how he understands this role: 'the children can come to me if they have some problems in their lives, and they do.' Such interactions frequently lead to engagement with social services or the police. He considered that his role 'means' that both children and staff can contact him. In addition to pupils and staff, he also meets with parents, as 'they have a right' to see him. Reflecting on his role as Chair of Governors, he said, 'the whole thing becomes a useful exercise, spiritually, incarnationally, physically and in every possible way.'

Fr William also described his experience of being Chair of Governors at his local Church of England primary school. Where Fr James appeared to be content with being Chair of Governors, Fr William no longer wanted to remain in the role. He described his 'complicated' position, where a 'disastrous Ofsted inspection', unbeknownst to him, led to a 'coup', during which he was appointed Chair of Governors: 'It was extraordinary, like the deck of the Titanic lurched and the deckchairs slid towards me, and I didn't get out the way in time.' He described his role prior to the appointment as a 'blissful position where I could turn up, celebrate the school Mass, do some collective worship otherwise, be part of the whole RE teaching'. Since being 'catapulted into a really, really difficult governance role', his experience has been 'deeply unpleasant'. As a result, Fr William has found the

tension between the pastoral role of parish priest and the bureaucratic role of 'sitting alongside the headteacher' difficult to bear:

> I don't like having to be Chair of Governors but… I hope and pray that I won't be at some point in the next few years, but the other governors currently […] simply don't have the time to be around, to be supportive, to turn up to this meeting with the chair of the trust at 24 hours' notice, or to show up to talk to the person doing the safeguarding audit or… I am the only person who is around and available. So, for a season, it's a cross that has to be borne.

Despite his dissatisfaction with being Chair of Governors, it was evident that Fr William took on the role because it was necessary to fulfil his vision for the school. Below, it is established that the formation of community is a significant purpose of the priests' practices within the cumulative scale of presence. The church school also acts as a microcosm of the wider parish in this regard.

Fr William's discomforting role as Chair of Governors is about more than trying to get children to come to Sunday Mass at the parish church. He explained how he puts his role under the headline 'this is about community.' His role as Chair of Governors – and by extrapolation, any role as a governor at the school – is about creating a particular kind of community. Explaining his hopes for the effects of his efforts, he said, 'It is about creating a school where children are really well-known and well cared-for and where they have the opportunity for formation in the Christian faith.' He noted that only roughly 15% of the school's children attend his church on a Sunday: 'I don't get loads of them.' However, from his explanation, this does not seem to deter him in his efforts. His vision, while centred around the 'true flourishing [that] happens in the context of a relationship with Jesus Christ', is wider than that. The school offers a micro example of his macro vision of the parish, where children are 'well-known and well cared-for' within a flourishing school community and said community provides the context for them to experience 'formation in the Christian faith.' In a similar way, as established below,

his vision for the parish is that the Church would offer 'genuine community' as a context for experiencing the 'true flourishing' found in the person of Jesus Christ.

Not all of the participant-priests reported the practice of leading school Masses or leading assemblies at local schools. Those who did consider it a missional opportunity. For the minority of participant-priests with active involvement at their parish school, they approached it as a microcosm of their parish, seeking the flourishing of the community and drawing individuals into experiencing Christ in the Eucharist. Thus, presence at local schools is the fourth stage of the cumulative scale of presence.

v) Stage 5 – Participating in local conversations for social change

The final practice on the cumulative scale of presence is being a presence in local conversations about social transformation. This can be a formal role on local committees or an informal relationship with local organisations and amounts to the priest having a presence where local decisions are made.

Only three of the participant-priests can be seen as exercising this practice. Fr Peter discussed his effort to 'renew' his parish's connection with London Citizens 'in a meaningful way'. London Citizens enables community organising by helping local communities 'participate in public life and hold politicians and other decision-makers to account on the issues that matter to them.'[325] Fr Peter sees his effort in renewing the parish's relationship with London Citizens as important, as it helps him 'engage with what's going on in the local community'. In this way, his place at the table is representational: his presence represents the wider church community, perhaps a moral authority for some when discussing issues such as homelessness and poverty, and for him, God's presence.

At the time of the interview, Fr William was at the start of a conversation with his Parochial Church Council about their social vision for the parish. He characterised

---

[325] www.citizensuk.org/about_us

his proposals as 'sociological': they included engaging with social enterprises by lending volunteers or providing church space for free or at a subsidised rate. He was working in partnership with Amnesty International to provide warm coats for rough sleepers over the winter. Although he did not give an example of being on a local committee, his 'sociological' approach places importance on being a stakeholder in community conversations about social action. In addition to these burgeoning relationships with local organisations and groups, Fr William's role as Chair of Governors at the parish's church school can be seen as him being present in local conversations to effect social change. Accordingly, his role in creating a flourishing school community is integrated with his presence in local conversations about social action.

Fr James was the most formally positioned in local community conversations. In a similar way to Fr William, he endeavours to improve the lives of the pupils at the school where he is Chair of Governors. He also tries to improve the lives of the residents of his parish by being on local boards and committees, such as the local Regeneration Committee, and by working with the local council on the HS2 extension and its effects. Although at first glance, such positions on committees may not appear to be the work of a parish priest, as he explained, 'All that to me is parish mission.' A priest's presence in a formal capacity on local committees and in an informal capacity in community discussions on social action is significant for two reasons. First, in a theme that will be discussed below, it is a part of mission as it forms community. Second, it is significant because the priest's presence is not merely to effect change, but to be representational. In other words, their presence at the table represents more than just themselves; it represents the wider church, moral authority and, in their minds, God's presence.

The question remains as to why not all of the priests' practice includes effecting change through presence in local conversations and on local committees. My research revealed correlations between the socio-economic circumstances of the parish, the age of the priest and the likelihood of being present in local issues. I will explore this question in further detail in Chapter 4.

3.5 Building community: The purpose of priestly presence

Building community is the purpose and aim of the parish ministry of the participant priests. They try to achieve this through their practice of representational presence. The building of community, as expressed by the participant-priests, took many forms. In addition to the maintaining, strengthening and growing of the parish's worshipping community, the growing of community within the wider parish was also considered the role of a parish priest. Such communities are the context for and the means by which transformative social action is achieved.

The growth and maintenance of the worshipping community can be seen in the practice of pastoral visits to those unable to attend church services. Such visits were considered by Fr Nicholas and Fr Simon to draw individuals into the worshipping community. As Fr Nicholas said of his regular visits to an elderly member of his congregation, they serve the purpose of 'keeping her part of a worshipping community as far as possible.' The building up of the existing congregation can be seen in Fr John's encouraging his congregation to invite friends to specific church events. Fr Peter's introduction of a mini-series of adult catechesis on the Eucharist, the Church and the saints also demonstrates an intention to grow the congregation in their faith to 'feel more confident […] to talk about their faith in their life in an attractive way.'

The priests' understanding of their role in growing the wider parish community was spoken about in more abstract terms. Some priests spoke of their presence within the parish as community-forming. For those priests not operating towards the end of the cumulative scale of presence, they said that it is their representational presence that fosters community. Fr George acknowledged that a wider community already exists and that his role is to integrate himself into it: 'coming down to church when people are going to school and saying "hello", and often the kids will shout "Hello, Father!", and the parents realise, and it's a way of

incorporating oneself into it all.'[326] Here, he understands his representational presence as a means of incorporating himself into the wider parish community and, by being present, growing that community.

For those priests operating along the breadth of the cumulative scale of presence, community was spoken about as the context for and the means of social action. Many of the priests gave the sense that community was both the result and the context of the church's response to social issues within their parish. For those priests, forming community is a response to the loneliness and fragmentation of the wider parish community. This was something Fr William had already given a lot of thought to prior to our interview. He shared his reflection on his parish's specific context:

> One of the things we've tried to do as a PCC is to discern the context and just to work out: What is the parish? Who lives here? What are their needs? What ages are they? And one of the things we spotted from the statistics is […] a very large number of lone, single-parent families, a lot of elderly people who also live alone and suffer from loneliness, a huge income disparity and a lack really of social cohesion. And so, what does God's Church want to offer that context? Well, I think it wants to offer genuine community where there is great diversity and unity. I think it wants to offer an antidote to loneliness where you can find safe and profound and meaningful relationships. And I think it wants to try in some way to bring about, to close that gap of opportunity and income disparity.[327]

From what some of the priests suggested, including Fr William, it appears that the working out of this perspective – that forming 'genuine' community is an essential task of the parish priest and the wider parish church in general – comes through engagement with local committees and forging links with local organisations. In addition to providing an 'antidote to loneliness', such community-building offers the proximity required to discern the needs of the community and provides

---

[326] P113
[327] P105

opportunities to offer care. Again, Fr William's uncomfortable role as Chair of Governors is about more than trying to get children to come to Sunday Mass at the parish church; he explained how he puts his role under the headline of 'this is about community.' As established above, his hope is that the school community can be a means of providing the care needed for children to flourish. However, for Fr William, such social action leading to the creation of community is to provide a context for individuals to experience the 'true flourishing' found in the person of Jesus Christ. Fr Alan also explained how the context of community can provide the setting for evangelism: 'if you build a relationship, build community, that is the context and opportunity to draw people into a shared faith.'[328]

The participant-priests consistently used the language of regularity and frequency in relation to their missional practice of presence. Regularity here refers to presence, however small, that is repeated over a sustained period of time, while frequency refers to a large amount of presence, sometimes over a short period of time. Such language was used when explaining their parochial practices already outlined above. All the priests had a pattern of regularly presiding at the Mass, and regularity was observed in the wearing of clerical wear: with one priest saying, 'I tend to be' in a cassock, while another 'always' wears a clerical collar. The language of regularity was also used regarding pastoral visits to the sick and the housebound. Fr Nicholas visits a parishioner 'once a fortnight in her care home'. Moreover, the priests seem to conduct visits more frequently during times of intense need. In the short term, Fr William and his curate were visiting a hospitalised parishioner 'every second day'. Fr Peter also described a high frequency of visits to a parishioner who was hospitalised following a stroke. This sense of regularity also came across when the priests discussed their schools' work. Fr James, referring to the pupils at the Church of England school where he is Chair of Governors, said, 'I see them all fairly regularly, they come here [to the church building] quite a lot.' He went on to explain the detail of how frequently he engages with pupils: 'we have a school Mass every week in school.'[329] Schools' work lends

---

[328] P112
[329] P101

itself to routine, as most interactions are scheduled. Therefore, some of the priests told me the exact days on which they go into the schools in which they minister. Fr Peter said, 'I have been going in there virtually every Tuesday for eight years'. Fr William explained that, in addition to his work as Chair of Governors, he goes in to 'celebrate the school Mass' every 'Thursday morning'. Fr Alan, holding a more formal role as chaplain in a local secondary school, produces a regular 'thought for the day' to be used in tutor groups. In the case of Fr George, where interactions with the school were regular but not frequent ('I go in to lead assemblies now and again, and various things in classes'), I had a sense that he would have preferred more frequent school visits but was building up from previously having no interactions at all. Regular and frequent interactions were the preferred situation.

Frequent and regular presence, according to the participant-priests, leads to familiarity. Fr Robert was very keen to frame his frequenting a local pub as mission. He told me about his visits, often accompanied by a former churchwarden of the parish. The two of them 'got into the habit of going regularly'. He credits their regular trips for the baptisms and funerals that he has administered 'as a result'. He also sees 'a lot of parishioners are there on a regular basis.' Some of Fr Robert's understanding of regularly frequenting the local parish pub is that his presence there is representational, even when interactions are not necessarily profound. However, he demonstrated how frequent and regular visits, combined with his representational presence, as signified by his clerical collar, can lead to familiarity. Importantly, it takes place in a context of familiarity, where relationships and community can flourish. Fr Robert shared one occasion where his regular trips and conversations with the pub landlord led him to celebrate the Eucharist downstairs in the building. The publican had been taken ill, and Fr Robert came to bring him the Eucharist. Expecting to go upstairs for the visit, Fr Robert was surprised to find that, in addition to putting a cloth on one of the tables downstairs, 'he [the landlord] had invited three or four of his friends to come along and be there'. Recounting the joy he felt at the unexpectedness of the engagement, he said, 'it was just so lovely' that the landlord had the Blessed Sacrament in the local pub. Later, when the publican died, his son arranged with Fr Robert to have the funeral

at the church. He recalled the ceremony as 'the only time the place has been full, the place was heaving.'[330] As Fr Robert's account demonstrates, it is familiarity though the frequency and regularity of representational presence that offers an opportunity for evangelism. Fr George spoke of this in more overt terms: of 'getting alongside people in a safe environment where they don't realise they are being evangelised.' Alluding to Jesus's words in Matthew 4:19, he said, 'suddenly they're reeled in, and it's too late, they've been caught.' For Fr George, the gentle reeling in of a person is essential for evangelism: 'you can't tell someone to become a Christian'. Instead, individuals have to see the Christian's beliefs being reflected in what they are doing. When this happens, Fr George believes that non-Christians start to say to themselves, 'I think I'd like to be part of that.'[331] Fr George's articulation may not be how the other priests would speak of evangelism, but it does set out the centrality of drawing individuals into the worshipping community in the priests' efforts to build flourishing communities.

While the priests did not overtly link their practice of presence with the idea of regularity or frequency, some mentioned the idea of embeddedness. Being embedded or immersed in the parish was important to many of the priests. The high value placed on what is actually quite an abstract idea offers a reason why representational presence is such an important missiological concept to the priests. Fr James explained his understanding of parish mission as regular presence in the mundane leading to a shared life or community:

> It means that we completely immerse ourselves. I go to the pub in my own parish. It means that we immerse ourselves in the day-to-day life of the parish. Parish mission might be the fact I do my shopping in the local shops, as well as the fact I go and preach a reconciliation service at the church. It's living, it's immersing yourself in the life that we share, with the people that

---

[330] P103
[331] P113

we are called by God to share our life with. And to realise that they are also called by God to share their life with us.[332]

Fr John also reflected on his perspective that being embedded in a community enables all action to be missional. Like the 'writing through the stick of rock', he considered mission as related to a 'consistent sense' of all action within the parish. He described how 'running through everything' is the hope of drawing people 'into a relationship with Christ, and a particular relationship to Christ through the Eucharist.' Fr John gave the example of clearing the leaves from outside the church building to make it a more attractive space to invite people into. In this way, he understands the sweeping of leaves as missional. However, he framed it in the context of a 'continual response, a continual focus, a continual sense that what we are doing is mission' – it is the embedded nature of the priest's ministry that makes an otherwise menial task missional. As Fr John summarised, 'when you are embedded in the life of a community, everything you do is about mission.'[333]

The idea of being embedded was also found in the historical figures to whom the priests looked for inspiration. When asked about who inspires him in his ministry, one of the answers Fr William offered, which was similar to some of the other priests (such as Fr Nicholas), referred to the Ritualist slum priests. Explaining why he finds priests such as Fr Lowder an inspiration for his ministry, he pointed to their 'sacrificial lives of extraordinary service to God and his people', with a vision beyond the 'purely cultic religious activity' that, although forming the heart of their ministry, was not its limit. Fr William understood the Ritualist slum priests' ministry in terms of community-building, whereby their focus was on 'regeneration' and the priests 'being there for and with the poor.' He described their 'sharing their lot' with the poor of their parish as 'profound'.[334]

---

[332] P101
[333] P102
[334] P105

For these participant-priests, embeddedness caused by regular and frequent presence is an essential precursor to mission. This is in keeping with the historical pattern of the Catholic movement's parochial practice established in Chapter 1.

3.6 Isolation

The participant-priests shared a narrative of isolation. This narrative is twofold. First, they contend that the Anglo-Catholic approach to ministry is undervalued within the Church of England today. Second, they believe that their position on the ordination of women, which led to their affiliation with The Society, makes positive relationships outside their fraternity difficult. I explore these narrative dimensions and their various facets in more detail below.

i)   Undervalued approach to ministry

Although the priests themselves value their Catholic approach to parish ministry, characterised above as a missiology of presence, it is evident that the establishment of the Church of England does not currently value such an approach. Fr John captured the overall value that the priests place on the Catholic approach, observing that Anglo-Catholics consider their approach to mission as 'the same old, same old' in a Church of England focused on the new. However, he hastened to add, 'the same old same old is converting, and the same old same old has a real depth and power and authenticity and life.'[335]

a) Evangelicals as lacking depth

This language of depth was also used in relation to another approach to ministry, but this time in a pejorative way. Fr Robert, responding to a question about his model of ministry's effectiveness, replied that some 'parts of the church' that

---

[335] P102

experience greater attendance figures could be 'a little more superficial'.[336] Although he did not state it explicitly, the impression he gave in the broader statement was that Evangelical worship lacked the depth of a more traditional Catholic approach. Fr John also articulated an idea mentioned by many of the priests: extolling the virtues of regular formalised prayer as opposed to more informal forms of worship. While he had high regard for Catholic forms of worship, his view of extemporary forms was explicitly negative. Explaining the importance of saying the Daily Office, he stated, 'it is about not having to invent something. About being given something, about being part of an offering that thousands of people are making across the world that they are praying the same prayer'. Although he was not speaking explicitly about the Evangelicals, he clearly espoused a dichotomy. However, his description of the opposite end of this dichotomy lacks detail. While it may be that Fr John appreciates not having to consider which passage of Scripture to read each day, his characterisation appears to value prescribed prayers more highly than extemporary prayer, as often practised by Evangelicals. While the majority of references to Evangelicals referred either positively or neutrally to other priests within their deaneries, this subtext – as demonstrated by some of the participant-priests – is significant as it points to an understanding of Evangelical parochial practice as lacking the depth and rigour found in Anglo-Catholic practice.

b) Evangelicals as the location of missional energy

A shared understanding was apparent that the missional resources of the Church of England are located within the Evangelical tradition. Such missional resources mentioned were financial, including both grants and clergy appointments, in addition to general institutional support. This was stated sympathetically by some, such as Fr James, bemoaning the criticism from Anglo-Catholics of the money located within the network of churches affiliated with Holy Trinity Brompton. He puts the absence of similar funding streams and practice among Anglo-Catholics down to the lack of 'one charismatic figurehead', such as the 'totemic figure' of

---

[336] P103

Nicky Gumbel. He attributes the success of the recent Evangelical church planting movement to the newness of the movement, 'begun by this guy who is still alive', with a 'plan for how you're going to do it.' In contrast, Anglo-Catholics have 'been there forever' and have 'no plan particularly.' However, Fr John would likely dispute this perception of Anglo-Catholicism. He believes that the missional inactivity of Anglo-Catholics is a matter of perception rather than reality:

> I think Anglo-Catholics can sometimes be a bit defensive about mission, thinking that it's the territory of another churchmanship. That Evangelicals are doing all the footwork, and that we're not doing very much, and actually I don't think that's true; I know that that's not true![337]

c) Financial/strategic decisions

Although there was not a deluge of accounts of adverse financial or strategic decisions impacting the participant-priests, two of the priests had clear examples to offer. Although these are experiences particular to these priests and their parishes, their fraternity in The Society means that they are also experienced corporately by other priests in their tradition.

Fr William spoke of Kings Cross Church (KXC), an Anglican church with a Bishops' Mission order. He explained how 'KXC, one of the most exciting success stories the Church of England has in the last decade, has just increased its area of operation.' He referred to the 'absolutely appallingly handled consulting process', where the Bishop of London allegedly approved the process 'without them ever having been agreed with and shown to the PCC.' In addition to his view that the process had been mishandled, Fr William felt as though 'the issue there is that nobody can say no to them [KXC] because they are so strong numerically, they're creating huge numbers of locations, and that's really impressive.' He felt as though a disparity was present in how the rules governing spheres of mission, usually following the

---

[337] P102

parish system, are enforced: 'They've also been working in my parish completely without my knowledge, without ever having come to talk to me about it.' He articulated this inequality as follows:

> I can't say 'I fancy setting up something over there or ministering to that housing development' […] I'm not allowed to do that because I'm a parish church. But that's not stopping quite a number of other people having a crack because they're not parish churches.[338]

However, despite being negatively impacted by this process, Fr William did not attribute the difficulty solely to the fact that he is in The Society and located within the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. He considered this 'imbalance' to not be about church tradition *per se.* Instead, it is about the size of the church and 'having a particular outlook into parish ministry.' He notes that Anglo-Catholic parishes are, on the whole, smaller and have a more parish-focused approach to ministry. Therefore, the 'discrimination' that they experience is 'by chance, rather than design.' Nonetheless, Fr William is not optimistic about the future: 'I imagine that the parish system will be *de facto* dismantled.'[339]

Fr John also offered an example of resources being given to an Evangelical church at the expense of an Anglo-Catholic parish. He referred to how 'resources are being put somewhere else.' He gave the example of his own parish: 'isn't it interesting that the resources of this parish were given to an Evangelical church?', he laughed, 'You know, the vicarage was taken away and given to somewhere else. The post was made half-time.' He considers this a choice by the diocese not to invest in his parish. He saw an alternative choice as the diocese making his parish 'a centre for Anglo-Catholic mission'. Instead, he identifies an assumption by the diocese 'that Catholics are no good at mission' and disputes such a belief: 'it just looks different', he adds. The second example offered by Fr William also stresses this point. He shared how one of his church buildings has a church plant using its building. The plant – from St Helen's Bishopsgate, a large Conservative Evangelical church –

---

[338] P105
[339] P105

means that he cannot use one of his church buildings on Sunday evenings. The situation was inherited by Fr William, and he was clearly frustrated by being limited and not able to 'do something on Sunday nights that's going to be really popular'.

In addition to highlighting examples of possible unfair treatment given to churches within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England and, more specifically, those affiliated with The Society, the accounts of Fr William and Fr John demonstrate that priests within this group have the vision to operate in similar spheres to Evangelical churches such as KXC. For instance, Fr John had a vision that, with the necessary stipend and funding, his church could be a 'centre for Anglo-Catholic mission', which would equip Anglo-Catholics in their missional activity. Moreover, Fr William demonstrated an understanding that a Sunday evening service would have missional potential, but it is currently impossible to establish such a service.

d) Dominant theology of the Church of England

The perception held by many of the priests was not just that their approach to parochial mission is not valued by the wider Church of England, but that the dominant theology of the Church of England is either not sympathetic to or incompatible with Anglo-Catholic beliefs. Some of this was alluded to when speaking about their approach to mission as Anglo-Catholics, in contrast to a more evangelical approach. This particularly came out when the priests reflected on their experiences of ministry during the COVID-19 social distancing measures in Spring 2020. In addition to feelings of 'bereavement'[340] due to losing their usual priestly practices, all the priests articulated feelings of frustration, confusion and disappointment at the Church of England's response to the national social distancing measures. They described the Archbishops' guidance as 'floundering'[341] and 'nonsense'.[342] Fr Nicholas's interaction with his archdeacon demonstrates

---

[340] P112
[341] P110
[342] P106

both the shared practice of setting up oratories at home and the general confusion experienced due to the Church of England's guidance in Spring 2020:

> Well, I got a rap over the knuckles from the Archdeacon several weeks ago because, as I understood it, I was doing the correct thing of saying Mass alone with the doors locked in the chapel of the church and put that in our weekly newsletter on the website to let people know that was happening so that they could have a sort of spiritual communion. And I got a phone call from the Archdeacon saying 'Stop it at once. You are not allowed to do anything at all in the church'. So, I asked if I was able to set up an altar in an empty bedroom I have here, there are so many empty rooms in this house. And he said, yes, I could do that. So, there has been a daily Mass going on at the usual times but in my house now. In a little altar that I've set up with one or two bits and pieces from the church and from the house.[343]

Because this confusing guidance came from Fr Nicholas's archdeacon rather than another priest in The Society, this demonstrates that it was not uniquely experienced by priests in The Society but by many other priests within the Church of England. While frustration was aimed at the initial flurry of guidance for parish priests, the overriding frustration was the direction, or guidance, for parish priests not to go to their parish church to privately preside at the Eucharist. In particular, this led to frustration for the participant-priests who lived on the same site as their parish church. Indeed, many of the priests' parsonages were, in a particularly Catholic architectural design, connected by an adjoining door to the church. Many of the priests shared that their congregation members were as frustrated as they were by the guidance.

---

[343] P110

Lack of value of buildings as sacred spaces

One of the values of Anglo-Catholicism is that of churches as sacred spaces. Beyond the generalised feelings of bereavement and frustration, the participant-priests perceived the Archbishops' guidance preventing celebration of the Eucharist in church buildings to be a confirmation of what the group already felt: that the dominant theology of the Church of England does not embrace Catholic values. Fr Robert thought that Justin Welby had not 'covered himself in glory' in his leadership during this period. He shared how parishioners were saying, 'Surely Lambeth Palace has got a chapel, why is he in his kitchen and the Archbishop of Westminster is in his cathedral?' Fr Robert considered that his congregation members were deriving 'a great deal of help and support' from the livestream Masses from the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral. When asked about Welby's possible intention to communicate a 'togetherness' with his fellow priests and also congregation members confined to their homes, Fr Robert interjected, 'Quite a few people have commented on it and not one has said, "Oh, how nice to be in his kitchen." [Instead, they ask] "Hasn't he got a chapel? Why can't bishops celebrate from their cathedrals and let everyone know?"'[344] Fr Robert's criticism summarises the sense that the hierarchy of the Church of England does not value church buildings as sacred spaces and considers the Lambeth Palace kitchen of equal value. Linked to this is a lack of reverence or high regard for the sacrament of the Eucharist, as demonstrated in not transmitting livestreamed Masses from cathedrals around the country, as the Roman Catholic Church in England did.

Lack of value of sacramental nature of priesthood

Another value of Anglo-Catholicism is that of the sacramental ministry of priests. On the contrary, there was a sense here that the Archbishops were not allowing priests to exercise the sacramental ministry to which they had been ordained. Fr John spoke of how 'a crisis always shows an institution up for what it is.' In this

---

[344] P103

case, he referred to the 'energy being elsewhere', as demonstrated by the lack of value placed in the sacramental life of the Church. Rather than being seen as 'fundamental', he considered that 'sacrament is seen as something else, or extra, for those who like that sort of thing'. It is this perception, he suggested, that led to 'frustrations […] coming out'. Fr William considered the guidance of the Archbishop of Canterbury to lead to priests not undertaking presiding at Mass in their church buildings, an activity for which they are 'specifically ordained'. When asked how the social distancing measures had made him consider his presence as a priest, he replied:

> The place to start is not to do with my presence but to do with God's presence. So, we know that God doesn't look away or shy away from suffering and difficulty and, indeed, he enters into it and is part of it. And so, for the ministers of the church who are called to represent the people to God and God to the people, they too themselves are to be in the midst of things and to not shy away from it. However, we are being directed by or advised by our leaders in the church not to undertake the kind of activity that we were specifically ordained, explicitly ordained to do: our ministry of presence among the sick and the suffering, and indeed a ministry of sacramental worship. So, there is a real disjunct between my instinct to be present and to be with people and the direction from on high, which appears to require me to abandon that and to sit on my sofa at home.[345]

Fr William expressed a sense of disappointment but not surprise at what he perceived as a lack of strong leadership from the Church of England hierarchy. The instruction to 'shy away' from the risk and suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to 'abandon' his priestly role to be present both in pastoral visiting and presiding at Mass, were at odds with his 'instinct' and understanding of his role as a priest. This highly sacramental understanding of the role of a priest is in keeping with the wider Anglo-Catholic perspective within which The Society is situated. The instructions from the Archbishop of Canterbury seemed to confirm

---

[345] P105

to Fr William what he already believed: that the model of priesthood to which he subscribes is not valued or even held by key decision-makers within the Church of England. It is worth noting that an alternative interpretation of the Archbishops' guidance[346] at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic was an example of strong leadership, rather than the shying away that Fr William considered it to be.

Restrained response

What is particularly interesting is that, despite the overriding experience of frustration and disenfranchisement of the participant-priests, their response was that of obedience. For a group of priests who are more widely criticised for their lack of liturgical adherence in using liturgy beyond the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer* and *Common Worship*, their obedience is notable. Fr William referred to the Archbishop's statement as leading to priests being 'guided and pressured' not to livestream from their church buildings. He was clear that, as parish priest, he was allowed to, but decided to follow the guidance instead:

> Well, of course, I'm allowed to, it's just that I've been guided and pressured not to. So, my reaction is one of disappointment because it's safe for me to do so. And it is what the people would like. Abiding by this guidance is not a matter that is lawful and honest,[347] but rather my simply trying to, as far as possible, respect the will of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London and not to cause a fuss, really. But I am disappointed that the Bishop of London was bullied into reversing her advice on livestreaming in churches by clergy who live attached to them. So yeah, disappointed, I think.[348]

---

[346] Welby and Cottrell, 'Letter from Archbishops', 24 March 2020.
[347] A reference to the The Oath of Canonical Obedience made by candidates for ordination. 'Canons of The Church of England', https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england. C,1.
[348] P105

Fr William's intention to 'respect the will' of Archbishop Welby and Bishop Mullally points to obedience to them in spite of his frustration and disappointment. His aim to 'not cause a fuss' speaks to him not wanting to cause disruption or unnecessary conflict – in the sense that causing a fuss may be interpreted more broadly because he is a priest in The Society.

Obedience despite ardent disagreement was also demonstrated by Fr Simon. Referring to his adherence to guidance from the Archbishop, he described it as 'just madness', suggesting that 'there will be questions to be asked and answered in the future about the way this was handled because it wasn't handled very well at all.' However, he had decided that the circumstances required obedience in the present, with questions raised at a more appropriate time. Despite his disagreement and that of his colleagues, he noted that 'we were obedient' nonetheless.[349]

Although the priests were all aware of the wider decisions of the Church of England, they all demonstrated a focus on their parish, its needs and their responsibilities as parish priest. This local concern, as interpreted in this thesis in the cumulative scale of presence, was a primary driver for the obedience practised by the priests. Fr John was unsure what his response should be to the frustration that he and his colleagues were feeling. He offered a pragmatic approach: 'I can only be faithful here in my bit of God's vineyard, and you know, I will try and offer what reflections I can, as best I can, to help the people that God's given me.'[350] Despite his frustration, his focus was on his vocation as a priest and his responsibility to those within his parish.

Although one of the participant-priests wrote to his diocesan bishop to express his concerns regarding the Church of England's response to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, there was a sense that the power to make decisions about missional strategy or diocesan priorities was out of the group's hands. The power lay elsewhere, and it was not being used to benefit them as an ecclesial group. While this feeling may

---

[349] P106
[350] P102

146

not be held exclusively by this group of priests, it was a notable contributing factor to their sense of disenfranchisement. Fr Robert's experience of the worship music at a recent diocesan synod encapsulates the disenfranchisement articulated by the priests. The worship led two songs 'that most of us had never heard before'. It became clear to him that a few people in the congregation were familiar with the songs and stood 'with their hands in the air'. He found himself looking around and observing several other people 'just standing there, totally alienated'. The medium of music made it clear who was in the know, while the others were left standing there, evidently not following the beat. In a similar way, the participant-priests voiced a sense of disenfranchisement, where their model of ministry was not embraced by the wider Church of England – that it is not new enough. Although few of them mentioned Evangelicals by name, they were the hand-raising elephants in the room.

ii)   Affiliation with The Society leading to difficult relationships

The data demonstrate that many of the participant-priests found that their affiliation with The Society led to difficulty in forming relationships with clergy at the local deanery level. I suggest that this contributes to their experience and narrative of isolation within the Church of England, and that this narrative was identifiable in various ways. The participant-priests raised the topic of the ordination of women without prompting. A clear contrast was evident between their abstract statements of isolation at the deanery level and their articulated concrete examples of positive relationships with neighbouring clergy. The Society of the Holy Cross offers both a location of fraternity and, I suggest, contributes to these feelings of isolation.

a) Raising the topic of the ordination of women

As established in Chapter 2, the aim of this project was to view the participant-priests holistically rather than just considering them in relation to their views on the ordination of women. Hence, none of the initial interview questions referred

to the ordination of women, and only one follow-up question in one interview mentioned the topic. Despite this approach, the topic of women's ordination – the defining belief held by all members of The Society – came up frequently during the interviews. Many of the priests brought the topic up unprompted, suggesting that they were in the habit of justifying their position. Fr James wanted to emphasise the lack of choice he felt in his position against the ordination of women. He describes his affiliation with The Society as 'purely theological' but admitted that he had considered changing his position: 'I have thought, can I change my opinion? Because you have to review yourself occasionally. And I come back and think, no, I can't, it's how I understand Scripture, it's how I see it.'[351] Nevertheless, he acknowledged that 'other people see it completely differently, and maybe I'm wrong.' He puts the matter down to each Christian having to 'live with our conscience' but repeatedly throughout the interview emphasises that his position on the ordination of women is 'one narrow part of my conscience.' An example he gave is that he never preaches about 'the ordination of women and Society things.'

Where attacks on the priests for their theological position are directed against them as individuals, they were (as Fr James exemplifies) keen to place the decision into the realm of theology rather than as a personal slight against women in general. This placement of their conviction beyond their own personal choice was a common theme. As Fr Alan explained, 'I am not an impossibilist; my difficulties are ecclesiological rather than theological. I am agnostic theologically, but ecclesiologically, I think the Church of England doesn't have the authority to change the threefold nature of ministry.'[352] Despite the group's propensity to remove personal responsibility from their theological positions, Fr William acknowledged how the effect of his position is 'extremely painful', particularly for women who feel called to ordination, but he was clear that 'it is not my place to say that women cannot be ordained; it is my place to say the faith and tradition which we have received, and the imperative to unity with other Christians (and we come from the Western Church), means that in good conscience I cannot take this

---

[351] P101
[352] P112

step'.[353] It was in the awareness of the pain that this position can cause that leads him to demonstrate 'great respect and great charity' when engaging with 'ordained women'.

The priests who made the most effort to clarify their theological position were among those who had the closest personal or working relationships with female clergy. Those priests who did not have such close relationships did not offer any explanation. Indeed, the only two negative comments about female clergy were from two priests who did not have friendships or close working relationships with female clergy. Fr Simon described the fact that he enjoyed the work of the female priest-theologian Fleming Routledge on the Crucifixion as a 'shock'. How he usually considers female priests was conveyed in what he did not say, rather than any explicit statement:

> she is an Episcopal woman priest, which wouldn't be my normal sort of… but in fairness, the stuff that she… I mean, I read a bit of it for last Lent, and now I will be reading it again this Lent, what she has produced is gold. So as a theologian, it's bang on the money. So, it isn't quite totally…[354]

The incomplete sentences suggest difficulty or lack of practice in affirming a female priest's work. Fr George also spoke negatively about the female clergy in his deanery. Explaining the historical context, he said, 'I was on the diocesan synod here for a long time until, sadly, it's well documented that the lady clergy and the deanery voted me off. They didn't like my stance on certain things.' The recent effect has been that he invites them 'to everything but never get responses.' This is undoubtedly a more complex story than what Fr George briefly shared: rather than referencing any attempts at reconciliation beyond inviting them to parish events, he spoke as though he was resigned to the fact that it is 'part of the state of play we are at.' However, such negative considerations of female priests were

---

[353] P105
[354] P106

in the minority; most of the other priests either had close working relationships or friendships with female clergy.

b) Perceptions of deanery vs. actual experiences

The priests exhibited a narrative of isolation concerning their deaneries. Despite the mixed experiences of deaneries, with the majority experiencing them positively or neutrally, there was a sense that this was not regarded as usual or normative. This disparity between the priests' own experiences and the corporate narrative of deaneries as hostile environments for priests in The Society is notable. The clear disconnect between their experiences and their corporate perception of deaneries indicates either a confirmation bias or the resistance of their collective narrative to adjustment in light of real experience.

This confirmation bias was seen in their personal experiences. Fr Alan described his clergy chapter in favourable terms:

> it's a very nice one, but very, very different. Very different traditions but again, I think for years we've been supporting each other and getting on with each other and respecting each other's differences. So, in terms of chapter, it's a good one. I know not everyone would say that, but it is a good one.[355]

Fr Alan's response encapsulates the predicament in which these priests find themselves. Even when they have positive experiences in their own deanery, it is always experienced within the wider Society narrative supported by other priests' negative encounters. Fr William has had experience of three deaneries, two of which were during his two curacies. Although his current situation was positive and conducive to partnership, he shared this information in the context of a previous negative deanery experience. His framing, and that of all the priests with

---

[355] P112

positive experiences in their deanery, is that this is not to be expected, that they are 'very fortunate'. As Fr William said:

> I am really blessed in this deanery with fantastic colleagues. So, it's a very heavily Evangelical deanery, so everybody is extremely motivated, and it's a very cohesive deanery as well, so people do a lot of partnering, which is great. People aren't really massively interested in some of the ecclesiological debates. I've been into other deaneries, I had two curacies, and the second one felt very different, and your presence was noted, and things would often be said under their breath, things like that. Generally speaking, I've been very fortunate…[356]

Fr Peter, although not referring to Fr William's situation directly, mentioned this cultural trait among Anglo-Catholic clergy, calling it a 'mindset'. He noted that 'particular circumstances' may contribute to priests being isolated within their deanery, but he personally 'would always try to work against that'. He does this for two reasons: to support and be supported by other priests and for his parish to have a connection with its neighbours. This commitment to engagement plays out practically in his parish, hosting a Lent quiet day for a neighbouring parish. He is also deanery chapter clerk, which keeps him in regular contact with all the parishes, although he rues the additional administrative work that it produces. This commitment contrasts with the incumbent before him, who was not as engaged. As Fr Peter explains:

> I don't think that's necessarily all through a sort of wilful lack of engagement. I think there were other concerns, internal parish concerns, which needed sorting out. So, when I arrived, I really wanted to make sure I was engaged.[357]

---

[356] P105
[357] P104

c) Relationships

Despite the narrative of isolation, it was through institutional contact points – such as team ministries for the older priests and theological college for the younger ones – that friendships with ordained women grew. The proximity of younger priests to women also training for ordained ministry during their theological education meant that the majority of the priests who were more recently ordained had female friends who are also ordained. Fr Peter's relationships with some of the priests with whom he trained are 'very close', although he is the 'only Society priest among them'. None of the priests implied that such relationships were uncomplicated. Indeed, Fr William believes that it is crucial for him as a priest in The Society to model 'great respect and great charity' when he speaks to ordained women generally, while emphasising that he has 'plenty of female clergy friends'. For Fr John, this complexity is present, but he offered an example of common ground he found in a relationship with a female friend who is ordained. A few months prior, he and a 'woman priest friend' were presenting to a parish that was considering 'passing a resolution'. An affirmative decision would mean the parish coming under AEO and not having female priests exercising sacramental ministry in the parish. In his presentation, Fr John asked,

> For both of us, where do we start? We start with the lordship of Christ in our lives, and we are responding to that sense of Christ's lordship of our life. That response has brought us to different places, two different understandings, but fundamentally, that is what this is all about. It's about Christ's lordship and responding to that.[358]

He described this perspective of a shared devotion to Christ but with differing interpretations as 'the real blessing'. When Fr John spoke of the importance of friendship to him personally as an unmarried priest, it was clear the support he receives and tries to reciprocate to his close friends, many of whom are ordained and some of whom are female. He described a 'sense of dependence upon your

---

[358] P102

friends, just to keep you real and to keep you sane, and to keep you encouraged.'
Like Fr Peter, many of these friends were from training at theological college and
in his priestly ministry. He described them as a 'daily inspiration' to him in his own
ministry.

Unsurprisingly, the priests ordained prior to the Church of England's decision to
ordain women in 1994 had fewer examples of friendships with female priests. Fr
Alan spoke of a friendship with a female curate in the cluster of churches within
which he ministers. He knew the curate while she was a layperson within the
parish. He was invited to her induction at a new parish; Fr Alan described how he
was 'pleased to go and support her'. He spoke of the understanding that they had
come to despite their differing theological convictions:

> She is very gracious. She gets where I'm coming from and realises that it's
> not misogyny or anything like that, it's just theological or ecclesiological
> conviction, really. I wouldn't even say that we agree to disagree; we just
> know it is where each other is coming from and just get on with it. I tried
> to work those five guiding principles.[359]

Although he did not use the word 'friendship', it was evident that their relationship
was valuable to him; indeed, it was important enough for him to travel across
London for her induction.

However, proximity does not always lead to affinity. This may be due to the choice
of the participant-priests, but it is also plausible that ordained women are
predisposed to consider a friendship with priests in The Society as impossible. This
thesis makes no attempt at discerning the possible nuances of these hypotheses,
as it is beyond the scope of this work. Ascertaining the factors contributing to
friendship between priests of different traditions is beyond the scope of this thesis.
Although the majority of the priests had positive relationships and some
friendships with ordained women, this was not the case for Fr Simon and Fr
George. Although Fr Simon mixed socially with local clergy who were not in The

---

[359] P112

Society, all of them were male. Fr George shared that 'on the whole', his priest friends are affiliated with The Society. Those who are not in The Society would be in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England 'because I don't really mix with other clergy socially that aren't.'[360]

Building relationships across the divides of theological conviction are a choice. The priests who proactively attend their deanery and try to foster positive relationships with other clergy, including female priests, found that, for the most part, positive relationships were possible. Even where preconceptions challenged relationships, proactive and honest conversations went a long way in growing positive relationships. This is highlighted by Fr James's response to discontent when he, as a Society priest, became Area Dean. His response to the 'grumbles' was to invite individuals to meet and get to know him:

> People came to see me, and I spent a few hours talking and we're fine. We have a shared vision, and we work together, we genuinely work together. My theological opinions, beliefs in that particular way, actually don't impinge at all on my day-to-day life and my work as Area Dean. People might perceive that they do until they know me and I know them. But actually, they don't.[361]

d) Fraternity as antidote or cause?

The fraternity experienced through the Bishop of Fulham and The Society of the Holy Cross was important to all the priests. All but one of the priests interviewed are members of The Society of the Holy Cross (SSC). Founded by Fr Charles Lowder, the society offers a rule of life based on the teaching on St Vincent de Paul. Fr William described how 'first and foremost', the SSC is a 'community of those who have a particular devotion to the Lord's cross and the mystery of the cross and who seek to model our lives in some way on that mystery.' Fr Peter emphasised the society's rule of life as the 'most crucial' and 'foundational' thing about it. Pointing

---

[360] P113
[361] P101

to his bookshelf, he explained how the rule of life contains a 'very prescriptive' spiritual discipline, one which Fr Robert referred to as 'every aspect of priestly ministry'. This leads to a common pattern of disciplined private devotion, such as morning and evening prayer and daily Mass, which was evident in all the researcher-driven diaries completed by the participant-priests. Due to the statutes of the SCC, Fr Peter explained that 'it's only really open to clergy of The Society', meaning that membership of The Society of the Holy Cross is only open to those in The Society under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda.

The commonality of the rule of life adhered to by all members of the SSC 155reatees fraternity. Fr Peter explained how 'the rule requires of us an obligation to chapter, so you're expected to turn up to chapter meetings as far as is possible.'[362] Such meetings occur every six or seven weeks. While they are an opportunity for accountability in following the rule of life, many of the priests emphasised how such meetings are a place of fraternity. Fr James shared how the SSC was 'very supportive' of him while he went through the ordination selection process.[363] He explained how, as a young man, it was positive to have a group of older priests to look up to and aspire to be like. He noted how some of the priests 'let you into their life a bit.'[364] In this way, the way of life that he saw at the chapter level offered a distinct kind of fraternity due to the support and openness of some of the priests. Such an experience of the SSC being present throughout a priest's ordained life was also articulated by Fr Robert, who noted that he had spent 'every single day of my ordained life as a priest as a member of the Society of the Holy Cross.'

In addition to the shared rule of life, the chapter meetings were identified by many of the priests as a place where shared language and a common expression of faith creates a safe space for 'likeminded' priests to gather.[365] As Fr Nicholas explained when describing why he has little to do with his local deanery chapter, 'I tend to

---

[362] P104
[363] P101
[364] P101
[365] P110

find my support in likeminded priests, what I would think of as my friends. I'm in the Society of the Holy Cross, and there are people I would make the effort to go to a meeting'.[366] Fr Robert shared how he finds the practice of regularly attending chapter 'extremely valuable', in part due to a 'side effect' of 'congeniality and community.' He explained:

> It's great to know that you share a particular way of life with other people, and you can reflect at chapter, which is monthly, with them on how you're doing with that. And you know that you share a similar language and a similar approach to things. It's a good opportunity to share burdens, to seek advice and just to enjoy fellowship, really. Because deanery chapter is fantastic, but we don't all approach ministry [or] the nature of the church in the same way, and so there's always a bit of translation that you're doing to and from in order to make sure that you are properly engaging. But it's good sometimes not to have to do that, and just to know that you are on the same page.[367]

The isolation experienced by priests on a deanery level, or at least the narrative of such isolation, contrasts with the companionship experienced through the SSC. Fr George articulated this most clearly: 'I've always taken the line with the way we're being so embattled is that those sort of meetings must have some sort of theological input, but it's really a chance to relax.'[368] Fr Peter drew together the idea of shared language and the impossibility of such common language in the deanery chapter. He mentioned how, at SSC chapter meetings, 'there is a sense that you talk about things in the same language', which he notes 'wouldn't be possible, say, at deanery chapter or at a breakfast meeting with your next-door parish, unless that happens to be a society parish!' [369]

In addition to the safety of the fraternity formed from a shared rule of life and a common language around faith, chapter meetings provide a secure space for

---

[366] P110
[367] P103
[368] P113
[369] P104

priests to share. Fr Peter explained how although SSC chapter meetings may sound formal to outsiders, they are 'less formal' than the other ways in which the priests may otherwise meet each other, such as the Chrism Mass or events hosted by the Bishop of Fulham, where 'there is more scope for chat and conversation.' He noted how the 'confidential environment' aids honest interactions. In addition to the rule of confidentiality, Fr Peter explained the limited number of attendees at chapter meetings as follows:

> your boss isn't there, the Bishop isn't there, but also, it's exclusive of the laity in a way which is supposed to be helpful for the priests. You can talk about things that you might not talk about in such an open way if your churchwardens were there or something like that. For me, the crucial thing is the rule and how that shapes us as priests and helps our identity of what we think it means to be a priest in the Catholic tradition, how that becomes manifest in the priest's life.[370]

A number of the priests demonstrated an awareness of the unique position of priests in The Society who are parish priests in London and Southwark Dioceses. Some referred to previous posts they had held outside of Greater London. Fr Robert recalled how he was the only priest in his diocese 'who was SSC' and described how he felt 'a little bit isolated' as a result. He contrasted this period with his current situation in London Diocese, saying, 'We are so fortunate in London having so many who look to the Bishop of Fulham, so we have that network as well as SSC.'[371] Fr Peter, observing that the high density of Fulham priests in London has led to there being two SSC chapters, noted how this was not the typical situation nationally:

> There is a lot of us in London, but outside London particularly, SSC is perhaps the only place where Society clergy can and do get together with any regularity or frequency or commitment. And I think in those parts of the country, in those dioceses which have fewer catholic parishes, which

---

[370] P104
[371] P103

have fewer Society parishes and fewer Society priests, that's really a godsend to those people.[372]

Conclusion

I have demonstrated that the priests, when speaking about parish mission in abstract terms, have a shared idea of what it is. Drawing on the characteristic of place with its own particularities, and the actions of proclamation, transformation and dedication, they all pointed to a missiology of parish mission rooted in presence. However, it is significant that when speaking about parish mission in concrete terms, referring to specific encounters and activities, their practice varied. I argue that this points to a contrast between their espoused and operant theologies of mission. I also argue that the priests' practice falls within a cumulative scale of presence. This scale of priestly presence ranges from presiding at the Eucharist to effecting change through local conversations and committees. The representational nature of the priests' presence has been established as denoting the wider church, sacramental and moral authority and Christ's presence. When asked about the purpose of such priestly presence in an approach to parish mission, community-building is offered as the reason. The priests understand their roles as building both the parish's worshipping community and fostering community in the wider parish. The priests' representational presence – exercised with frequency and regularity – offers opportunities for such community-building. In turn, such frequency and regularity lead to the familiarity necessary for effective social transformation to take place and for the gospel to be shared.

The priests operate within a narrative of isolation, specifically a perspective that their approach to ministry is undervalued by the Church of England, and their position on the ordination of women means that deaneries are hostile places. Despite the value they place on Anglo-Catholic ministry as having depth and authenticity, they consider it to be undervalued by the Church of England. Instead,

---

[372] P104

they perceive that an Evangelical approach is given more value despite it lacking, in their view, the depth and rigour found in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The value placed on the Evangelical approach to mission by the wider Church of England means that the missional energy of the Church, both in confidence and funding, is located outside the Anglo-Catholic tradition and is found instead in the Evangelical tradition. Some of the priests voiced examples of this, but they were not prevalent across all of the participant-priests. One reason understood for the Anglo-Catholic tradition being undervalued was due to the dominant theology of the Church of England being unsympathetic to Anglo-Catholic values, such as viewing church buildings as sacred spaces and the sacramental nature of priesthood. These pre-existing perceptions were reinforced during the Church of England's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020. Despite the disappointment and frustration experienced by the priests, their response was restrained, not seeking to rock the boat but rather to focus on their local parish ministry.

In addition to the perception that their approach to parish ministry is undervalued by the wider Church of England, the priests operate under a narrative that their affiliation with The Society leads to difficulty in forming relationships at the deanery level. Perhaps in response to this, many of the priests appear to hold a defensive position, bringing up the topic of the ordination of women without prompting, defending their view and seeking to place it in the realm of theological conviction rather than personal judgement of female priests. The majority of the priests had positive friendships with ordained women. These relationships with ordained women are experienced in the context of perceiving deaneries to be hostile places for priests in The Society. The majority of the priests had either positive or neutral deanery experiences; however, these were often qualified by the wider narrative of the difficulties mentioned above. It was through the proximity offered by team ministries – in addition to the more recently ordained priests' experiences of proximity at theological training institutions – that the priests formed many of their friendships with female clergy. However, proximity at the deanery level did not always lead to positive relationships, with two of the priests not offering any examples of friendships with female priests.

All bar one of the priests were also associated with the SSC, which offers fraternity in the context of perceived isolation. The shared rule of life creates a community, in addition to a shared language. The regular chapter meetings also create a space for priests to feel secure and understood when sharing their ministry experiences. While this is helpful for the participant-priests, it is likely to be extremely valuable for other priests in The Society in dioceses with fewer other priests under AEO. However, the SSC and The Society, in addition to providing fraternity for the priests, may also perpetuate the narrative of isolation. They may be the place where negative stories from deanery interactions are shared, thus making individual negative encounters corporate. The external influences on the priests' ministry also ought to be considered. The majority of influential figures, as listed by the priests, are Roman Catholic, with the minority being Anglo-Catholic; this fact may also reinforce the isolation experienced by the priests. Priests in The Society are situated with a foot in two camps: their diocesan bishop's authority and the oversight of the Bishop of Fulham. However, this dual existence does not seem to be experienced problematically by the priests and may be a negative perception rather than a negative reality. Indeed, their association with diocesan bishops, including female bishops, was overwhelmingly positive. In addition, the good relationships that many of the priests experienced with the Bishop of Fulham offer a positive dimension to their identity as 'Fulham priests'.

The narrative of isolation identified in my research provides the context within which the priests' practice as a ministry of representational presence can be more richly understood. The next chapter considers how the cumulative scale of presence relates to other missional approaches within the Church of England today. It also explores how the priests' missional approach is linked to their shared narrative of isolation.

CHAPTER 4. REPRESENTATIONAL PRESENCE: MISSIOLOGY AND CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter develops the findings of Chapter 3 and analyses the themes of presence and isolation in light of the historical context established in Chapter 1. Chapter 3 established a difference between the group's theology of presence when reflecting on parish mission in abstract terms and their reflections on lived examples of parish mission. Using the cumulative scale of presence and aided by the Four Voices framework,[373] the diversity within their concrete theology of presence is explored further. Drawing on Swinton and Mowat's concept of critical faithfulness,[374] I offer a critical analysis of the participant-priests' underpinning theology of representational presence as centred on the Eucharist. Using the Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist as 'source and summit', I examine how some of the participant-priests demonstrated a passive understanding of representational presence. I will critique this understanding and argue for an active approach with reference to the historical context of Anglo-Catholic parochial practice.

All of the participant-priests' practice must be understood in the context of a narrative of isolation. Their theological approach of representational presence is no exception. Drawing on the historical interpretation of Anglo-Catholic history established in Chapter 1, I will examine the participant-priests' claims that they are marginalised within the Church of England. This chapter lays the groundwork for Chapter 5, in which, influenced by Receptive Ecumenism,[375] I propose that the Church of England ought to consider a missiology of representational presence as a gift that engages both sacramental theology and missiology. I then propose which practical steps ought to be considered to positively affect the participant-priests' narrative of isolation.

---

[373] Cameron, '*Talking about God in Practice,*' 53-58.
[374] *Swinton and Mowat, 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.' 86-89.
[375] Paul D. Murray, 'Introducing Receptive Ecumenism', *The Ecumenist* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1–8. 4.

4.2 Priestly presence: A diverse concrete theology of representational presence

i) The cumulative scale of presence

The participant-priests' accounts of practice varied when talking about parish mission in concrete terms. As established in Chapter 3, aided by the inductive approach of TAR's Four Voices of Theology model,[376] a dissonance was identified in relation to the participant-priests' abstract theology. This is described as their *abstract theology* when reflecting on parish mission in abstract terms and *concrete theology* when reflecting on their actual practice. The next section analyses the concrete theology of the participant-priests' reflections on missional practice. All of their practice was underpinned by the idea that priestly presence is representation; however, their practice varied. As established in Chapter 3, I argue that this missional practice can be understood on a cumulative scale of presence. The participant-priests were: first, present at the Mass; second, visibly present in the parish wearing clericals; third, conducting pastoral visits; fourth, present in their local school(s); and finally, present in local conversations and committees to affect positive social change. This is a cumulative scale because a priest who is present on local committees will also be present in the school, wear clericals and regularly preside at the Mass. In other words, the scale demonstrates increasing levels of missional action. What underpins all of the participant-priests' missional practice is a theology of representational presence – the idea that a priest's presence represents something, or someone, beyond himself. His presence represents Christ. This concept flows from a sacramental theology of the Eucharist.

An analysis of the participant-priests' understanding of presence could adopt many different approaches. One valuable exploration could be related to the theology of presence in the context of chaplaincy. Here, Sarah Dunlop's question of 'is "being

---

[376] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 53-58.

there" enough?'[377] would ask an important question of the participant-priests' assumptions around presence. In addition, this would tie in with Sam Well's work on incarnational mission as 'being with'.[378] All of this would be valuable work; however, for this thesis, I want to focus on priestly presence in relation to both missiology and sacramental theology. I use two lenses to aid these considerations: first, the lens of the Eucharist as 'source and summit' to consider the participant-priests' differing approach to representational presence, and second, the lens of *Mission-Shaped Church*. This will particularly come to bear in Chapter 5's consideration of representational presence's compatibility with the Church of England's current missional strategy. Next, I address these lenses in turn.

ii) <u>The Eucharist as the source and summit of representational presence</u>

The identity and missional practice of the participant-priests are rooted in their priestly role of presiding at the Eucharist. Their presence at the Eucharist epitomises their understanding of the representational nature of priestly presence. As the priest presides, the Anglo-Catholic tradition considers them to be *in persona Christi*, the Latin phrase for 'in the person of Christ'. When describing pastoral visits, Fr Peter said, 'you are the person of Christ; you are representing Christ to them. I mean, in the Mass, we stand there for those minutes of the consecration *in persona Christi*'.[379] This was the most theologically developed reflection on practice given by the participant-priests. Although only one of the priests referred directly to being *in persona Christi*, all of them used the language of presiding for or on behalf of the congregation. While presiding on behalf of the congregation may appear to be the opposite of being Christ to the congregation, it is actually one side of the same coin: the priest is as Christ who both intercedes at the right hand of the Father on our behalf *and* offers us his body and blood. The priest, as Christ, acts as mediator.

---

[377] Sarah Dunlop, 'Is "Being There" Enough? Explorations of Incarnational Missiology with Chaplains', *Practical Theology* 10, no. 2 (3 April 2017): 174–86.

[378] Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Mission: Being with the World* (London: Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2018).

[379] P104

The theological concept of *in persona Christi* is that the priest represents Christ. This representation is not in the usual use of the word in terms of symbolism. The priest does not symbolise or denote Christ, because this implies that Christ is absent. As Benedict XVI explains:

> In the Church Christ is never absent, the Church is his living Body and he is the Head of the Church, present and active within her. Christ is never absent; on the contrary, he is present in a way that is untrammelled by space and time through the event of the Resurrection…[380]

As Benedict XVI expounds, Christ is made present by the presence of his priest. Within the Eucharistic liturgy, it is not only at the consecration that the priest is *in persona Christi*, but the priest's representative state is also evident at other points in the liturgy. The Dismissal is another point at which the priest speaks with Christ's authority to the congregation:

> Go forth, the Mass is ended.
>
> Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
>
> Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
>
> Go in peace.[381]

What the project's data indicate is that this representational presence is not limited to the liturgical settings of the Eucharist, but understood by the priests to be a reality in other actions in their ministry. The most clearly articulated examples of this were linked to both pastoral visits and conducting mundane tasks within the geographical boundary of the parish.

---

[380] Benedict XVI, 'General Audience, Saint Peter's Square,' 14 April 2010, http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100414.html.

[381] 'The Order of Mass' (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2010), http://www.missal.org.uk.

In Roman Catholic theology, the Eucharist is understood as the 'source and summit of the Christian life'.[382] The participant-priests' self-understanding and practice of representational presence can be considered in relation to the concept of the Eucharist as source and summit. The Eucharist is the source of their priestly identity and understanding of their presence as representational. The participant-priests' accounts of practice include the regular celebration of the Eucharist as a foundational practice. Fr Alan described how regularly celebrating the Eucharist reminds him of his priestly identity: 'I could be a premises administrator, a parish administrator and the like… all the other things that go on with life. So, [saying the office and saying Mass] does remind me of that dimension of what I am.'[383] In this way, the act of presiding at the Eucharist informs the participant-priests' self-understanding as parish priests. It is no coincidence that their regular act of presiding at the Eucharist – of understanding themselves as having representational presence *in persona Christi* – instils an identity of priestly representational presence. It is the source of the participant-priests' understanding of their presence as being beyond themselves and instead representing Christ.

In addition to the Eucharist being the source of the participant-priests' self-identity and practice of representational presence, it is also the summit of that identity and practice. The representational nature of their presence representing Christ at the Eucharist is made possible by their participation in Christ's Priesthood. The Catholic understanding of the ontological nature of ordination is that priests are always participating in Christ's sacerdotal ministry. This participation comes with the representational presence of which the participant-priests spoke. This means that their representational presence as priests participating in Christ's presbyterial ministry is constant. The Eucharist as the 'source and summit of the Christian life'[384] means that their participation in Christ's ministry and the associated

---

[382] 'The Catechism of the Catholic Church', accessed 23 April 2021, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a3.htm. 1324.
'Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations,* ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Northport: Costello, 1996), 11.
[383] P112
[384] *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

representational presence is most actualised at the Eucharist. However, the potentiality of representational presence continues beyond the Eucharist itself. Such an understanding refuses to divide the priest's work between the Eucharist as responding to God's initiative and everything else. This lends a sense of continuity to the priest's life due to the ontological change occurring at ordination. This idea of perennial representation is found in Austin Farrer's work, which describes the priest as a 'walking sacrament'.[385] Although Farrer notes that the priest receives the Sacrament as a congregation member, at certain points in the liturgy, he 'steps into the place of Christ himself'. Here, the Eucharist, as the summit of Christian life, comes to bear. The Eucharist is the summit of the priest's representational presence. It is there that their participation in Christ's presbyterial ministry is most fully realised. Yet, as Farrer explains, these 'exceptional' occurrences at the Eucharist are not 'disconnected' from the rest of the priest's life; he continues to represent Christ. There is an air of absurdity to this: that a man walking around a supermarket could be representing Christ. However, as Farrer points out, this is no less absurd than the absurdity of being a Christian, of 'Jesus being willing to be in us, and to let us show him the world'.[386]

iii)   Clerical wear as communicating representational presence

The participant-priests' understanding of the effect of garments as aiding or pointing to priestly representational presence is interesting, as it is a bridging symbol from their liturgical to their day-to-day missional actions. In the Church of England's Catholic tradition, when a priest presides at the Mass, they usually wear a chasuble. This liturgical vestment, reintroduced through the Oxford Movement's liturgical reforms, can be understood as representing the priest as an icon of Christ. As the garment covers the priest, evoking Romans 13:14, it indicates how priests are covered by the 'symbolic cloak of Christ's priesthood'.[387] Similarly, the clerical collar indicates not only the priest's role, but the clerical shirt also covers the priest,

---

[385] Austin Farrer and J. L. Houlden, *Austin Farrer, the Essential Sermons* (Cambridge, Mass: Cowley Publications, 1991). 102.
[386] P104
[387] John-Francis Friendship, *Enfolded in Christ: The Inner Life of a Priest*, 2018. 102.

reducing his individuality and emphasising his representational presence. All the priests observed presiding at the Eucharist wore a chasuble, and all their practice included wearing a clerical collar or cassock when moving around their parish or conducting pastoral visits. While this is not uncommon practice within the wider Church of England, the understanding of wearing clerical wear as indicating representative presence is a particularly Anglo-Catholic perspective.[388] Thus, the wearing of a garment to indicate representational presence illustrates the bridging of the belief in representational presence from the Eucharist into other areas of parish ministry.

Although some reference was given to negative connotations of effects from the wearing of clerical wear, I now critique the priests' general assumption that the clerical collar still communicates real and positive meaning to the wider public. I will discuss the significance of the clerical collar for the priests, but I will not seek to ascertain its effectiveness on the part of the people who see the priests in question. Ascertaining whether such connotations exist, be they positive, negative or neutral, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Some of the priests referred to the collar as having negative connotations. Fr George referred specifically to the clerical sex abuse scandal as leading to negative connotations among the public. He recalled that 'it hasn't happened recently, but at the height of the child abuse stuff, they just assume everybody in a dog collar is not being properly behaved.'[389] This experience of hostility caused by the wearing of a clerical collar was particularly prevalent among Roman Catholic priests.[390] However, this experience among the participant-priests suggests that male Anglican priests in England may also be affected by clerical sex abuse scandals.[391] Although Fr George shared this negative experience of wearing clerical wear, the

---

[388] Examples of this in Anglican thought include: Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Ministry: Being with the Church*, 2017. 16. and, Christopher Hobbs, 'General Synod, Private Member's Motion: Canon B8, Background Paper', July 2014, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%201944a%20-%20pmm%20on%20canon%20b8_July14.pdf.

[389] P113
[390] Barry O'Sullivan, 'The Sexual Abuse of Minors by the Clergy: The Effect of This Crisis on Non-Offending Catholic Priests in England and Wales' (The University of Manchester, 2015). 163.
[391] Moloney, *'A Look at a Priest's Life'*.

participant-priests also gave examples of positive experiences. For example, Fr Robert's recollection of being approached in the supermarket to bless a woman's rosary was shared as a positive experience.

Although some of the younger priests spoke of the need to counter unhealthy power dynamics during pastoral visits, there was no consideration of the clerical collar as a symbol of traditional male clerical authority. This may be because the priests, as white men, have not significantly experienced the abuse of power perpetrated by those wearing a clerical collar. Such wearing of a collar may have more complex connotations for other groups of priests depending on their sex, race and socio-economic background.[392] That being said, female clergy wear the clerical collar and, from personal observation, in some circumstances, more deliberately than male clergy.

As I have demonstrated, the issue of clerical wear is a nuanced one. However, the participant-priests did not exhibit evidence of developed reflection on its relation to representational presence. As I will propose in Chapter Five, such a developed reflection of a theology of representational presence will enable the practice to be offered as a gift to the wider Church of England.

I have demonstrated that the Eucharist can be understood as the 'source and summit' of the participant-priests' self-understanding and missional practice. Their regular practice of wearing clerical collars and/or cassocks contains the embedded theology of representational presence beyond the liturgical act of presiding at the Eucharist, which ought to be understood as more than an act of personal devotion but as the defining act of their priestly ministry. However, despite this shared practice and understanding, how the priests accounted for and reflected upon their own actions in relation to their representational presence differed. Some of the priests, particularly those whose accounts of practice were not located across

---

[392] Lesley Stevens , 'Different Voice / Different Voices: Anglican Women in Ministry', Review of Religious Research, Mar., 1989, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Mar., 1989), pp. 262- 275

the breadth of the cumulative scale of presence, spoke of their presence in passive terms.

iv) A passive approach to representational presence

All the participant-priests gave an account of their practice of wearing clerical wear when conducting day-to-day life in their parish. Although this was a shared practice, for some of the priests, it represented a passive approach to representational presence and in relation to mission. As established in Chapter 3, the wearing of a clerical collar was considered as infusing otherwise mundane activities with missional potential. Fr Robert shared his belief that, on his way to post a letter, 'more people stopped to speak to me with my cassock on than when I've got my collar on'.[393] However, he did not suggest that he had changed his practice to wearing a cassock as a result of this belief. While all the priests spoke of their representational presence and perhaps would consider the wearing of clerical wear as creating potential in otherwise mundane scenarios, for a minority of the participant-priests, the representational presence of wearing a clerical collar in their parish was the majority of their missional activity outside of the parish church.

It is worth considering this passive approach to parish mission in light of the participant-priests' general critique of more active, intentional missional approaches. A generous reading of such a passive approach is that it ought to be considered in the context of critiques of capitalist work ethics infiltrating the Church of England's expectations of parish priests' ministry. It is not insignificant that this is one of the main critiques levelled at *Mission-Shaped Church*. The compatibility of the participant-priests' missional practice with *Mission-Shaped Church* will be considered in the next chapter. *Mission-Shaped Church*'s active approach – intending to meet the challenge of a changing British society by planting fresh expressions of church – has been critiqued for valuing newness over the received model of church, as exemplified in the parish. As established in Chapter 1, *Mission-Shaped Church* is accused of pandering to 'capitalism',[394]

---

[393] P103
[394] Milbank, 'Stale Expressions,' 118.

'managerialism',[395] 'pluralism'[396] and 'consumerism'.[397] As viewed by its critics, its motivation is not mission but a 'collusion' with contemporary culture, post-institutional tendencies whereby individualism is valued above community and, for John Milbank, the managerialism adopted by Protestants in general. According to Davison and Milbank, this succumbing to cultural pressures is caused by 'a failure of confidence, a denial of responsibility, and a throughgoing underestimation of the Church's revolutionary nature.' For Percy, the result is that 'God, religion and faith have become consumable commodities.' It may be that, in such a context of theological discourse, a more passive consideration of representational presence, as identified in the practice of the participant-priests wearing clerical wear, has been considered by some as an act of resistance.

A passive understanding of representational presence as transforming mundane tasks into missional opportunities undersells the potential of the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence when considered in an active way. One reason from confirmation theory[398] suggests that the priests require a few examples of positive outcomes of this approach to confirm their belief that it is effective in a missional context. In reaction to a perception of *Mission-Shaped Church*'s proactive, even anxious, approach to parish ministry, with all the capitalist weaknesses outlined above, some of the participant-priests may resist an active approach to such an extent that their missional practice has become passive.

There is a critique to be made of the current management-focused trend found in many of the Church of England's recent communiqués. The first action that priests are asked to declare at their ordination is to be 'diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the gospel'. Anna Matthews is correct when she calls for her fellow priests to remember to return to Christ in prayer and devotion continually:

---

[395] Milbank, 'Stale Expressions,' 117.
[396] Percy, 'Old Tricks for New Dogs?,' 127.
[397] Percy, 'Old Tricks for New Dogs?,' 124.
[398] Nickerson, '*Confirmation Bias*'.

It will also help us to resist our own fantasies that we are omnipotent or indispensable, that we have everything sorted, or that we are justified by the busyness of our diaries or the offering of our own exhaustion. To operate like that is worryingly easy, particularly in a church whose dominant climate is one of anxiety.[399]

However, Matthews does not suggest this at the expense of being an active presence in the parish, nor does she malign strategic thinking about how and where a priest's representational presence may be most effective in sharing the Good News. Rather, she argues that this action must remain in the context of 'God's gifts of prayer, sacrament, Scripture and service.'[400] While Matthews claims that there is a dichotomy to be balanced and extremes to be avoided, there are many reasons to suggest that it is not plausible that taking a purely passive approach to mission, simply by walking around the neighbourhood in a clerical collar, realises the full missional potential of the catholic tradition.

Nonetheless, this was a minority approach among the participant-priests, the majority of whom took a more active approach to their presence as representational within their parish, with some of them engaging across the cumulative scale of presence. I now turn to discussing the more active approaches to mission in which the participant-priests engaged.

v) An active approach to representational presence

In contrast to the passive approach to mission outlined above, many more priests demonstrated a much more active approach, which can be seen most clearly in school ministry. Many of the participant-priests were involved in local schools. Some had formal roles, such as school chaplain or chair of governors, while others contributed to school life solely through leading assemblies and teaching RE lessons. As with other areas of their priestly ministry, they all attended the school in clerical wear, demonstrating their continued understanding of their presence as representational. For many of the participant-priests, their presence in school had

---

[399] Anna Matthews and Robin Ward, 'Reflections on Vocation and Mission', in *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission* (London: Canterbury Press, 2020), 71–85. 74.
[400] Matthews and Ward, 'Reflections on Vocation and Mission,' 77.

a clear purpose: for those in Church schools, to preside at the Eucharist and teach the faith, and for all the priests (regardless of the type of school), to provide pastoral and practical care.

Those priests with an active approach to schools' ministry, speaking of their role in active rather than passive terms, also tended to demonstrate a more active approach to other areas of ministry. It may be thought that some of the priests consider their presence drinking tea in the school staff room a similar kind of open passive presence to wearing a collar when doing their weekly shop. However, this was not the case. Reflections on chaplaincy offered many thoughts about priestly presence. For example, when the priests in the staff room may not appear to be active, they are actually 'loitering with intent'.[401] This has an active purpose: to be available, considerate of body language and aware of dynamics in the room. It is different from having a cup of tea in a local café while wearing a clerical collar, open to divine interruption but not actively looking for it. A priest's action in their local school may be a helpful way of examining their wider practice, because the school's structure and campus limits offer a microcosm of the wider parish. A priest's attitude to mission in a school context may be indicative of their attitude towards ministry in the wider parish. In addition, the fruit of mission in one area – their presence as representative – has the potential to provide an example of the possibility of fruit in another area. It is interesting that the priests whose accounts of practice span the full cumulative scale of presence in being involved in local conversations about social action consider their role at their local school to be effecting positive social change. As Fr William explained, 'It is about creating a school where children are really well-known and well cared for and where they have the opportunity for formation in the Christian faith.'[402] Here, the priestly vision for the school is as a microcosm of the parish, a place where loving action and faith formation – achieved in part through priestly presence – forms community. Where the priests have a solid grounding in missional principles in

---

[401]Helen Orchard, *Hospital Chaplaincy: Modern, Dependable?* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). 74.
[402] P105

172

schools, they often pose the same questions and adopt a similar attitude in their general parish ministry.

vi)   Community-building in a historical context

Despite the participant-priests' diverse accounts of practice, with a minority taking a passive approach to representational presence and others taking a more active approach, there was a shared purpose to their priestly presence. All the participant-priests understood their presence, when conducted with frequency and regularity, as leading to the familiarity required to build community. While some of the priests were aware that I, the researcher, may not have considered some of their accounts of non-liturgical practice as missional, the Anglo-Catholic tradition has always had a broad understanding of parish mission.

As established in Chapter 1, social action has always been a characteristic of parochial practice in the Church of England's Catholic movement. Such an approach is in keeping with parish ministry in the historical Oxford Movement. The early Tractarian understanding of the parish helps contextualise social action as not just an end in itself but as a means of drawing individuals into the central worshipping community and into relationship with Christ through the Eucharist. George Herring suggests that the Tractarian clergy understood their parish and its parishioners in terms of a 'series of concentric circles',[403] the widest circle being the entire population of the parish, whether baptised or not. Moving inwards were those parishioners adhering to what the Tractarians perceived to be a flawed type of Christianity, including those belonging to dissenting sects. Next, Anglicans who did not have a clear understanding of Anglicanism's distinctiveness would worship at local Protestant churches alongside attending the parish church. Further inward was a group that made up the majority of those who attended worship and those who attended the parish church exclusively but were not and did not intend to become communicants. Next, those preparing for Confirmation or First Communion, and finally, the regular communicants who the Tractarians understood to be at the heart of the parish.

---

[403] Herring, '*What Was the Oxford Movement?*,' 77.

The framework of the parish as concentric spheres of community is helpful in identifying how the participant-priests understand their presence in the parish. Their presence in their parish has a similar intention to their Tractarian forefathers: to expand the eucharistic community by drawing individuals into community. As Herring writes:

> It was the creation of an ever-expanding Eucharistic community that the Tractarian clergy saw as the final goal of the whole parochial system, and measured their success or failure in terms of its size. All their visiting, their schools, their evening classes were part of a machine designed to produce momentum from the periphery to the inner core.[404]

This historical context offers a challenge to today's participant-priests around numerical growth. In reaction to the perceived numerical emphasis of Evangelicals and the current trend of the Church of England, many of the priests spoke of how they were 'not so much into numbers',[405] as though their priestly vocation of being present in their community was a higher calling than those fixated on increasing their congregation sizes. However, priestly presence cannot be detached from congregational growth. As has been demonstrated, the purpose of representational presence is to form community through increased familiarity. Dismissing numerical growth is neither in keeping with the historical perspective of Anglo-Catholic parochial practice nor fully appreciating or engaging with representational presence. It is difficult to consider a passive approach to representational presence combined with a disregard of numerical growth as a credible missiological approach, both in the historical context of the Anglo-Catholic tradition and in relation to the meaning of representational presence.

---

[404] Herring, '*What Was the Oxford Movement?,*' 79.
[405] P103

vii)   Representational presence – the Eucharist as both source and summit

As I have established above, the participant-priests' identity and practice can be understood in relation to the Eucharist as source and summit. The difference between some of the participant-priests' approaches to representational presence can best be understood in light of this theological concept. I argue that those with a passive approach to representational presence under-realised the Eucharist as source. Conversely, the participant-priests all had a strong understanding of the Eucharist as the summit of their priestly ministry. This is evident in their regular presiding at the Eucharist, particularly in their adapted practice in response to the COVID-19 social distancing measures of Spring 2020. In addition, their reflections on this reported practice also demonstrate the firm theological understanding of presiding at the Eucharist as the summit of their priestly vocation; as Fr George explained, 'saying the Mass is one of the most important things I do every day'.[406]

However, not all of the priests had such a firm theological understanding of their presiding at the Eucharist as the source of the priestly ministry. It was only those with an active understanding of representation presence whose reported practice was spread across the cumulative scale of presence, who spoke of the Eucharist as a source for their ministry. For example, Fr James spoke of how presiding at the Eucharist kept him 'nourished spiritually'. He believed that he would be unable to continue his presence across a wide range of social action projects and at his local school without the daily nourishment of the Eucharist.

It is this dual-directional understanding of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic theology that offers a challenge to the participant-priests to examine their theology of the Eucharist as both source *and* summit. I offer that it is no coincidence that those priests with an active approach to representational presence, whose reported practice is across the cumulative scale of presence, also shared a strong understanding of the Eucharist as source. It is not just that they

---

[406] P113

hold the theological view that the Eucharist is the source of their ministry, but that this belief is matched by their practice.

Incoherencies were evident in the participant-priests' practice of their theology of representational presence, both in terms of differing applications in their practice and in the lack of development of thought in their articulations. However, in the next chapter, I will argue that representational presence ought to be considered a gift from within the catholic tradition to the missional practice of the wider Church of England. To do so, the participant-priests must address these criticisms and reflect more deeply on representational presence. I propose that this reflection ought to take place within The Society more widely. Next, I turn to the political and historical contexts of the participant-priests' missiological approach of representational presence.

4.3 The context of representational presence
i) Isolation

The participant-priests articulated a narrative of isolation. Due to their positioning within the wider Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England, this narrative is, in fact, a juxtaposition between two narratives of isolation: first, the narrative that an Anglo-Catholic approach to ministry is undervalued by the Church of England, and second, the narrative that their position on the ordination of women, as represented in the affiliation with The Society, makes positive relationships with other clergy difficult.

In Chapter 3, I established how the participant-priests considered evangelical missiology as lacking the depth of the catholic tradition. Nevertheless, they described the 'energy'[407] of the Church of England as being located within the Evangelical tradition. Their sense of being undervalued as communicated by a lack of central Church of England funding was compounded by the interpretation of the dominant theological position of the Church of England. The effect of the Church of England's theological communication was particularly evident in the priests'

---

[407] P102

reflections during the height of the COVID-19 social distance measures of Spring 2020. The Archbishops' apparent trivialisation of church buildings as sacred spaces, and the essential sacramental nature of the priesthood, led some of the participant-priests to comment on the lack of 'any depth in what is coming out of the top'.[408]

ii) Church of England funding

It is difficult and beyond the scope of this thesis to establish the dominant theology of the Church of England and assess its compatibility with catholic sacramental theology. However, the participant-priests' belief that Anglo-Catholics receive less financial support than other traditions is more easily considered. Although there is no definitive way of demonstrating how funding from central sources, such as the Church Commissioner's Strategic Development Fund (SDF), is distributed, some key points are worth considering.

Gathering data on how SDF funding is distributed according to church tradition is not straightforward. This is primarily because many diocesan bids for SDF funding are for multiple projects across the diocese or roles such as missioners, youth workers or additional area deans to work across church traditions. However, it would be fair to assert a skew towards charismatic evangelical projects.[409] Although the participant-priests are correct in their view that funding is disproportionately given to charismatic projects, their anxiety linked to this perception is exacerbated by the high profile of SDF-funded resources churches such as KXC,[410] as mentioned by Fr William.[411]

The contributing factors for this skew towards charismatic evangelicals are twofold. First, informal conversations with those involved in the SDF funding process suggest that the skew is present at the development stage of the projects, with fewer Anglo-Catholic projects being offered. Second, the projects offered by

---

[408] P102

[409] 'SDF Project Summary' (Church of England), accessed 23 April 2021, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/SDF%20project%20summaries%20Jan%202021.pdf.

[410] https://www.kxc.org.uk

[411] P105

charismatic networks, as represented by the Church Revitalisation Trust (affiliated with Holy Trinity Brompton) and New Wine, offer a tried and practised model for planting with a track record of identifying and training leaders, thereby representing a reliable investment. This raises questions beyond the scope of this thesis of why this skew exists and how the participant-priests within the wider Anglo-Catholic tradition may produce viable bids for SDF funding.

While there is clearly some skew, this has not prevented projects affiliated with The Society from receiving SDF or Church Commissioner funding. I note four significant examples of such projects here. The first is the previously mentioned 2018 Catholic Mission Conference. I find it noteworthy that the most significant catholic mission conference of the decade was both funded by an SDF grant and hosted by Lambeth Palace. These two actions from the Church of England's establishment ought to be considered an affirmation of the catholic movement as a whole. The second example is the inclusion of the See of Ebbsfleet in an SDF funding bid by the Diocese of Coventry. The bid successfully obtained funding for a full-time 'Healthy Churches Mentor' to support and mentor incumbents in the Ebbsfleet area.[412] The third example is a recent role advertised for a 'National Missioner to the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda', which received two years of funding from the Archbishop's Council, tasking the postholder(s) to 'promote a confident mission agenda and support local churches in prioritising growth'.[413] The final example is the SDF funding a stipend for a priest-in-charge at St Philip the Apostle South Tottenham, leading to a revitalisation of the church from St Mary's Tottenham. This came under a wider diocesan strategy of creating 19 resource churches, given 'planting curates' to lead church plants and revitalisations.[414]

The related question arises of what distribution of funding would be considered fair by the participant-priests. Given that parishes affiliated with The Society

---

[412] 'Appointment of a Healthy Churches Mentor', 1 June 2020, https://www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/category.php?category=Announcements.

[413] 'National Missioner to the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda, Job Description', accessed 23 April 2021, https://www.sswsh.com/uploads/National_Missioner_JD_FINAL_2.pdf.

[414] 'Resource Churches Announcement', London Diocese announces first resource churches, 15 November 2018, https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/london-diocese-announces-first-resource-churches/.

represent around 3% of the total number of parishes nationally, while in London Diocese this rises to almost 12%, distribution aligned with representation may be considered fair, although not necessarily a gospel-orientated approach to funding allocation. While beyond the scope of this thesis, establishing the expectations of what would constitute fair funding of projects affiliated with The Society – or, indeed, other ecclesial groups within the Church of England – would be a fruitful area of research to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Aside from expectations, the other question that emerges is one of communication. Projects and roles associated with The Society have been, and continue to be, funded by central Church of England funding streams. The question arises about how such funding is fairly distributed, but as I have established, examples of such funding do exist. However, how is such funding communicated to this project's participant-priests? Three of the above examples list the funding source. The stipend for St Phillip the Apostle South Tottenham is not easily identified as being funded by the SDF; however, this would not be unusual and may well be a fact well known to the congregation. The conference leaflet for the Catholic Mission Conference noted that funding had been received from the Church Commissioners, while the Ebbsfleet announcement explained that the funding came from being included in the Diocese of Coventry's bid to the Church of England's Strategic Development Fund. The job description for the role of National Missioner to The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda notes how the post has been 'generously funded' by the Archbishop's Council.[415] It is outside of the scope of this thesis to consider how the communication of funding affects the narrative of isolation articulated by the participant-priests, but reference to this issue will be included in Chapter 5. Rightly or wrongly, mission communicates value and therefore ought to be considered in light of participant-priests' sense of marginalisation and isolation. Therefore, the value that funding denotes ought to be communicated more clearly by the Church of England. Funding communicates

---

[415] 'National Missioner to the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda, Job Description'.

value, but that value can only be felt by the recipients if they are made aware of the funding source.

iii) A historical context

The participant-priests articulated a narrative of isolation, with Fr James saying that local clergy 'rarely speak to me because I am a Society priest'.[416] This narrative within the data, as a context for the participant-priests' missional practice, must be considered in light of Chapter 1, in which I established that priests in The Society are located at a juxtaposition between two narratives of isolation. The first is shared with the wider Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England and relates to the historical narrative of isolation as read into the early history of the Anglo-Catholic movement. The second originates in the bereavement and marginalisation experienced after the Church of England's decision to ordain women as priests. While the participant-priests did not refer to the Church of England's decision to ordain women, references were made to the marginalisation experienced by the Ritualist priests of the Victorian era. I will now draw on the project's data to consider how this narrative was manifested in the participant-priests, considering that such historical interpretation may be projected onto their current experience of isolation.

From the conception of the Catholic Movement, opposition was experienced for both theological and political reasons. That said, as I established in Chapter 1, such opposition is overplayed by many church historians, such as Ivan Clutterbuck. As a result, a prominent historical interpretation projects a narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation onto the past, which then informs a narrative of marginalisation in the present. In *Marginal Catholics,* Clutterbuck projects this narrative of marginalisation onto the catholic movement during the interwar period:

> Catholics could be forgiven for thinking that their bishops were against them and seeking their undoing, for their record had not been good from

---

[416] P101

the very beginning of the movement. The fact that they had stood aside and let their priests be prosecuted and sent to prison was not exactly encouraging.[417]

Nigel Yates identifies how Ollard's 1915 study of the Oxford Movement[418] 'has exercised a very powerful influence over all those writing on the topic'.[419] Until the emergence of revisionist readings in the late 20th century, the historical interpretation of the period offered by Anglican church historians, often situated within the Anglo-Catholic tradition, reinforced a narrative of isolation and marginalisation in their struggle to reform the Church of England. As Yates writes, 'old myths, once created, die hard.'[420] Hints of such a historical reading can be found in this project's data, with a romanticisation of the early period of Anglo-Catholic history. Many of the participant-priests referenced Victorian Ritualist priests (e.g., Charles Lowder, Alexander Mackonochie and Arthur Stanton) as influences on their parish ministry, pointing to a definite reference to the period. Fr William interpreted Fr Lowder's context as 'extraordinarily hostile',[421] suggesting a sympathy for a historical reading of Anglo-Catholicism as marginalised. In addition, Fr William drew a parallel between the hostility experienced by Lowder and the situation in the Church of England today. This is an example of the participant-priests projecting a narrative of isolation in their historical interpretation of Anglo-Catholic history onto their experience of the Church of England today.

This identified reading of Anglo-Catholic history, in addition to the 'bereavement',[422] 'pain and grief'[423] experienced by priests now in The Society at the Church of England's decision to ordain women at priests, is an important context for the participant-priests' experience of isolation today. The juxtaposition between the two narratives of marginalisation is the context within which the

---

[417] Clutterbuck, '*Marginal Catholics*,' 70.
[418] Ollard, *'A Short History of the Oxford Movement.'*
[419] Yates, '*Anglican Ritualism*,' 8.
[420] Yates, *'Anglican Ritualism*,' 8.
[421] Yates, *'Anglican Ritualism*,' 105.
[422] Greenacre and Podmore, '*Part of the One Church?*.' xxxvi.
[423] Oddie, '*The Roman Option*,' 28.

participant-priests experience the funding decisions and theological communications of the Church of England. The historical interpretation projected onto the past by individuals such as Clutterbuck is then projected onto the present, interpreting current decisions as acts of marginalisation.

This historical interpretation of the Anglo-Catholic movement provides the context for the experiences of priests now in The Society at the Church of England's decision to ordain women at priests. While it is difficult to interpret this more recent period, as Colin Podmore writes, because we are currently in an 'interim period, when memory is lacking or dim yet definitive history remains unwritten',[424] it is fair to assert that the participant-priests are located at a juxtaposition between these two narratives.

iii)   Phillip North and self-imposed isolation

However, this narrative is not solely critiqued by revisionist historians, such as Yates. Individuals such as Martyn Percy and campaigning groups such as Women and The Church (WATCH) strongly dispute the idea of The Society being marginalised. Percy considers any marginalisation that The Society experiences to be self-imposed. While Percy and WATCH may have long held this opinion, it was the nomination of Bishop Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield that brought the debate to the fore. This event was referred to by Fr Alan, who gave it as an example of 'mutual flourishing' not being 'respected on both sides'.[425] Tracing Percy's arguments around the furore in the wake of North's nomination offers an insight into a contemporary critique within the Church of England against the participant-priests' narrative of isolation.

On 31st January 2017, Downing Street announced that Philip North, then Bishop of Burnley, was to be the next Bishop of Sheffield. A Bishop of The Society, North held theological and ecclesiological misgivings about the ordination of women. It has been identified as a contributing factor to the events that followed that North's

---

[424] Greenacre and Podmore, '*Part of the One Church?*,' xv.
[425] P112

position was not clearly communicated.[426] Many ordained women in Sheffield were dissatisfied with having a diocesan bishop who, in their understanding, would not (or could not) affirm their priestly ministry.[427] Concerns were raised by Women and the Church (WATCH), and various articles were written by Martyn Percy and published in *Modern Church* and the *Yorkshire Post*, with a defence of North written by the Archbishop of York also published in the latter. The *Church Times* published a letter from 32 Blackburn ordained women in support of North, while a few days later, on International Women's Day, a protest took place. On 9th March, 37 days after North's appointment was announced, Downing Street announced that North had withdrawn his acceptance of the nomination to the See of Sheffield.

The two main critiques of North's nomination as a diocesan bishop were those of power and integrity. In a 2013 article for the *Daily Telegraph*, Percy evoked the words of Palestinian theologian Munir Fasheh. He likened the power dynamic between The Society and female clergy to that exemplified in Fasheh's account of Israeli taxation officers and a Palestinian woman:

> Fasheh tells of how a woman in Beit Sahour (near Bethlehem) behaved when Israeli taxation officers came to town. When the army had already taken nearly everything from her house, she finally protested at the removal of her fridge – the last thing left in her kitchen. She said to the officer: 'Why don't you leave the fridge – I need it to feed my hungry children, and the food and milk will rot outside.' Trying to tempt her, the officer said, 'OK – but pay $25, and you can have it.' She said, 'I am not bargaining with you; I am appealing to you as a human being who probably has children.' He said, 'All right, pay $5.' She said, 'You don't seem to

---

[426] Report by the Independent Reviewer, 'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns' (The Church of England, 15 September 2017). 23.
[427] Bishop Richard Chartres in London offers an example of a non-ordaining diocesan bishop, Chartres would not ordain any individuals, male or female, priest.

understand.' He said, 'OK, pay just $1.' She said, 'Take the fridge – it's yours.'[428]

Percy uses this evocative image, while confusingly claiming that the Israel-Palestinian conflict is 'not a comparable analogy'[429] for the Church of England's debate, to demonstrate the dynamic of female clergy needing to 'barter and beg' to carry out their ministry freely. Percy then applies this same language of power to the Sheffield nomination, writing that this was a question of 'power-relations, and what one person's choice of abstention means for everyone else.'[430] WATCH echoed this critique of a misbalanced power dynamic, highlighting the 'power differentials in different circumstances'.[431] For example, constructive working relationships can occur on a local level between parish clergy or chaplains because they are not influenced by an imbalance of power. However, this is not the case when those with authority over female clergy, such as archdeacons and bishops, cannot fully affirm their priestly orders.

In addition to a question of power emerging from the nomination of North to the See of Sheffield, Percy raises the question of integrity. He highlights how the Church of England's move to consecrate women as bishops has required The Society to attempt a sort of sacramental gymnastics. Percy quotes Colin Podmore's words:

> Until last year, you could tell by looking who was a priest whose ministry we could receive and who was not. But now we have male priests ordained by women bishops. We can't receive their ministry, but how can you tell who ordained whom, for example, when you're a churchwarden arranging cover in a vacancy? One of the reasons why the Bishops invite priests to register as Priests of The Society is to help answer that question. Deacons

---

428 Report by the Independent Reviewer, 'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices' (The Church of England, 15 September 2017). 7-8.
429 Report by the Independent Reviewer. 8.
430 Martyn Percy, 'MP: Guest Blog Reflection (Lenten) on "Abstinence"', in *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices*, 2017, 24–24.
431 Report by the Independent Reviewer, 'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices'. 2.

and ordinands can register as well. They sign a Declaration that commits them to what The Society stands for. Priests and deacons submit their letters of orders to prove they were ordained by a bishop whose orders we can recognise. The relevant Society bishop sends them a Welcome Letter, so they can prove that they are clergy of The Society; and we have begun to issue identity cards to priests [...][432]

Percy refers to the need to determine which priest's ordinations maintain the integrity of their ontological genealogy as 'sacralised sexism'.[433] Although The Society issued a statement expressing its 'regret at the offence'[434] caused by how membership cards had been described, Percy's critique of sexism still stands. Percy argues that the appointment of North as a Bishop in The Society involves sexist discrimination, describing it as 'discrimination, dressed up as doctrine.'[435]

These critiques from Percy and WATCH come down to the idea of choice. They argue that women do not have a choice within the negative power dynamics caused by those under AEO, but men in The Society do. Percy writes of North: 'as the Diocesan Bishop of Sheffield, all of his choices – his chosen ranges of abstinence – are no longer about his liberty of conscience as an individual. They are now imposed on others, and moreover, on those who do not share his liberty of conscience.'[436] Percy consistently frames the theological convictions of priests in The Society (such as North) and this project's participant-priests as a choice. He writes, 'From the outset, this debate has always been between those charged with a duty to compromise and another group, who, we are told, simply cannot move.'[437] Percy's response to this project's participant-priests who spoke of feeling isolated and marginalised within the Church of England would likely be that such

[432] Colin Podmore, 'New Directions', *New Directions*, February 2017. 14.

[433] Report by the Independent Reviewer, 'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices'. 12.

[434]'Statement Regarding the See of Sheffield', 28 February 2017, https://www.sswsh.com/archive.php?month=February&year=2017.

[435] Martyn Percy, 'MP: Essay on "Discrimination", April 2017', in *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices*, 2017, 25–34. 26.

[436] Percy, 'MP: Guest Blog Reflection (Lenten) on "Abstinence"'.

[437] Martyn Percy, 'MP: Daily Telegraph Article, 2013', in *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices* 2017, 5-8.

isolation is a choice; they have chosen to isolate themselves by practising what he considers to be gender discrimination. He writes:

> But make no mistake: these groups are also inherently *discriminatory.* And I cannot see how justice or integrity is best-served, or the mission and ministry of the national church can ever be enhanced by extending the influence of such groups across the wider church. These groups have elected to marginalise themselves; this is their own chosen path. They have chosen opinions that necessitate their distancing from the mainstream. And so they should remain in their partially sealed-off wings (but self-constructed, incidentally), until such time as they wish to part company with those alienating opinions and no longer choose to practice their identity-based discrimination.[438]

It follows that if one considers a theology of women's ordination to the priesthood to be a watertight case, then discrimination is the only conceivable explanation for continued opposition. However, this project's data demonstrate that the participant-priests do not consider their stance to be a choice. As Fr James explained, 'I have thought, can I change my opinion? Because you have to review yourself occasionally. And, I come back and think, no I can't, it's how I understand Scripture, it's how I see it.' Nevertheless, he acknowledged that 'other people see it completely differently and maybe I'm wrong.'[439]

As established in Chapter 3, there is a costliness to this position, particularly in how it affects relationships with local clergy and especially with female clergy. This was evident in how many of the priests broached the topic of women's ordination despite not being specifically questioned about it. This demonstrates that they are used to having to justify their theological position. In addition, there was an awareness of how 'extremely painful'[440] their theological conviction can be and their need to demonstrate 'great respect and great charity'[441] to ordained women.

---

[438] Percy, 'MP: Essay on "Discrimination", April 2017'. 34.
[439] P101
[440] P105
[441] P105

Many of the participant-priests considered their ordained female friends and colleagues to be understanding that their membership in The Society is due to theological conviction rather than a choice to discriminate against women. Fr Alan noted that such understanding from a colleague was because she was 'gracious'. He said, 'She gets where I'm coming from and realises that it's not misogyny or anything like that, it's just theological or ecclesiological conviction really.'[442] Many of the participant-priests had friendships and positive working relationships with female clergy, believing that they understood the nuance of their theological position. Of course, this is only their perception, and further analysis of these relationships across theological divides could be an important area for future research.

iv)   Local expectations vs. actual experience

It is within the context of a narrative of historical, theological and financial marginalisation that the participant-priests enter their local deaneries. As established in Chapter 3, the participant-priests held the perception that deaneries are a hostile environment for priests in The Society. This was evident in the language the participant-priests used when speaking about their generally positive experiences with their deaneries. Speaking about his deanery chapter, Fr Alan said, 'it's a good one. I know not everyone would say that, but it is a good one.'[443] Fr William also contrasted his positive deanery experience with an idea of deaneries often being hostile environments for priests in The Society by saying, 'I've been very fortunate...'[444] However, the majority of the priests had positive experiences in their deaneries, and a dissonance was observed between their expectations of deaneries as hostile environments and their current experiences of positive working relationships. It is unsurprising that the participant-priests had negative expectations; the group's wider narrative of isolation and marginalisation likely created such expectations. In addition, SSC chapter meetings provide a safe space for local priests in The Society to share their experiences. Indeed, it may be the only space where negative experiences can be shared in confidence. Therefore,

---

[442] P112

[443] P112

[444] P105

SSC chapter meetings may inadvertently perpetuate the expectation of hostility at the deanery level. In Chapter 5, I address this perpetuation further, drawing on my TAR-informed[445] terms 'abstract' and 'concrete' in proposals for The Society and SSC gatherings.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, aided by the Four Voices framework, I have demonstrated the dissonance between the participant-priests' shared abstract theology of presence and their diverse concrete theology of representational presence. I have identified the underlying theological cause of this as an under-realisation of the Eucharist as both source *and* summit. I argue that representational presence ought to be considered a gift to the missiological practice of the wider Church of England. However, I critique some of the participant-priests' passive approach to representational presence, arguing that an active approach is both more engaging with the sacramental understanding of being *in persona Christi* and the historical practice of Anglo-Catholic clergy. For a missiology of representational presence to be offered as a gift from within the Church of England's catholic tradition, consideration ought to be given to its engagement between missiology and sacramental theology. In the next chapter, I propose that the Church of England ought to consider it a gift and argue for its compatibility with *Mission-Shaped Church*.

It is important to consider the narrative of isolation held by the participant-priests, as it provides the context for their missional practice. They feel marginalised by an evangelical-focused Church of England, which ignores the theological depth of the catholic tradition. Despite a perceived lack of depth within the evangelical position, they consider that the energy of the Church of England is located there. In their minds, this is demonstrated by the central funding decisions made by the Church of England, not favouring parishes or projects affiliated with The Society. However,

---

[445] Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice*. 53-58.

I have shown that this perspective is not totally correct, with significant examples of central Church of England funding being given to The Society-affiliated projects. However, it is understandable why, given the high-profile nature of many of the charismatic evangelical church plants, such a narrative of financial marginalisation exists.

The perception of the Church of England's financial decisions must be viewed in light of the historical interpretation of the Oxford Movement and Tractarianism, reading isolation as a prevailing narrative. I have shown that such a romantic reading of the period is questioned by historians, such as Yates, who instead seek a revisionist reading. Nonetheless, this is the historical interpretation at which the participant-priests hint and that forms the culture within which they are situated. They consider themselves to be isolated and marginalised within the Church of England. However, Martyn Percy disputes this in a debate culminating with Philip North's nomination to the See of Sheffield. Arguing that the two issues of power and integrity necessitated North's withdrawal from the nomination, Percy frames him and all priests in The Society as choosing isolation. In Percy's view, isolation is a choice, and holding discriminatory views is a choice. However, this is not how this project's participant-priests understand their theological convictions; indeed, they examine their views in light of the pain that they cause female clergy. It is in this context of believing that the Church of England does not care for them financially or value their sacramental theology within a historical narrative of isolation and having their theological convictions labelled 'a choice', that they enter their local deanery. In turn, I demonstrate the expectation of deaneries as hostile places for priests in The Society and show how such expectations do not correspond to the group's experience of their current deaneries, which is predominantly positive. Nevertheless, it is within this context that the participant-priests navigate their parochial practice – under a cloud of isolation. In the next chapter, I turn to what can be done about this narrative of isolation and offer proposals as to how the Church of England and the participant-priests themselves ought to respond to this narrative.

CHAPTER 5. A GIFT TO THE CHURCH

Drawing on the previous chapter's data and analysis and influenced by Swinton and Mowat's critical faithfulness approach of 'casting bread on the waters',[446] in this chapter I argue three points. First, *Mission-Shaped Church* is a flawed report, as it lacks any significant engagement with eucharistic theology. In light of this, the participant-priests' missiological approach of representational presence ought to be considered as both compatible with *Mission-Shaped Church* and, utilising the framework of Receptive Ecumenism,[447] a gift to the wider Church of England. Second, I argue that the participant-priests' narrative of isolation is false and self-serving. However, it is perpetuated by both The Society and the wider Church of England, despite it having detrimental effects on the missional practice of parish priests. I propose that the current practice of AEO should be adjusted to bring both conservative Evangelicals and traditionalist Anglo-Catholics under the same bishop, based on geographical area rather than church tradition. Third, I argue that there are signs of life among the younger participant-priests that offer hope to both The Society and the wider Church of England. I now address each of these in turn.

Receptive Ecumenism frames this chapter's approach of not seeking to argue against the participant-priests' missiology but to identify how it may be received by the wider Church of England as a gift. As Paul Murray summarises, Receptive Ecumenism is where:

> each tradition moves from asking how other traditions need to change and focuses instead on its own difficulties and tensions and consequent need to learn, or receive, from the best discernible practice and associated understanding in other traditions. [448]

---

[446] Swinton and Mowat. ''*Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*,' 274.
[447] Paul D. Murray, 'Introducing Receptive Ecumenism', *The Ecumenist* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1–8. 4.
[448] Paul D. Murray, 'Introducing Receptive Ecumenism', *The Ecumenist* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1–8. 4.

Furthermore, this chapter's serious consideration of the participant-priests' articulations of isolation and its seeking a way forward that is positive for both the participant-priests and the wider Church of England is another outworking of the Receptive Ecumenism approach. As Michael Ramsey writes, 'Let those who are glad to be Catholics or Evangelicals or Liberals set themselves to learn all they can from one another…'.[449]

5.1 Representational presence as a gift to *Mission-Shaped Church*

Mission-Shaped Church lacks adequate engagement with eucharistic theology. As such, the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence described in Chapter 4 ought to be considered both compatible with and a gift to the report's missiology. As established in Chapter 2, I use the framework of Receptive Ecumenism positively, considering how the participant-priests' missional practice can be received as a gift to address some of the wider Church of England's missional challenges. I argue for a compatibility between the missiology held within *Mission-Shaped Church* and the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence. Therefore, those holding a missiology similar to the participant-priests ought to be encouraged in their practice, respecting the context of a Church of England, where they do not consider their practice to be affirmed. In addition, the wider Church of England should receive the practice of representational presence as a gift from within the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

i) <u>Arguing for compatibility</u>

The participant-priests' missiological practice, as established in Chapter 3, needs to be understood in the context of isolation. A historical narrative of Anglo-Catholic marginalisation, compounded for the participant-priests by the Church of England's decision to ordain women, sets the scene for their reception of the Church of England's missional approaches. As shown in Chapter 3, the participant-priests considered their approach to ministry to be undervalued. They said that, despite the evangelical tradition's lack of depth, their catholic approach to ministry

---

[449] Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008). 72.

was not appreciated by the wider Church of England. They considered the dominant theology of the Church of England, especially highlighted during the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions of Spring 2020, as incompatible with a catholic, sacramental theological position. It follows that their approach of representational presence is considered incompatible with the Church of England's missional approach as held within *Mission-Shaped Church*. In addition, a perceived incompatibility can impact the participant-priests' missional practice. This was shown in Chapter 4, with the example of John Milbank's critique of *Mission-Shaped Church* as being capitalistic, contributing to a passive approach to representational presence among some of the participant-priests. I argue that the perceived incompatibility between the Church of England's current missional approach and the missiology of the participant-priests leads to disengagement at the deanery level and a weakening of the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence. I propose that this perception of incompatibility is false. First, drawing on the arguments in Chapter 1, I demonstrate that the early critique of *Mission-Shaped Church* is not as strong as it was first perceived to be, thus rendering some of the points redundant. Second, I argue that it is possible to use the approach to local mission as held within *Mission-Shaped Church* while being Eucharist-centred.

One of the main contributing factors to the participant-priests not considering their approach to parochial ministry to be appreciated by or compatible with today's Church of England is the effect of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report. The effect on some of the participant-priests' approach of representational presence has already been established above, but I would like to turn to how representational presence may be understood in relation to *Mission-Shaped Church* more broadly, with reference to the parish and the effect of discourse around the document.

A key issue of compatibility between representational presence and the Church of England's current missional approach is that of the parish. As established in Chapter 3, the participant-priests had a very strong understanding of the parish as a geographical place. *Mission-Shaped Church* is perceived by some, such as John

Milbank, to be 'a clear conspiracy against the parish'.[450] The parish church, with its particular forms of worship, is considered by critics to be the only appropriate way of maintaining the church's integrity while conducting local mission. As established in Chapter 1, Davison and Milbank offer a critique of Fresh Expressions. However, their critique presupposes the parish to be the only way to conduct local mission, whereas other missional approaches make it clear that this is not the case. Chaplaincy is an example of an acceptable missional priestly presence that does not come under criticism from the participant-priests. One of the participant-priests also had a role as a school chaplain, and another had previously been a hospital chaplain. Chaplaincy often exhibits a homogenised focus, be it educators and their students, or medics and support staff and their patients, as critiqued by the defenders of the parish. Indeed, the key proponents of the above 'defence' of the parish are all predominantly situated in non-parish forms of ministry: Andrew Davison and Martyn Percy minister in university settings (Corpus Christi Cambridge and Christ Church Oxford, respectively), while Alison Milbank is Canon Theologian at Southwell Minster.

The lack of critique of *Mission-Shaped Church's* proposals from those within parish ministry suggests that Davison *et al.* hold an idealised, even romanticised view of the parish. I argue that local mission has the potential to take forms outside of the parish structure. However, the question remains of the principles of the parish that the participant-priests articulated as important to parish mission. These principles are important because they have characterised the Church of England's mission for centuries. This givenness makes them easy to ignore or take for granted. In this project, drawing on the data from the participant-priests, the characteristics of parish ministry have been identified as involving geographical place with its own particularities, the parish as the location of proclaiming the Good News, transforming the local community, and communicating God's dedication to the place through the parish priests' own dedication. As established in Chapter 3, all these characteristics – shared by the participant-priests when speaking about

---

[450] Milbank, '*Stale Expressions,*' 124.

parish ministry in abstract terms – culminate in a theology of presence. For the participant-priests, this theology of presence was indistinguishable from the parish system. This raises a question of the compatibility of *Mission-Shaped Church* with the participant-priests' missiology of representational presence. However, William Foulger's research on non-parochial churches demonstrates that the Church of England's parish principle is identifiable in churches beyond the parish system. Questioning assumptions around space and place, Foulger argues that 'rather than pursuing geographical coverage as an end, [the Church of England] must find ways of establishing and equipping churches that are present to places as they are found.'[451] If this is true, there is hope that the representational presence approach to parish mission is compatible with the non-parochial church models affirmed by *Mission-Shaped Church*.

For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions is the primary text for arguments against alternative missional approaches beyond the parish. In it, the authors portray Fresh Expressions as lone rangers removed from the parish system. However, this view has not been borne out, as in the 11 intervening years since the book's publication, Fresh Expressions have been predominantly linked closely to parishes and often share projects with them. In short, there continues to be a 'wide diversity of fresh expressions of church'[452] and not the free-for-all that was anticipated. This speaks to the inherent compatibility of differing missional approaches, even within the same geographical parish, let alone within the same Church of England.

The participant-priests may disagree with this thesis's critique of the arguments set out by Davison and Milbank. They may argue that it misses the point of the critique of Fresh Expressions due to the inseparability of form and substance. I personally find much merit in this Wittgensteinian critique. Nevertheless, a pragmatic consideration is also required of representational presence in the post-*Mission-Shaped Church* landscape of the Church of England, and I argue that

---

[451] Foulger, 'Present in Every Place: The Church of England and the Parish Principle'. 3.

[452] Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church*. 44.

representational presence can be compatible with non-parochial church settings. I am not the only person exhibiting this pragmatism. Such pragmatism is growing within the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England, in which the participant-priests are situated. The heat of debate about *Mission-Shaped Church* is starting to dissipate, and engagement is growing within the wider Anglo-Catholic tradition with the Church of England's missional discourse. This has not been a full acceptance of *Mission-Shaped Church*, but a pragmatic engagement with it, taking what is positive and leaving what is perceived as negative. An example of this is Luke Millar's view that 'Catholic Anglicans can learn much from the "non-parochial" church'[453]; rather than a wholesale rejection, they should 'take what is good'[454] from non-traditional initiatives while retaining their sacramental integrity. Indeed, Millar points to a fault within the Anglo-Catholic movement's commitment to the parish above other expressions of church. He highlights how the 'homogenous vision' of the Parish Communion Movement – of the whole worshipping community gathering together for a shared Sunday communion – has had unintended negative consequences. It has led those in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, including the participant priests, to have an unnecessary focus on the corporate Sunday Mass while rejecting the wisdom found in *Mission-Shaped Church*'s focus on gathering similar demographic groups to make invitation easier.

Millar's advice was given in the context of the 2017 Catholic Mission Conference. This conference was historically significant, as it was the first substantial coming-together of Anglo-Catholics from across the divide caused by women's ordination. One of the causes of this conference was a pragmatic need to engage with the Church of England's missional strategy, because it was perceived as being overrun by Evangelicals. At the conference, Catholic Anglicans of different integrities considered catholic mission as a gift to be offered to the wider Church of England. Here, the cooling of two heated debates has resulted in a fertile dialogue, considering representational presence as a gift from within the Anglo-Catholic

---

[453] Luke Miller, 'Catholic Mission - God's Mission as Our Mission', in *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*, ed. Susan Lucas (Canterbury Press, 2020), 35–60. 54.
[454] Miller, *'Catholic Mission*,' 48.

tradition to a Church of England focused on both parochial and non-parochial churches. The new energy for Anglo-Catholic engagement post-*Mission-Shaped Church* can also be demonstrated in the Catholic Sacramental Evangelism network, which describes itself as for 'Clergy and lay ministers from catholic and sacramental traditions in various contexts with a passion for resourcing the church and achieving numerical and spiritual growth, from both integrities within the catholic tradition.'[455] Its online gatherings are attended by a mix of priests, some from The Society. These gatherings and conferences seek to 'articulate positively what is distinctive about a Catholic understanding of mission, in a language in which Catholics of all "tribes" in the Church of England would feel at home.'[456]

Such a positive opportunity to share aspects of Anglo-Catholic missiology, including representative presence as practised by the participant-priests, is only possible because of the corporate informal decision that this is not a schism issue. The participant-priests were all affiliated with the ecclesial group, The Society. While The Society is held within the ecclesial structures of the Church of England, it has the traits of being a schismatic group. The Church of England's decision to ordain women as priests and later to install them as bishops was considered by the participant-priests to be 'fundamentally incompatible'[457] with their priestly identity. What is significant for considering the missiological practice of the participant-priests is that while the belief remains that much of the content of *Mission-Shaped Church* is incompatible with their theological beliefs, particularly around sacramental emphasis, it is not incommensurable with their position within the Church of England. Despite the fact that this project's participant-priests feel disenfranchised by the Church of England and perceive much of their sacramental theological foundations to be incompatible with decisions being made, particularly during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are able to maintain their belonging to the Church of England. This unspoken decision has dispersed the heat

---

[455] 'Sacramental Evangelism Network', n.d.,
https://sacramentalevangelism.wordpress.com/about/. Accessed 1 Dec 2020.
[456] Lucas, '*Introduction*,' x.
[457] Sani and Reicher, 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups,' 98.

of argument, leading to a more positive engagement with the current missional strategy within the Church of England, as found in *Mission-Shaped Church*.

Having demonstrated the weaknesses of some early critiques of *Mission-Shaped Church* and argued for a pragmatic response to the report, I now argue for the compatibility of *Mission-Shaped Church* with the participant-priests' missiological approach of representational presence. I posit that it is possible to be centred on the Eucharist and use the missional approach found in *Mission-Shaped Church*. This possibility of retaining sacramental integrity while engaging with *Mission-Shaped Church* builds on the last point around pragmatism. Rather than waiting for the missional strategy of the Church of England to be an entirely catholic, sacramentally focused approach, the participant-priests are challenged to reimagine what a Eucharist-centred fresh expression could look like. Here, Millar's call to 'take what is good'[458] comes to the fore. A critique of *Mission-Shaped Church* is that it puts the cart of relevance before the sacramental horse. It is not sufficient to tack the Eucharist onto a Fresh Expression; rather, it should be the centre of each expression of church. However, while the centrality of the Eucharist within Anglo-Catholic theology cannot be overestimated and will come to bear in relation to representational presence below, this does not come without challenge. As Bishop Lindsay Urwin, former Administrator of the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, writes, 'Sacraments are only worth celebrating if they draw people into an experience of truth, and for us, the ultimate truth is Jesus.'[459] Drawing people into the truth of Jesus Christ is an important aspect of any celebration of the Eucharist. This poses a challenge to this project's participant-priests in terms of how they understand Urwin's challenge in relation to the Declaration of Assent's statement that the Church is called to proclaim the Christian faith 'afresh in each generation.'[460] The Victorian Ritualist priests, whom many of the participant-priests admire, sought to draw in their parishioners by offering what they lacked.

---

[458] Miller, 'Catholic Mission,' 48.
[459] Lindsay Urwin, 'What Is the Role of Sacramental Ministry in Fresh Expressions of Church?', in *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 29–41. 29.
[460] 'Declaration of Assent', Declaration Assent, n.d., https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/declaration-assent.

They offered colour, beauty and holiness where there was none amid the poverty and social deprivation of their parishes. While it was established in Chapter 1 that this was not as successful as the priests and their contemporaries considered it to be, this question-asking approach is helpful to the participant-priests. Indeed, some of them whose reported practice demonstrated an active consideration of representational presence asked a similar question: 'What does God's Church want to offer that context?'[461] Here, Fr William considered the particular needs of his parish and considered how the Church, with the Eucharist at its heart, can best speak to that context. This is a particular challenge to those participant-priests whose passive approach to representational presence may be inhibiting individuals from experiencing the truth of Jesus as revealed in the sacraments. While it may require some translation work to decipher a sacramentally centred method in establishing Fresh Expressions and a robust challenge to the wider Church that the sacraments cannot be tacked onto a worshipping community, *Mission-Shaped Church* offers freedom to consider Urwin's challenge of how sacraments draw individuals to the truth of Jesus. It allows the participant-priests to draw upon the practice of the Victorian Ritualist priests in seeking to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in their generation.

It is a misconception to assume that churches that are new or 'fresh' are more compatible with *Mission-Shaped Church* than churches with traditional forms of worship. This idea is challenged by Martin Seeley, the former Principal of Westcott House Cambridge, as he justifies his choice to maintain traditional liturgical practice during his time as a parish priest on the Isle of Dogs, London.

> This is not at all because of a feeling that fresh expressions of church or a new church plant would be wrong in principle. But we did as *Mission-Shaped Church* asks. We listened to God and to our context – a context of a community living in the midst of massive change. And as we listened, it

---

461 Martin Seeley, 'Mission-Shaped Isle of Dogs', in *Mission-Shaped Parish* (Church House Publishing, 2009), 69–77. 105.

seemed right to continue to use the traditional resources of the parish to do God's mission.[462]

Seeley practised the 'double listening' put forward in *Mission-Shaped Church*.[463] It is an act of discernment in listening to both the surrounding culture and the inherited tradition of the church. It was through this listening that he decided to retain his parish's traditional liturgical practice. Seeley demonstrates that the result of prayerful discernment and listening will not always be fresh expressions of church; instead, the traditional can also be a valid outcome. This is because, as *Mission-Shaped Church* affirms, the Anglican tradition's 'diversity is part of our strength in mission.'[464]

While it is in keeping with *Mission-Shaped Church* for a parish to maintain traditional forms of liturgical practice, this comes with two challenges. The first is a challenge for those akin to the participant-priests. While Seeley's practice was to maintain traditional liturgical forms, the role of the listening process cannot be understated. I would challenge those with a missiology similar to the participant-priests to compare their current service patterns to their parish's pattern of worship 25 years ago and then to compare their local community then and now. Communities change in terms of demographics, working patterns and general needs, to name only a few matters to consider. If their parish community has changed, but the life of the church has not changed in response, this raises a question around their practice of listening.

The second challenge is to the wider Church of England. If it is in keeping with *Mission-Shaped Church* for a parish to maintain traditional forms of liturgical practice, such practice ought to be valued as an integral part of the Church's mission. This challenges any idea that maintaining traditional forms of liturgical practice is not of value to the wider Church of England. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters in the exploration of the theme of isolation and

---

[462] Seeley, '*Mission-Shaped Isle of Dogs*,' 70.
[463] *Mission-Shaped Church,* 104.
[464] *Mission-Shaped Church,* 35.

marginalisation, this project's participant-priests do not consider their traditional approach to parish ministry as valued by the wider Church, as it is not considered new. If their approach to parish mission is in keeping with *Mission-Shaped Church*, then clear communication of this would be a step towards bestowing more value on the participant-priests. Indeed, I now argue that the participant-priests' eucharistic missiological approach of representational presence not only has value as part of the Church's missional practice, but it also ought to be considered a gift in the context of an inherent weakness of *Mission-Shaped Church*.

ii) <u>Arguing for gift</u>

I invite the participant-priests, their peers and the wider Church of England to practice Receptive Ecumenism. Such an act would allow them to consider how both *Mission-Shaped Church* and representational presence may be considered gifts to each party. As established in Chapter 2, Receptive Ecumenism involves each tradition moving from asking how the other tradition ought to change to focusing instead on the difficulties and tensions within their own tradition.[465] Dialogue offers an opportunity for receiving constructive challenges from the other's strength of practice or understanding and thus becomes an opportunity for gift. I have touched on how *Mission-Shaped Church* may be a gift to the participant-priests in the freedom it offers in response to their communities' needs. I have drawn on Millar's challenge to his fellow priests to approach more evangelical approaches to missional practices as gifts by taking 'what is good'.[466] Here, I establish that a missiology of representational presence ought to be considered a gift from within the catholic tradition to the wider Church of England. As Pope Francis states:

---

[465] Murray, '*Introducing Receptive Ecumenism*,' 4.
[466] Miller, '*Catholic Mission*,' 48.

It is good to acknowledge the grace with which God blesses us and, even more so, to find in other Christians something of which we are in need, something that we can receive as a gift from our brothers and our sisters.[467]

Representational presence ought to be considered a gift to the wider Church of England's missiological discourse because its proponents offer a critique of *Mission-Shaped Church.* One significant critique is that it fails to place the Eucharist at the centre of the Church's missional strategy. Someone reading *Mission-Shaped Church* seeking to understand the Church of England's ecclesiology would come away with little sense of the centrality of the Eucharist in her theology. Indeed, I can identify only seven instances where the Eucharist is mentioned in the 149 pages of *Mission-Shaped Church*. Even in these minimal instances, little weight is given to the sacrament or its consideration as the central act of the Church. As has been previously mentioned, discussions of Fresh Expressions and the sacraments tend to get the priority order wrong, resulting in a tacking of sacraments onto the theology in *Mission-Shaped Church*. An example of this is the case study of a school-based Fresh Expression in Thatcham, West Berkshire: 'From the start it aimed to be "church", hoping in time to get representation of the PCC and to administer the sacraments of baptism and communion.'[468] The troubling phrase here is 'in time'. It reveals a consideration of the sacraments that troubles this project's participant-priests: a view that the Eucharist is something to do 'in time', rather than it being the foundation of the Church's life and mission.

While there has been engagement with the report's ideas in relation to the sacramental tradition of the Church of England,[469] the fundamental misplacing of the Eucharist has not been resolved. As Bishop Steven Croft writes:

Fresh expressions of church are inherently sacramental and are formed, often through the connections made between liturgy and life. They are

---

[467] Pope Francis, "General Audience," 22 January 2014, available at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/audiences/2014/documents/ papa-francesco_20140122_udienza-generale_en.html.

[468] Mission-Shaped Church, 68.

[469] The literature mentioned elsewhere in this chapter written by Urwin, Tilby, Seeley, and Croft are example of this.

playing a major part in re-introducing the common meal to Christian gatherings and fellowship. It is broadly understood within the movement that fresh expressions should not be permanently shallow places within the Christian community, but that they grow into maturity. That growth to maturity means taking Baptism and the Eucharist extremely seriously, as necessary parts of what it means to form and be the Church. Some fresh expressions begin in a sacramental context and are fully eucharistic from day one; others develop and grow towards the Eucharist over a number of years.[470]

While Croft seeks to affirm the importance of the sacraments to Fresh Expressions, he does not manage to allay the fear of the participant-priests who consider their sacramental theology to be undervalued or even at odds with the dominant theology of the Church of England. While a conversation is to be had about the growth and maturity of Fresh Expressions,[471] the critique of the primacy of the sacraments still remains. The weakness of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report and the discussion surrounding it is its failure to place the Eucharist at the heart of the conversation. It is in relation to this weakness that this project's participant-priests should be considered a gift because they offer a valid critique of this weakness and challenge the wider Church not to ignore this significant omission.

Furthermore, representational presence ought to be considered a gift from within the catholic tradition to the wider Church of England because it addresses *Mission-Shaped Church*'s failure to engage with the sacramental theology of the priesthood. Indeed, this project's participant-priests do not merely critique the gaping hole in consideration of the sacramental in the discourse, but they offer a gift of their missiological practice to address this absence of an interdisciplinary engagement between sacramental theology and missiology – asking what the

---

[470] Steven Croft, 'Persuading Gamaliel: Helping the Anglo-Catholic Tradition Engage with Fresh Expressions of Church', in *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (London: Canterbury Press, 2009), 36–51. 42
[471] Mission-Shaped Church.120-123; John Drane, 'What Does Maturity in the Emerging Church Look Like?', in *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 90–101.

priest's role is in the mission of the Church. The participant-priests, in their reflections on their reported practice, offer a missiology of priestly presence. They consider the presence of a priest in the local area of his parish to be representative. Because the task of mission is to draw individuals to the truth of Christ in the Eucharist, the priest's presence being representative of that very presence of Christ means that their representational presence is missional. It is this pervasiveness of the Eucharist throughout all catholic theology that makes the above critique of *Mission-Shaped Church*'s omission of the Eucharist important in relation to the participant-priests' missiology.

iv) Normative proposals

a) *Development of missiology of representational presence by the participant-priests*

This thesis has identified an emergent missiology within the disclosed practice of the participant-priests. However, as established in Chapter 4, this missiology has not been intentionally developed while remaining in its historical roots. Furthermore, it is negatively affected by debates within the Church of England today. I propose that this emergent missiology is purposefully cleared of theological noise to be developed in relation to the wealth held within the Anglo-Catholic tradition, so it can be concretely and purposefully offered to the wider Church of England today. Such theological development would give the practice of the participant-priests credibility when in discourse with other missiological practices.

Priestly representational presence while presiding at the Eucharist was important to all the participant-priests. This was exemplified in their responses to the COVID-19 social distancing measures of Spring 2020. Although all of them held this representational presence as essential practice, it did not have the same impact on all their missional practice within their parish. As established in Chapter 4, a marked disparity was apparent between the priests' abstract theology of parish

mission and their concrete reports of and reflections on their practice. Although all the participant-priests emphasised presence, how the priests acted on that shared conviction differed, with some relying on their clerical wear signifying their representational presence and others being more active in their presence by contributing to local conversations for social change. All the priests spoke of presence to varying degrees, which I have characterised as a cumulative spectrum of presence; however, few of them offered any critical engagement with the subject. Some of the priests considered the power dynamics of their presence, while others considered their presence as requiring frequency and regularity, but none spoke about the qualities of different kinds of presence. It is in this direction of thought that I propose that the participant-priests, and those sharing their missiology of representational presence, focus their development of representational presence – asking what it means to be present and what it means to represent Christ to others. Drawing from the writings of Farrer, as introduced in Chapter 4, and Ratzinger on the priesthood, the participant-priests can develop their theological engagement with the shared concept of representational presence.

In addition to developing a theological basis for the missiological practice of representational presence, the participant-priests would benefit from having purposeful conversations about concrete theology. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated the dissonance within the group's articulations about parish mission in abstract terms and their reported practice when speaking about concrete examples. This is not a disintegration between theology and practice within the individual priests but a dissonance between the group's use of the language of presence. All of the participant-priests spoke of representational presence as essential to their understanding of parish mission, but not all of them exercised this through active practice. If the current conversations between the participant-priests are predominantly about missiology in abstract terms, this dissonance may not be obvious. Conversations purposefully discussing missional practice in concrete terms, naming actual practice rather than examples of ideal practice, would help identify this dissonance. Such identification can allow priests whose practice of

representational presence is passive to rediscover missional potential. In turn, this would create an opportunity for formation for such priests and potentially lead to the growth of community in their parishes.

The scope of this research was a specific group of priests under the Bishop of Fulham. This thesis's findings and these proposals relate to the data gathered from these priests. However, it may be that the findings have a level of transferability to a wider group, namely, other priests under the Bishop of Fulham or, more broadly, other priests in The Society. If the data from the participant-priests are indicative of a wider trend in these two broader groups, then this and other proposals can be applied to those groups. For example, the Bishop of Fulham, or other bishops in The Society, may consider fostering conversations about concrete missional practice to identify and support priests with a passive understanding of representational presence. Crucially, such conversations may have the potential to divide the group, so it is understandable if the bishops in The Society feel apprehensive. However, with the consideration of methods, this risk can be reduced. The use of a pastoral reflective cycle, such as Osmer's hermeneutical cycle,[472] could aid such discussions, with the process raising questions of practice and theology rather than the bishops themselves. Accountability in conversations at events hosted by The Society and SSC chapter meetings would allow the identification of priests whose practice is not an active, representational presence.

As established in Chapter 4, it was only through careful listening to the participant-priests' articulations about parish mission and their reported practice that the discrepancy between the group's shared missiology and concrete practice became apparent. I hope that the participant-priests will hear this observation and reflect upon an incoherence that they may not have noticed before. The identification of priests whose practice of representational presence is passive should allow leaders within The Society, such as the bishops and their mission advisors, to educate and encourage such priests to espouse a more active missional practice. A reason that leaders associated with the participant-priests may not want to take on this

---

[472] Osmer, '*Practical Theology*'.

proposal is that it invites potential division within the group; while this may indeed be the case, such risk can be mitigated through effective pastoral care, where conversations are about professional development rather than judgement.

b) Representational presence to be considered by the Church of England

Robin Ward, principal of St Stephen's House, Oxford, writes how Catholics often feel as though they are the flamingos in the zoo that is the Church of England. He describes how they are considered to be:

> picturesque, attractive to some of the visitors who like that sort of thing, probably worth some care and attention to conserve. But no one would want a whole zoo of flamingos, and if by some unfortunate accident – no doubt brought on by their rather needy attitudes – they could probably be replaced just as well with some more penguins.[473]

I would suggest that although the liturgical practice of the participant-priests may be considered flamingo-esque, they are more often considered missiological tortoises. Their 'old fashioned'[474] approach to mission, harking back to times past, places these missiological tortoises in stark contrast to the evangelical gazelles, bounding forwards into the new. While it may be that the missiological practice of the participant-priests draws on a historical pattern of priestly presence rooted in the Eucharist to form community, such practice is a gift to the Church today and ought to be viewed and received as such. I propose that the missiological approach demonstrated in the reported practice of the participant-priests should be considered by the wider Church of England in its missiology. This approach of representational presence engages the Church's understanding of priests as representing Christ, both in the Eucharist liturgy and other encounters with missiology. Within the academic practice of theology, there is a tendency towards siloed thinking: the Academy's modular division and teaching of theology in

---

[473] Matthews and Ward, '*Reflections on Vocation and Mission*'. 77.
[474] P101

206

separate disciplines can lead to inadequate interdisciplinary dialogue and synthesis. I propose that the Church of England should welcome a theology of priestly representational presence as a missiology in conversation with its sacramental understanding of priesthood.

As I have established, such a missiology of representational presence is compatible with the Church of England's missiological approach, as articulated in *Mission-Shaped Church*. Indeed, the missiological approach of representational presence would aid conversations about *Mission-Shaped Church* and the Church of England's strapline, 'A Christian presence in every community.'[475] The question of how priests play their specific part in this vision is a valuable discussion for the Church of England to have. Such a conversation could take place in multiple forums. First, in the Academy: academic theologians could explore this link between sacramental theology and missiology to equip the Church in her missional actions. Second, such considerations of representational presence could take place in missional conversations at the national and diocesan levels, particularly when conducting training events and conferences about mission. Many of the dominant voices when discussing mission are from the Evangelical tradition; this is particularly the case when church planting is the topic of discussion. While this is not always the case, and efforts are being made from initiatives such as the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication[476] to include a diverse range of voices in their discussion of church planting, there is still work to be done to increase the representation of this project's participant-priests.

A by-product of the inclusion of representational presence in missional conversations within the Church of England would be an increase in the amount of funding spent in parishes or non-parochial communities whose priests exercise such an approach. Such affirmation by way of increased financial support correlates with the proposal below regarding their Church of England's welcome to this project's participant-priests and their peers. An example of this is in Fr

---

[475]'The Church of England Website', accessed 5 March 2021, https://www.churchofengland.org/.

[476] 'The Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication', accessed 12 January 2021, https://ccx.org.uk/.

John's belief that the financial resources of the Church of England 'are being put somewhere else.'[477] The possible problems to be anticipated with this proposal are twofold: first, that such inclusion may be disruptive, and second, that the missional approach of representational presence has not been fully developed enough to contribute to a wider discussion. The inclusion of an additional missiological approach will likely be disruptive, as it will cause individuals to have to share their platform with another perspective different to their own. While this is not necessarily problematic, it may exacerbate existing negative dynamics. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider how the missiology of the participant-priests could be received in the least antagonistic manner; however, it is necessary to raise the possibility of conflict here.

5.2 Isolation as a false narrative with real effects

The participant-priests all spoke of isolation in their experiences as priests in The Society. However, as I have shown, when digging down into the details of their articulation, their experience of isolation is not straightforward. Their perception of isolation at a local level is best seen in their view of deaneries as hostile places for clergy in The Society. However, as I have demonstrated, their experiences in their current deaneries do not tally with their narrative of hostility. Indeed, some of the participant-priests spoke of friendships with female clergy and clergy of other traditions in their deaneries. In addition to the view of deaneries as hostile places, the participant-priests share a belief that their group is marginalised within the Church of England at both the diocesan and national levels, with the missional 'energy'[478] being located in the Evangelical tradition. However, their pointing to a lack of investment in initiatives associated with The Society does not hold water in supporting such a belief. As I have shown, at least four projects are affiliated with The Society that have received SDF or Church Commissioner funding. Considering the fact that parishes in The Society make up just 3% of the Church of England's

---

[477] P102
[478] P105

parishes, I do not think that this constitutes a strong argument for isolation. Others may point to the recent recruitment of non-stipendiary positions for parishes affiliated with The Society as evidence for marginalisation. The Church of England does not collect statistics based on parish tradition, so ascertaining the distribution of financial resources based on this category is challenging. I have also considered the participant-priests' practice of reading marginalisation into Anglo-Catholic history as a contributor to a misplaced narrative of isolation. As I demonstrated in Chapter 1, Yates's revisionist reading of the early Oxford Movement and their Tractarian successors questions the narrative of isolation perpetuated by Ollard's 1915 study.[479]

Despite the nuance and, at times, incoherence in their experience of isolation, the narrative experienced by the participant-priests, however misplaced, is real and must be taken seriously, not least due to the negative effects it has on priestly missional practice. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 4, the narrative of isolation has a detrimental effect on some of the participant-priests' practice of representational presence. Those negatively affected resist an active approach to representational presence in reaction to the perception perpetuated by John Milbank[480] that the Church of England's current missional strategy has succumbed to capitalist principles. In addition, such a narrative reduces the group's confidence in its missional practice. It cannot be positive for a group, however small; however much the majority disagree with them, to conduct their ministry under a cloud of marginalisation.

I consider there to be two significant effects of such a narrative of isolation. The first is in the participant-priests' ability to gift their missional approach of representational presence to the wider Church of England. It is little surprise that the participant-priests have not offered a coherent missiology of representational presence when they do not feel valued and, therefore, encouraged to share their approach. If the participant-priests felt as though their practice was valued by the

---

[479] Yates, '*Anglican Ritualism*,' 8.
[480] Milbank, *'Stale Expressions,'*

wider Church of England, they may feel more confident in developing and offering their missiology as a contribution to the wider Church. As such, the participant-priests' narrative of isolation has a negative effect on their ability to gift their missional practice. Second, the participant-priests' narrative of isolation has a negative effect on their ability to collaborate with other non-Society priests at a local level. Here, the mistaken negative view of deaneries as hostile places for priests in The Society suggests that the participant-priests would be less inclined to collaborate than their non-Society neighbours. While this would vary depending on the priest's character, it is understandable that the participant-priests would feel defensive when first entering the perceived unsafe space of the local deanery. Although, as the data show, this negative preconception can be dispelled over time through positive interactions, the time taken to do so is problematic. Moreover, the defensive position of the participant-priests upon entering the sphere of the deanery impedes their ability or willingness to collaborate on local missional initiatives. In this way, the participant-priests' narrative of isolation has a negative effect on their engagement with local deanery missional activities, and the Church of England ought to take these negative effects on local ministry seriously.

All that being said, the fact that such a narrative of isolation serves the need of The Society to remain a unified group cannot be ignored. As Sani and Reicher identify, The Society is a schismatic group within the Church of England.[481] What causes schism is the lack of consensus with the wider group.[482] It then follows that what is required for The Society, like any schismatic group, to retain the group identity required to survive is consensus. Although the participant-priests for this project displayed very similar theological convictions and liturgical preferences, had this project had a larger pool, some of the diversity within The Society would likely have been more apparent. Priests within The Society are not a homogenous group; they do not all look for authority in the same place, and they do not all have the same liturgical convictions. What holds them together is their conviction on the ordination of women, although theological rationales for this belief. I argue that in

---

[481] Sani and Reicher, '*Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups*,'
[482] Sani and Reicher, '*Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups*,' 96.

addition to their views on the ordination of women, their shared sense of isolation is a significant adhesive holding together an otherwise diverse group. The narrative of isolation, with the aforementioned negative effects on mission, is perpetuated by both The Society and the wider Church of England. I now address these two sources of perpetuation in turn, starting with The Society.

The Society's Council of Bishops may not be fully cognisant of the fact, but I argue that The Society allows this narrative of isolation to be perpetuated because it serves a purpose of contributing to the group's identity. This is not to say that a narrative is deliberately cultivated by the Council of Bishops. Nonetheless, this emergent narrative of isolation does serve a purpose for an otherwise diverse group. The cohesive effect of such an emergent narrative does not motivate the Council of Bishops to deconstruct the narrative. However, I argue that they ought to deconstruct this narrative, as it has negative effects on their priests' missional activity.

This narrative of isolation is perpetuated in two ways: at the fraternal gatherings of priests in The Society and through the structural mess that is AEO, which enables The Society to continue as a siloed group within the Church of England. Aside from personal friendships, priests in The Society gather in two ways: at events such as Chrism Mass or congresses and at SSC chapter meetings. I hold that these two kinds of gatherings are the locations of discussions that perpetuate the group's narrative of isolation. Of course, the Council of Bishops has no control over what is discussed at the pub after an event, nor should they seek to limit free discussions at SSC chapter meetings; they can, however, set the tone in their interactions with their fellow priests and use their position of authority to direct them.

As I have demonstrated, a stark incoherence is evident between the participant-priests' consideration of deaneries as hostile places for priests in The Society and their current positive experiences. Consideration must be given to the effect of confirmation bias on the participant-priests. The participant-priests reiterated an existing hypothesis that Anglo-Catholics are historically marginalised within the Church of England and that priests in The Society are isolated at a local level, with

relationships being difficult to form because of their convictions on the ordination of women, in addition to a broader marginalisation caused by the prominent theology of the Church of England being heavily influenced by Evangelicals and, as such, being incompatible with a sacramental, Anglo-Catholic approach.

Such confirmation bias can be seen in how otherwise insignificant actions of other clergy within a deanery are interpreted by the participant-priests, as well as (and most importantly for my current argument) in how conversations about marginalisation at SSC chapter meetings and The Society's gatherings are interpreted. I argue that where priests speak about marginalisation in abstract terms, not taking care to consider the narrative of isolation in relation to their own lived experience, one priest's isolated negative encounter at his or her local deanery becomes a corporate encounter and affirms the group's sense of marginalisation. Although I have not attended such gatherings, I have witnessed this in a parallel circumstance: I have seen a female curate share a negative example of being on placement at a parish affiliated with The Society. As she shared her experience and gave details of how hurt she was by the incumbent's words, the wider group of ordained women listened, and the story became a part of their shared identity of being ordained and female in the Church of England. One woman's negative experience thus adds to a narrative that priests in The Society are misogynistic and simply dislike women. In response, many of this project's participant-priests will likely regret this curate's experience and seek to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates 'great respect and great charity'.[483]

It is frustrating when the sharing of one interaction paints the whole group with the same brush. In a similar vein, one priest's hostile deanery does not make all deaneries hostile places for priests in The Society. The effect of confirmation bias in the participant-priests' narrative of isolation suggests that a concerted effort ought to be made to focus conversations on priests' concrete experiences at the deanery level rather than second-hand experiences or abstract ideas of

---

[483] P105

marginalisation. Of course, such a focus on the priests' concrete experiences needs to be balanced with allowing spaces in which the priests feel it is safe to share both their positive and negative experiences. This is a particular consideration for SSC chapter meetings, which were valued by the majority of the participant-priests as 'a chance to relax'.[484] It is important for such spaces to remain a place of confidential honesty, but the group would nonetheless benefit from increased accountability for discussions based on personal experience rather than third-hand experience.

If The Society's Council of Bishops are serious about stepping out of the narrative of isolation and into a new confident positioning within the Church of England, thereby enabling the ecclesial group to be fully missionally engaged, they must take responsibility for setting a new tone. It is for the bishops to consider how it would be most suitable for them to affect such change. Nevertheless, I would go as far as suggesting frank and open discussions of this thesis's findings, with honest reflections on the recent concrete experiences of parish priests. If this project's participant-priests are representative, a clear incoherence between the narrative of isolation and the priests' experience will emerge, opening avenues for development. In addition, the Council of Bishops ought to encourage direct conversations about specific examples, rather than examples that are second-hand or that occurred many years ago. I argue that focusing conversations at gatherings of priests in The Society on first-hand, recent experiences would contribute to reducing the effect of a narrative of isolation on the wider group.

All this being said, it is not correct to lay the responsibility for perpetuating the narrative of isolation solely at the feet of The Society; the wider Church of England is also complicit. The Church's keenness to consecrate women as bishops led to a rushed attempt to appease those who were adamantly against the decision. In the context of Resolutions A and B in *The Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993*, which WATCH described as having 'encouraged division, bitterness and

---

[484] P113

isolation',[485] four options were considered by the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate: a code of practice similar to the Scottish Episcopal Church's Statement of Intent; extended or AEO within the existing diocesan or provincial structures; a third province; or restrictions on the exercise of the episcopal office by women.[486] The understandable impatience of those campaigning for women in the episcopate led to the second option being chosen under the duress of time. This is not to say that the decision to consecrate women as bishops happened overnight, as the first Synod vote did not pass, and there was a period of reflection before the second, successful vote. However, the pressure continued to pass the legislation promptly, leading to the flawed 'solution' of AEO.

While this is not necessarily the case, in practice, AEO is self-selecting, and this presents unexpected challenges not foreseen when the decision was initially made. Two neighbouring parishes seeking AEO, one Conservative Evangelical and the other Traditionalist Catholic, will find themselves with different bishops: the Bishop of Maidstone offering oversight to the Evangelical parish and, say, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet offering oversight to the Anglo-Catholic parish. This makes the system of AEO an anomaly in two ways: first, the obvious way in that parishes have episcopal oversight from someone other than their diocesan bishop, and second, and most importantly for my argument, it allows dissenting priests to have a bishop from their own tradition. As such, the self-selecting nature of the Church of England's current arrangement of AEO is problematic for three reasons: it lacks ecclesiological coherence, it fails to adhere to the Five Guiding Principles and it perpetuates the narrative of isolation. I now address each of these in turn.

The current arrangement of AEO undermines the fundamental ecclesiological concept of bishops as a point of unity. As Michael Ramsey writes:

> for the Bishop does not have a greatness of his own, he is the organ of the
> one Body who represents to the Christians their dependence within the

---

[485] P212

[486] Church of England, ed., *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*, GS / Church of England, General Synod 1557 (London: Church House Publ, 2004). 209-227.

Body, and to the local Church its dependence within the historic family whose worship is one act.[487]

Bishops are a point of unity. They communicate both the corporate and historical nature of the Church. The need for AEO is an indication of the brokenness of the Church, which will one day be perfected by her Bridegroom. The fulness of bishops being a point of unity is undermined by any arrangement of AEO, but the current arrangement undermines it further by allowing two groups within the Church of England to self-select their bishops. The rest of the Church of England has no choice about the tradition of their bishop; they must submit to them as their 'Father in God', despite being from potentially different perspectives within the Church of England. I believe that there is a strength to this. It demonstrates the diversity of the Church of England and the necessity for priests to work alongside individuals from outside of their tradition for the good of the wider Church and nation. Bishops are a sign of unity in a Church that is diverse. This fundamental ecclesiological concept has been undermined by the current arrangement for AEO.

Furthermore, I argue that the current arrangement does not maintain 'the highest possible degree of communion'[488] and propose that having one system of AEO in which both traditionalist Anglo-Catholics and conservative evangelicals share a bishop, Chrism Eucharist services and ordinations would be in the spirit of the Church of England's Five Guiding Principles. The Church of England has come to understand that full communion among these disparate groups is no longer possible, but seeks to maintain communion to the 'highest possible degree'. The dual segregation of ordinations between those ordained by diocesan bishops and those ordained by bishops offering AEO, in addition to the division between those ordained by a traditionalist Anglo-Catholic bishop and a conservative evangelical bishop, is not a satisfactory situation. By allowing The Society to conduct their own ordinations in a significantly different liturgical style to other ordinations, I argue that the Church of England is not maintaining 'the highest possible degree of

---

[487] Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 80.
[488] The Faith and Order Commission, Five Guiding Principles: A Resource for Study, (Church House Publishing, 2018).

communion'. Instead, the current arrangement encourages a siloed mentality, which bolsters a narrative of isolation that, as shown above, has detrimental effects on local missional practice. A sharing of AEO among conversative evangelicals and traditionalist Anglo-Catholics would, by not segmenting the Church of England further, represent a step towards a higher degree of communion.

In addition to not adhering to the Five Guiding Principles, the current arrangement of AEO limits the proximity required for a relationship. This project's data suggest that one way to improve the experience of the participant-priests is through proximity. The proximity provided by local deaneries offers an example of how regular interactions across theological divides offer opportunities for unlikely friendships. Although it did not completely solve the problem of isolation and feelings of marginalisation, it did reduce the isolation experienced by the participant-priests. The 'proximity effect' is a term in social psychology that describes the effect of close proximity leading to relationships. Physical and psychological closeness leads to increased interpersonal liking.[489] Within the Church of England, such proximity can occur through established structures, such as ordination training pathways and the deanery chapter. Indeed, these were the two locations of the friendships that the participant-priests had with ordained women. The Church of England ought to consider how additional opportunities for proximity could be created to reduce the isolation experienced by the participant-priests. A significant way to achieve this is to reform the current model of AEO.

It will be clear to anyone familiar with the people and structures involved that such a suggestion would not be acceptable to The Society's Council of Bishops. The current arrangement offers too high a level of comfort to be rejected. I am under no false view that conservative Evangelicals would be in favour of such a move, either. The difference between the Real Presence-believing Anglo-Catholics and the near-Zwinglian Conservative Evangelicals is no small gulf. Indeed, even their

---

[489] Jamie A Gruman, Frank W Schneider, and Larry M Coutts, *Applied Social Psychology: Understanding and Addressing Social and Practical Problems*, 2017.

reasons for opposing the consecration of women as bishops differ. However, such a critique assumes a homogeneity of belief among priests in The Society. As I established in Chapter 1, while there is a shared Anglo-Catholic heritage, the theological convictions for opposing the ordination of women are varied. Some consider it an ecumenical matter that detrimentally affects the Anglican Church's relationships with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, while others relate it to the Church of England being unable to make such a decision without broad consensus. Others consider the sexes to have specific roles, the priesthood being a male-only role. Not all priests in The Society hold all three positions. The Church of England already exemplifies theological diversity under the unity of one bishop. Why should this small group of conservative Evangelical and traditionalist Anglo-Catholic parishes, just shy of 500, not enjoy the challenge of having a bishop from another tradition challenge and strengthen their ministry? I propose that all parishes seeking AEO should be allocated a bishop offering AEO based on their geographical location, not their tradition. In addition to more fully engaging with an ecclesiology of the episcopacy as a point of unity and taking a step towards 'the highest possible degree of communion', such a change would reduce the siloed experience of priests in The Society. In turn, this would reduce the lack of proximity perpetuated by the current arrangement, address the narrative of isolation and marginalisation of the wider group and hopefully improve their missional engagement at a local level.

Some may critique this proposal, arguing that it intends to assimilate those in The Society into a Church of England that holds a view of the ordinations of women that is at odds with their theological convictions. That is neither the intention nor indeed the expected result. Rather, such a change in the AEO structure would remove one barrier to communion, while allowing the distinct theological convictions of the group to remain. The Society would remain, but its associated priests would not have purchase over their bishops, as the current situation allows. Many groups within the Church of England retain their distinctiveness despite being under the episcopal oversight of bishops with whom they differ. Many

groups achieve this by forming networks, for example, New Wine,[490] HTB,[491] Affirming Catholicism[492] and HeartEdge.[493] Indeed, this was the practice of Anglo-Catholics prior to the formation of the AEO arrangement. One notable historical example is the congresses of the interwar period.

As I have shown, the narrative of isolation located in this project's data has detrimental effects on the participant-priests' missional activity. Although it is a false narrative, it has real effects. It affects the missional practice of parish priests within The Society, but it also affects ordained women. It would be remiss of me not to mention the experience of women who interact with priests in The Society. Gabrielle Thomas's excellent work on this identifies 'mutual flourishing' as a 'live wound', not just for the Church of England as a structure, but for many ordained women.[494] Although, in her research, there were women with excellent experiences of priests in The Society, there were also troubling, painful encounters at theological colleges and at the deanery level. It is beyond the scope of this research to fully engage with Thomas's work as a complementary data set, but it does highlight the real effect of church legislation and culture on individual priests, as well as a shared observation of isolation, with one of her participants saying, 'we are all in our little separate groups, and it's far too easy to avoid one another.'[495]

5.3 A change is taking place

This thesis is especially pertinent in light of recent developments. The contributing factors of the juxtaposition of isolation experienced by the participant-priests, as established in Chapter 1, are easing from both directions. First, the heat around the general narrative of isolation of those in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and

---

[490] 'New Wine'.
[491] 'HTB Network Churches', accessed 12 July 2021, www.htb.org/network.
[492] 'Affirming Catholicism', accessed 12 July 2021, www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk.
[493] 'HeartEdge', accessed 12 July 2021, www.heartedge.org.
[494] Gabrielle Thomas, *For The Good Of The Church: Women, Theology, and Ecumenical Practice.* (SCM Press, 2021). 140.
[495] Thomas, '*For The Good Of The Church*,' 145.

currently focused on them being marginalised by the Church of England's favour of evangelical missional practice is cooling. *Mission-Shaped Church* is over 17 years old, with much discourse and practice associated with it already published. Fresh Expressions are more integrated into the parish structure, and non-parochial churches can exhibit similar principles to parish churches.[496] After years of being divided by the ordination of women, Anglo-Catholics are seeking to form a shared constructive voice contributing to the Church of England's conversation about mission. The wider Anglo-Catholic movement is engaging more fully with the Church of England's missional conversation, and The Society benefits from this, with individuals within The Society such as Bishop Philip North, Luke Millar and Damien Feeney vocal in such discussions. Second, the narrative of isolation specific to priests in The Society caused by the Church of England's failure to achieve further communion with the Roman Catholic Church and its decision to ordain women as priests is also showing signs of diminishing. Time has passed since the Synod decision to ordain women, and healing is starting to occur. While examples remain, as highlighted by Thomas's research and the Philip North affair, of the ambiguity of 'mutual flourishing' leading to pain, there are also signs of positive progress.

London Diocese's successful transition from the traditionalist Bishop Richard Chartres to Sarah Mullally demonstrates the effectiveness of the London Plan. In addition, traditionalist bishops continue to be consecrated to serve as suffragan bishops.[497] It has been six years since women entered the episcopate, and some of this project's participant-priests were still in primary school when women entered the priesthood. It is these younger priests who offer a sign of an emerging energy from within The Society. This new, younger breed of priest, while still existing within a narrative of isolation, did not personally experience the bereavement of the 1994 decision to ordain women and therefore do not carry the personal wounds associated with it. Rather, they offer a sign of life within this fragment of

---

[496] *Foulger, 'Present in Every Place: The Church of England and the Parish Principle'.*
[497] 'The Bishop of Lewes', accessed 12 July 2021, www.chichester.anglican.org/the-bishop-of-lewes.

the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Their missional vision for themselves as parish priests, their congregations, and the social welfare of their wider parish is a new source of energy for The Society.

The younger priests have both a more active missiological understanding and greater engagement with female clergy. The difference between the two cohorts of priests participating in this research should not be overstated due to the small size of the data set; however, a distinction between older and younger clergy was observable. Although the older priests used the same language of presence, their restricted practice on the cumulative scale of presence suggests a lack of missional vision for their congregations and parishes. Such practice contrasts with that of the younger priests, which stretched more fully along the length of the cumulative scale of presence. More specifically, they had a vision of their role as parish priests and their congregation's role in transforming their parish. This vision led to focused Lent courses seeking to enable their congregations to articulate their faith more clearly in their day-to-day lives, in addition to the priests' presence in local conversations about social action. Supposing that these younger priests can be persuaded to consider their missiology of representational presence beyond the parish, their participation in the future of the Church of England's missional conversation seems not only possible but essential. In addition to their active missional vision, these younger priests demonstrate a way of existing within a Church of England that affirms women's ordination that is closer to the hoped-for 'flourishing'.

What marks these younger priests out is their experience of training. First, there has been a marked increase in the teaching of missiology within ordination training since the 1960s and 1970s. Second, and more pertinently for my point, the younger priests all trained alongside female ordinands. Indeed, as I have demonstrated, many of them have good friendships with female priests. Although some of the older priests had friendships with female clergy, this originated at the deanery level rather than at the training stage. Such proximity at the training level is fundamental to the future of the Church of England. It has formed a generation of priests in The Society who, while maintaining a traditionalist position, lean into the

Church of England as it is, a Church that ordains women. In doing so, they participate in the forging of a future for a movement that some would like to disappear.

While holding that it is right that the group be held within the Church of England, Martyn Percy argues that both The Society and conservative Evangelicals 'should remain in their partially sealed-off wings'.[498] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer an analysis of the Church of England's decision to offer AEO to those unable to accept women in the Episcopate. As I have already made clear, its existence is a sign of the brokenness of the Church. However, I would argue that Percy's consistent emphasis on choice in his critique of The Society is misguided. He states that it is a choice for them to hold such a view: that it is a choice to act on the basis of their conviction that the Church of England should not or cannot ordain women as priests, despite the pain such action causes. However, it is wrong for Percy to suggest that the priests have a choice in their convictions. They have no more of a choice than in other examples of theological conviction. To believe that Jesus rose from the dead is a choice. Belief in it opens some doors and closes others. It is wisdom to some and folly to others. Considering the participant-priests' views as convictions rather than choices allows more space for the possibility of positive relationships. For some of the participant-priests, it may be a choice – they may indeed be misogynistic – but I, as a female minister, choose to believe them when they state that it is not a choice.

Percy and others may dismiss this naive Pollyanna approach, considering it as yet another example of female clergy having to make concessions, but I refute this for two reasons. First, believing the best in the other is not to be dismissed. Indeed, an ability to do so demonstrates the Christian value of compassion, the absence of which is immoral. Percy's cynicism is evident in his critiques, and I understand it, but I imagine a Church where we believe each other and err towards compassion rather than judgement. Second, to dismiss the convictions of this project's participant-priests as a choice is to ignore the negative effects that holding such a

---

[498] Percy, 'MP: Essay on "Discrimination", April 2017'. 34.

belief in the context of a narrative of isolation has on the group's missional practice – in short, it has not made their lives any easier. One thesis does not change this, but the examples of positive relationships in both my research and Thomas's demonstrate the importance of individuals choosing proximity and believing what the other says.

The signs of life among the younger participant-priests bodes well for The Society and the Church of England more widely. However, such hope is still set within a context of isolation, which requires dismantling by both The Society and the wider Church of England to allow the group to engage with God's mission more fully at both the deanery and national levels. The participant-priests have a missional practice in representational presence that speaks to the weaknesses of *Mission-Shaped Church*. If they could more fully articulate its theology, this missiology may be a gift from within the Anglo-Catholic tradition to the wider Church of England.

5.4 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I have sought to take a normative turn, factoring the data and analysis found in the previous two chapters into the historical and cultural contexts established in Chapter 1. Over the course of this research, two significant findings emerged. First, the participant-priests have a missiology of priestly representational presence, best articulated as a cumulative scale of presence. Second, the participant-priests operate within a narrative of marginalisation. This is rooted in a reading of the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement. However, this narrative is inaccurate. Nonetheless, it has detrimental effects on the participant-priests' missiological practice as parish priests.

In this concluding chapter, I have outlined three key observations from this research, with corresponding tasks proposed for the wider Church of England and The Society:

I. *Mission-Shaped Church* is flawed, as it lacks any significant engagement with Eucharistic theology. Therefore, the participant-priests' missiology of

representational presence, due to its engagement with Eucharistic theology, is a gift to the conversation around *Mission-Shaped Church*.

a. The Society ought to develop a missiology of representational presence.

b. The Church of England ought to integrate this developed missiology into its broader missiology as located in *Mission-Shaped Church*.

II. The participant-priests' narrative of isolation is false and self-serving.

a. The Society's bishops ought to establish a culture of only using concrete, first-hand and recent examples of marginalisation.

b. The Church of England ought to adjust the current model of Alternative Episcopal Oversight to allow for an increased level of communion.

III. There are signs of life among this project's participant-priests.

a. If both The Society and the Church of England attend to the above proposals, this will encourage these signs of life, thereby benefitting the wider Church of England.

b. Proximity, as opposed to isolation, ought to be given a high value for how the Church of England reckons with differing theological convictions.

This thesis opens the door for the exploration of further questions to clarify some of the claims made and to pursue some of the avenues identified. Although this thesis's claims around the narrative of isolation experienced by the participant-priests are weakened by the small data set caused by COVID-19 social distancing restrictions disrupting the project's research phase, as previously established, this narrative was shared by all the participant-priests. The negative effect that this narrative has on their missional practice, often limiting their engagement at the deanery level, suggests that this would be a fruitful area for further research as a means of identifying approaches to increase their engagement with local missional projects. Further study would also allow increased consideration of how priests in The Society interact with those outside of their ecclesial group. The potential for a TAR project within a deanery with both priests in The Society and other non-

affiliated priests would offer scope for honest and theological reflection and action to positively impact all parties involved. The interaction between this and Gabrielle Thomas's work would be another verdant avenue of research and would address this 'live wound' in the Church.[499]

A natural next step from this thesis would be to explore the representation of presence as a missiological approach among a larger data set of priests in The Society. Indeed, considering the literature referencing presence within the wider community of Anglo-Catholic priests, a further project could identify whether such a missiological approach is practised within the wider tradition. Analysis of this wider group could, in turn, assist with the theological development of the missiological approach of representational presence to enable its gift to the wider Church of England. Indeed, this has been my posture as a researcher seeking to locate what gift this oft-maligned group of priests may have to offer the wider Church of England.

The posture of Receptive Ecumenism has been an important one for this piece of research. The idea that traditional Catholics in the Church of England have something to offer the wider Church of England has often led to bemused responses at best and disdainful comments at worst. When I commenced this research, I was unsure what I would find or whether there would be a gift at the end of it. Nevertheless, through spending time worshipping with and hearing from the participant-priests, and then poring over the transcripts of each interview, a gift emerged: the gift of representational presence. At first, I felt underwhelmed by the simplicity of the offering, but as I continued in the practice of critical faithfulness, the depth and breadth of the application brought me hope. Representational presence represents such a gift – it has the potential to offer practical wisdom of such missiological practice in parish life. Stories of clerical collar encounters, school staff room encouragements, and positively impacting parish residents through local conversations. What the cumulative scale of

---

[499] Thomas, '"Mutual Flourishing" in the Church of England: Learning Receptively from Saint Thomas Aquinas.' 302–32.

presence does is create a paradigm for all these priestly activities to be viewed with reference to priestly presence at the Eucharist. Viewing the priestly activity of representative presence as located within a cumulative scale of presence, with its source and summit being the Eucharist, is a gift to the wider Church of England. This gift invites the wider Church to expand its theological imagination. Representational presence presents a proactive missional practice that, while rooted in the parish, integrates the Church's central act of celebrating the Eucharist into its wider life. A weakness of the *Mission-Shaped Church* report is its lack of missiological engagement with the Eucharist. Given its role as such a formative report in the recent history of the Church of England, the risk is that it has set the tone for missiological discourse to be divorced from the Church's sacramental life. The gift of representational presence is a remedy to such a divorce. It offers to bring the practice of parish mission into William's sacramental universe.[500] This truly infuses the eucharistic possibility of Christ's presence in the smallest acts of priestly presence. This is a gift to the wider Church of England – if they choose to take off their shoes to see it.

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
> The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.[501]

---

[500] William Temple, Christus Veritas: An Essay, Macmillan, London, 1949
[501] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh VII*. 821-4 (London: Penguin, 1995), 232.

APPENDIX 1. RESEARCHER-DRIVEN DIARY

Please complete this diary for each day of a 'typical' week. Submit it to the researcher at least two weeks prior to your interview.
Email to: katharine.v.stock@durham.ac.uk
Please ensure the anonymity of any third parties when recording interactions with parishioners etc.
If you have any questions, please contact Katie Stock.

Date	Activities	Reflection
(Example) *10th September 2019*	*(Example)* *Morning Prayer* *Preparation for morning Eucharist Service* *Homily preparation* *Pastoral Meeting* *Picked daughter from school and took to swimming* *Evening Prayer* *Walk the dog* *Reading*	*(Example)* *Smaller number at morning Eucharist than usual – will pop by one of the regulars who was absent. She will appreciate having a home Eucharist this week.* *Homily encouraging congregation to pray for their friends and colleagues. I'm hoping this will encourage them to consider how their faith is situated outside of the church service.* *Spoke with parents at school gate, one would like new baby baptised. This adds to the number of possible baptisms this autumn. I am going to try a group baptism preparation session to help the parents get to know each other.*

		Reading Fulton Sheen's Life is Worth Living. I might hand it on to my church warden when I'm finished.

APPENDIX TWO – LETTERS TO PARTICIPANT-PRIESTS

<div align="right">
20 Gaynesford Road
Forest Hill
London
SE23 2UQ

28th February 2020
</div>

Dear Fr _____,

I am writing to ask if you would be so kind as to participate in my doctoral research project. As a doctoral student at the University of Durham, I am commencing research into the self-understanding of priests of The Society. As part of this research I am conducting a series of interviews with priests within the Fulham episcopal area.

I hope to join you for a midweek Mass and then conduct an hour-long interview. Before that meeting I would appreciate you filling out a very brief diary of a 'typical' week in your parish ministry. This diary will be the basis of many of the interview questions.

Please find enclosed a letter from Bishop Jonathan commending this research to you. Our hope is that the findings will enable a better conversation within the Church of England regarding The Society's distinctively catholic approach to the role of the parish priest.

I hope that you can find time to meet with me over the next few weeks. My email is katharine.v.stock@durham.ac.uk. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Katie Stock

The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker
Bishop of Fulham
5 St Andrew Street
London   EC4A 3AF

Tel: 020 7932 1130
bishop.fulham@london.anglican.org
www.london.anglican.org

DIOCESE OF
LONDON
THE BISHOP OF FULHAM

7th November 2019

Dear Father

I write to commend to you a research project being undertaken by Katie Stock, in the hope that you might be able to assist her with her research.

Katie is a doctoral student at the University of Durham. She is researching the self-understanding of priests of The Society. Katie is hoping to conduct a series of interviews with priests within the Fulham episcopal area. Her research will hopefully enable better conversations within the Church of England about The Society's distinctively catholic approach to the role of the parish priest.

Katie would like to join you for a midweek Mass and then conduct an hour-long interview. Prior to meeting she will ask you to complete a brief diary of a 'typical' week in your parish life. If at all possible, I would ask you to find time to meet with Katie and assist with her research.

I have met Katie and discussed her project with her, which I believe is entirely reputable and trustworthy. You will enjoy meeting her I am sure if you are willing to assist.

Katie came to part of the recent mini Lay Congress at St Alban's, Holborn, so she has something of the flavour of who we are!

With every blessing

+Jonathan Fulham.

APPENDIX THREE – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

This interview transcript with participant priest 113 has been redacted to maintain their anonymity.

K: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. To be clear, if you say something and sort of wish you'd re-phrased it, let me know. And, if tomorrow morning you wake up and think 'actually I wish I'd kind of nuanced that a bit' then let me know and I can change the transcript.[502] So, I'm not here to catch you out. It's just to find out what you think. How does that sound?

P113:   Fine.

K: Well, the first question is: what do the words 'parish mission' mean to you?

P113:   Well I think two things. Firstly, there is the mission to the people that are in the parish church, so the regular worshippers. And then more importantly with them, the mission to those outside. So those that live in the parish and here we have a community of just under 15,000. Slightly more than half of which are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh. So there is quiet an area of other religions and religious activity going on. In this parish, there is no other place of Christian worship apart from the odd pop up black church. I think that says probably something about the effectiveness over the years of the mission of this place. That no other domination or any other Anglican plant has felt it necessary to come here. On a good Sunday, we are about 100. Slightly less over the last couple of months with things going on, but of that population, we represent the ages that are found in the parish. So we have the right number of children, the right number of teenagers and what have you. So, we seem to have a good mix. Certainly, more than half of the congregation live in the parish and that wasn't the case when I first came here, less than half lived in the parish. We were predominately White, now we are predominately Black. So there have been a number of changes over the years.

K: And has that been a conscience change?

P113:   I think it's in part to do with the way housing and accommodation around here works. And a general shift of older, white people moving out of [the area] to elsewhere or dying. I still have a couple of members of the congregation who worshipped here for 70 or 80 years. So, there is a fairly fixed part of the congregation and a turnover of about 20% every year.

K: So, this is sort of a dinner party type question. Who dead or alive inspires you most in your ministry?

---

[502] None of the participant–priests requested any changes.

P113: Well, some of the Mirfield Fathers that I have known have been great examples. Augustine Hoey who then became a Roman Catholic and died a couple of years ago. Michael Ramsey. I think from his sort of approach to theology and people and just generally giving the impression of being somebody you could like and then learn from. It's not something I've really thought about.

K: Are there any particular writers that you end up coming back to?

P113: Well, again Michael Ramsey with his book on the Christian Priesthood. I suppose keeping a variety of books to go back to. I can't now think of one in particular, I'm sorry. My mind has gone completely blank.

K: No, that's alright. The rest of the questions are really from the diary. So, in the diary it seems that you have quite a structured pattern of prayer.

P113: Yes

K: Could you tell me what importance you place on that?

P113: Well, it is important to have a rule of life and a regulated prayer life. And that really was established when training at [Theological College] where we had the sung offices every day and the low Mass and the high Mass on Sundays. And it's important to try and encourage that in the parish. One of the things that I've always introduced here and in my last parish, was the exposition of the blessed sacrament for the daily Mass. So there is half an hour of silent corporate prayer in the parish. Here the laity don't join me for the offices, whereas in [previous parish] they did. In [previous parish] the community was more centred physically around the church. Whereas here people are fairly disparate so there is no sense of church community up and down [Church's Road] or nearby. So, coming into the offices at different times of day is difficult for them but people do hone in on exposition and the daily Mass. And it's where we start the day and end the day, really. Bringing everything into prayer to go out into the world and bringing it back, to offer it back to God. And without it, one would be useless.

K: Some priests talk about the kind of public prayer being distinct from private prayer. How does that look for you?

P113: Well, there would be meditation and intercessory prayer which I might do at home or as I'm going about. If I'm on a bus, it's easy enough to say a rosary whilst you're on the bus. Or walking around the parish. I tend to be in a cassock so that I am easily recognisable. And just engage with people in conversation. And as you meet people it gives you then food for intercessions either in church, certainly during the Eucharistic prayer, people will ask me to pray for them or things like that. So, at home, there is the private prayer which is not sort of marked as a diary thing, I suppose really. But the things I do automatically at home.

K: In the diary you mention having some congregation members for lunch at the vicarage. Can you tell me a little bit about that? Is it a regular thing?

P113: Yes. Hospitality and entertainment have always been part of my parish life. My only regret here, and they all know about it, is that the vicarage is so far away. We have tried for a number of years to have, to build a new hall and put a vicarage next door. Because if you have something here and you say to people 'oh let's pop next door' for a bank holiday, the Mass would be at midday, come in for a glass of sherry and a piece of cake or something. Well, if they have walked up the hill to the vicarage, it's, exhausting and the last thing they will want is sherry but oxygen! And then the walk home so people don't. We have garden parties and I do lunch for people on Sundays and get invited out as well. I think entertaining is an important part of parish ministry.

K: And it seems as though you have a relationship with the local school?

P113: Yes. Well, there are two schools in the parish. Neither of them are church schools and it's difficult to get into non-church schools because of the secular relationships that they have there. And in the past, the Head of [Local School] was particularly anti any sort of religious minister coming in. And so, for a long time, I couldn't get into the school but that changed. And the Head there and the Head of the other school are both, ones a practising Anglican and ones a practising Roman Catholic, and so there is an immediate sympathy for church. And they like coming in here because it's a big space where we can get quite a lot of the school in, in one space together. And the children, the choir can sit in the Sanctuary area and the parents and it's becoming quite a tradition and so that's good. And I go in to lead assemblies now and again and various things in classes. We're hoping now with the establishment of our children's choir, once that's fully up and running to offer music to the children in school. I used to teach the recorder but I've discovered the Head teaches the recorder so she might not want me doing bits of that. But I think sort of engage them in music and we've always said to the schools they can have this as a concert venue for whatever. Because it means the parents can get in because the school doesn't have a decent hall.

K: And so, how do you understand that relationship, you know, you going into the school? If you had to do a sort a theological reflection of you going into the school, how do you understand that as you as a priest going in?

P113: If we believe that Christianity is an incarnational religion then those of us who adhere to it are part of that incarnation. And so, it's important that the children know who I am. And rather like after weddings and funerals and baptisms, I think my main aim, and this is not out of sense of pride, but they, that people go away thinking 'oh the vicar was a nice chap'. Simply because if they have a problem, they can say 'oh he did Granny's funeral

nicely, let's go and talk to him'. And you've broken down a barrier to those that are outside the church to actually come and talk to you. I often note before weddings and baptisms, the families are outside like the condemned dragging on a last cigarette before they come into the church and they leave much happier because they realise it's not such a bad thing as they thought. And if you can make people smile and laugh a bit and relax, it opens up a chance for them to come back and talk to you. And often people will speak to me in the street after and say 'oh I like that baptism, can you help?' and I say 'yes if I can, I'll do my best'. And it's about making opportunities so that people can feel reassured that they, you know, are not going to get turned away. And often I say to them, at worst all I can say is no and at best I can say is yes.

K: In the diary you mentioned some evening visits. What kind of visits are these?

P113:   Just pastoral visits and generally sort of checking up on people. That sounds pompous, but you know, seeing how they are. And if it's people who are working, not everybody works here but those who do, the evening is the best time to go and visit. It might include funeral visits or baptism preparation. We haven't had a wedding for a year and I've had two funerals so far this year and so that was an evening visit that took a couple of hours because he was clearly wanted to talk about things. Yeah, you know. The day, no week, no day is the same really. The fixed points are worship and then it's fitting around that.

K: That's the thing I've been asking priests, a typical week, although I know there's not really one. But, can you think about the last baptism visit you did and tell me a bit about it?

P113:   Now, when was that? That would have been just before Christmas, Family on the fringe, they come occasionally, had come occasionally. They had a baby. Endeavouring to engage them in church was a little bit difficult because they, they didn't have much English to start with and so trying to explain things was proving quite difficult. Whereas the Mass they understood because visually they knew what was going on. And so, trying to explain various words and draw things out and explain how it happened and what we do. And the baptism is always in the context of a parish Mass. And there were quite keen to bring food to share afterwards so we had some interesting food. So yeah. But that was difficult because of the lack of being able to communicate. One of them, in fact it was twins, one of them had Down Syndrome and the family, they were Sri Lankan, the family weren't keen on having her baptised because of the deformity and I said no, that's perfectly alright. We'll baptise her. And about two years ago another handicapped child, they didn't want him confirmed because of the handicap and we said no, the bishop will gladly do that. So there is still...

233

And again, I think that's from different cultures where people look at handicap in a different way, perhaps.

K: And maybe the priests there would look at it differently as well.

P113: Yeah. I mean some may say it's a punishment from God, which is a horrid thing. But that handicapped person is perfectly integrated into the life of the community here. And we several with Asperger's and so. Sometimes the children will start shouting out and one triggers another.

K: Yes. With the baptism visits, do you do them here or do they come to you or do you go to them?

P113: It varies. Baptism visits, I tend to go to the home because it's nice to, nice to see the home background. Often when the family come for second baptism, my heart sinks because I know they are going to move because they want bigger accommodation. And so, you know, you've worked with a family and then they disappear. And also, the council will move people at a moment's notice. We have lost two families in the last 18 months – that's 10 or 11 people – and they come on Sunday and say 'we are being moved tomorrow, miles and miles away. We won't be able to get back' and suddenly there is a whole gap in the congregation. It's hard.

K: That must be hard.

P113: Yes.

K: So, continuing to talk about visits. On the Tuesday you wrote about a hospital visit?

P113: Yes. Somebody had been taken in unexpectedly so I try to go up as soon as I can after hearing someone is in hospital to see what is what and what needs to be done. And then if they are going in long term then I arrange to take sacrament to them, which might include confession, certainly anointing if they are going to have to be operated on. People here if they know they are going to into hospital will always ask to be anointed the Sunday before. And we do that in the context of the parish mass so they know they are prayed for and there is a great deal of support amongst the congregation. Being, you know, 100 people, we do know each other which is important. And I found it very odd yesterday and last Sunday,[503] not shaking hands and greeting people physically. You know, the catholic religion is a very intimate physical expression of faith and standing at the door and distancing and waving, and it just felt so very odd. I felt as though I had not spoken to people.

---

[503] While social distancing had not yet been legally enforced, in London, many people were starting to adjust their practice in response to COVID-19.

K: Yeah. I agree. And so, it sounds as though you have some regular home communicants. Can you tell me how that's come about?

P113:   Yes. One is housebound because she had an accident and broke her back and is paralysed. The husband serves and so he comes on a Sunday but he has to dash back to look after her. And I take them the sacrament on Wednesday. Another member of my congregation has Alzheimer's and sometimes when I try to go and see her and she'll say 'well why? Because I was in church on Sunday'. And I make the tea on a Wednesday and so you can't argue at that point. And other times she'll say 'oh nice to see you' and we'll have communion. Another one is recovering from cellulitis so she can't get out of the house. And people that are occasionally ill who are regular communicants. I normally give them a fortnight and then start taking the sacrament to them. Because if they've been coming weekly it seems wrong for them to not have the sacrament. Though what's going to happen with this present health crisis, I'm not sure. I shall see visit *in extremus* and anoint and all of that. Home visits fluctuate. A couple of years ago I might have had 8 or 10 home visits and then sadly they die and they are not replaced and then there is an influx. So, there is usually one a week, if not more.

K: You are part of a choir. Which sounds exciting. Is that a local community choir?

P113:   It's here.

K: Is that here? [In the church building]

P113:   Yes. I sing, I practice with them on a Wednesday because I can't join in the anthems because I'm at the other end doing things. But it's good. It's another social event and what's good is that last year, [congregation member] launched the choir and they learned the Hallelujah chorus from the Messiah which they sang on [parish patronal festival]. And they themselves said 'can we keep this going?' and a number of them said 'could we have a carol service?' to which I said yes. I've never been averse to having a carol service, but we've never had the musical ability to do it. And just coming together to sing a couple of Christmas carols is not a carol service. And so now they are keen to do that. He's… they are doing Arcadelt's Ave Maria on Sunday with the children. They sang Lead Me Lord yesterday and they sang the top line, beautiful. But the children have shamed the adults into coming and singing and the children. We sing. The introit is sung in Latin on Sunday and the children are singing that. And they are reading it, they aren't learning it by rote. And at the Wednesday evening, [congregation member] teaches the congregation that are there the response to the Psalm and a couple more bits. So, there are dozen people in the congregation that know it. Which is an improving the quality of the music. In Lent we sing. The Sanctum Benedictum Deus is sung in

235

Latin to plainsong. Another setting is the Missa de Angelis and the Schubert Deutsche Messe setting. We've got about ten settings under our belt in two years and people are beginning to pick up the plainsong. Singing together and making music together is always an exciting thing.

K: And how do you understand the two choirs, the children's choir and the adult choir, in relation to the church's mission?

P113: Um. Well. Partly through the children's choir we are getting the parents coming along. And one parent has joined because she has to bring the children and she has started singing herself and was robed on Sunday for the first time. One of the hope's about if we get children from the school coming is that parents might want to see they are doing and come and see church and get involved. There are two choirs simply because it's easier to rehearse the children separately. Because of the work that they are doing. And then the adults, it's only occasionally that they'll do things. But we are going to have, this year for [parish patronal festival] it being a Sunday, we are keeping it in the afternoon with a choral evening song, and song and benediction and Christopher [Diocesan Bishop] has asked to preach at that and will officiate the benediction and that's no problem sacramentally. In fact, he was here on Friday awarding two members of my congregation with the Lancelot Andrewes Medal and he thoroughly enjoyed it. I think probably, wistfully thinks, you know, he's lost all of this because of a particular stance he has taken. So, they'll start working on big bits of music. So, it should be quiet a feast.

K: Wow, that's amazing. Speaking of Bishop Christopher, Do you go to deanery synod? How do you feel that you fit into all of that?

P113: Yes. I've always maintained that part of the problem we have in the Church of England today is that those of us who are catholicly minded never joined in things. So, they out of a badge of pride would never go to the deanery synod or chapter. I was on the diocesan synod here for a long time until sadly, it's well documented that the lady clergy and the deanery voted me off. They didn't like my stance on certain things. There is one other catholic parish in the deanery which is [parish name], and the only other parish that I get on really well with is the really low evangelical parish and we agree on so many things but approach them from different angles. So, our theology on what we are saying would be different but we are agreeing on the things we are talking about. But yes. I've known Christopher a long time. We were in [area of England] together, well in the last century. So, yeah. He's very kind and generous.

K: Are you part of The Society of the Holy Cross?

P113: Yes.

K: And so, what role does that play in your day-to-day life?

P113: The intercession for each other. The meetings, sort of every other month, are quite important. I've always taken the line with the way we're being so embattled is that those sort of meetings must have some sort of theological input, but it's really a chance to relax. And I think unless people really know each other they can't really trust each other and then share things and so I've always encouraged. I do a garden party once a year for them, for us. Not for, that sounds wrong. But encourage people to relax and have a glass of wine or two or a gin and tonic and something to eat. So. if we are relaxed we can tell each other about problems and know that it will go no further. In a us and being able to express concerns about things that affect bit like the [committee meeting].

K: And speaking of the [committee meeting], that you went for dinner with some clergy afterwards. Is that something that you are in the habit of doing or?

P113: It just happened that we were all free and Thursday, as I say, is normally my day off so we thought as we are all in town we might as well just do that. So yes. There are a group of us that will get together. And clergy from outside London and Southwark. And I think, I mentioned, I am a chaplain to a number of charitable orders. And where we are now? Last month we had a trip to Portugal to a place near the Spanish border. So, we had a couple of days there for that and a priest and I had a couple of days in Porto and that in itself is important. It's important to have a bit of a break. So, I tend to, every other month to, if I can get away sort of Monday to Friday and do something. I have clergy who can cover the daily Mass and that doesn't impact on the life of parish but it gives me a little bit of a break and we were hoping to go to Rome to do a bit of shopping but that's completely off now. So. I don't know what will happen there.

K: And so, of your friends are most of them priests? Or are just some of them priests?

P113: A mixture, and some of my friends are completely secular. I think it's important to be grounded in that. And although I have no family of my own, they're all dead. I do have a whole bunch of godchildren so they keep me fairly normal and um. Though several of them have learning difficulties and a couple have health issues so movement at the moment is impossible. So, there's family, friends and all sorts of things, different organisations.

K: And of the friends who are priests, are most of the affiliated with The Society or is there a mix? What does that look like?

P113: I would say. Well on the whole, yes they would be. They would all be in the catholic tradition of the Church of England, really. I suppose in part because I don't really mix with other clergy socially that aren't. We have the old

social in the deanery but that can be a bit strained. Liturgically we are very diverse. But interesting enough, of the two evangelical clergy came to my anniversary celebration which was an eastward facing high mass. But none of the other clergy and none of the women responded. So, it's part of the state of play we are at. Which is a shame because elsewhere it's not always like that, but it's been pretty... I invite them to everything but never get responses.

K: My last question is about the fish and chip supper and quiz night.

P113:   Oh right! Well, we have a very active affairs and social committee. Um. It gives us something jolly. We have fish and chips. Well quiz nights, with a fish and chips supper. What else have we had? I'm trying to think. We used to have karaoke's but they seem to have fallen out of favour. Other sort of entertainments. We did have a race night once. And occasionally, a couple of my congregation are learning to dance properly. They are doing bronze and silver and gold certificates and what have you. And we've had a Strictly Come [Parish Name].

K: Nice!

P113:   Which has been great fun. But they are fundraising events as well. I mean, we raised £350 from that and fun was had. And it's from that. I mean, that is one of our biggest evangelical evangelisation pools to fish in. And people, friends of members of the congregation will come and see that we don't have two heads and I can talk normally and sensibly. And even have a gin and tonic. That always surprises people 'the vicar drinks'. Well yeah, like a fish! Watch it!

K: [Laughs]

P113:   So, it is a case of getting alongside people in a safe environment where they don't realise they are being evangelised. And then suddenly they're reeled in and it's too late. They've been caught. So. I think Christianity is caught and not taught. And once you've caught them, of course you can then teach them but you can't tell someone to become a Christian, you have to gently reel them in so that they see what we are doing is reflective of what we believe. I think I'd like to be part of that.

K: And is you wearing your cassock when you are out and about part of that?

P113:   Yeah. I'm easily identifiable. It doesn't separate me from people but it makes them know. I mean there are downcast. I can be abused physically and verbally. People going will shout out abuse. Particularly, it hasn't happened recently, but at the height of the child abuse stuff, they just assume everybody in a dog collar is not being properly behaved. So. But I think the benefits are a lot of people say 'morning, Father' and I don't know who you are but they know to say Father. Although I have been asked once if I was a Rabbi [laughs] wearing these robes, 'no, I'm a Christian'. You

know, I think it's important. You would expect other, you know the postman is readily identifiable and in the days when you had milk delivered, the milkmen are identifiable. Why not the clergy? And being unidentifiable doesn't put you alongside people, it just makes you invisible. Sorry. [Laughs]

K: I think that's all my questions done. Is there anything that, you know what I'm kind of looking into, 'oh I wish she'd asked that and this is what I was hoping to tell her'?

P113:   Um. No, I don't think so. Of course I'll go away and think I should have said that or not. But no. I think it's about being available. I tried to think it's about… something about spending an inordinate amount of time on small people. You know, spending a lot of time in small groups so that you are getting alongside and drawing them in. And you know, just loitering with intent around the parish, basically. And you know, coming down to church when people are going to school and saying hello. And often the kids will shout 'Hello, Father!' and the parents realise and it's a way of incorporating oneself into it all. And I suspect if we all have to stay indoors, me wondering around the streets in a cassock going to open the church every day might be a rallying point for some people. I mean the couple that left, they come on a bus to get here so if. I mean there's talk about older people not being to use buses.

K: Told to stay at home.

P113:   Stay at home. But they can walk but they can't walk this far. So, I may find myself doing a little more visiting but I need to be advised as to whom I can go and visit. The lady who I was telling you about who broke her back. Their apartments are being re-decorated so she's in a home at the moment. Well, I had to virtually sign my life away to get in last week. Now what it'll be like this, well I can't go this Wednesday because I'm doing my child protection training, the following Wednesday they might try and stop me getting in. But I don't think they can if I'm bringing the sacrament to somebody.

K: Thank you very much for your time, I've really enjoyed hearing about your ministry here.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'Affirming Catholicism' www.affirmingcatholicism.org.uk. [Accessed 12 July 2021]

Aldridge, Alan. 'Men, Women, and Clergymen: Opinion and Authority in a Sacred
Organization/'. *The Sociological Review* 37, no. 1 (1989): 43–64.
'Women Priests: From Exclusion to Accommodation'. *The British Journal
of Sociology* 45, no. 3 (September 1994): 501–10.

'Appointment of a Healthy Churches Mentor', 1 June 2020.
www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/category.php?category=Announcements.

Anglican-Methodist Working Party. *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the
Church: Report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party.* Church House
Publishing, 2012.

Avis, Paul D. L. *Anglican Orders and the Priesting of Women*. London: Darton
Longman + Todd, 1999.

Bagilhole, Barbara. 'Not a Glass Ceiling More a Lead Roof: Experiences of Pioneer
Women Priests in the Church of England'. *Equal Opportunities
International* 25, no. 2 (February 2006): 109–25.
'Prospects for Change? Structural, Cultural and Action Dimensions of the
Careers of Pioneer Women Priests in the Church of England'. *Gender,
Work and Organization* 10, no. 3 (June 2003): 361–77.

Bailey, Kenneth, Methods of Social Research, Simon and Schuster 1995.

Ballard, Paul, and John Pritchard. *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking
in the Service of Church and Society*. London: Society for Promoting
Christian Knowledge, 1996.

Barrett Browning, E. *Aurora Leigh VII*. London: Penguin, 1995.

Bayes, Paul. *Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing Context*.
London: Church House Publishing, 2009.

BBC. 'BBC Breakfast with Frost Interview: Rt Rev Richard Chartres Bishop of
London', 10 November 2002.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast_with_frost/2437895.s
tm.

Beckett, J. G. 'Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England. By E. R. Norman. Pp 240. London: Allen and Unwin. 1968. 35 *s*.' *Irish Historical Studies* 17, no. 66 (September 1970): 292–93.

Benedict XVI. 'General Audience, Saint Peter's Square,' 14 April 2010. www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100414.html.

Biko, Steve, and Aelred Stubbs. *I Write What I like: Selected Writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Bosch, David Jacobus. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1997.

Boyatzis, Richard E. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

Browning, D.S. *Practical Theology*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.

Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Bury, Charles, A. 'The Church Association', 1873. Pusey House.

Cameron, Helen, ed. *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*. London: SCM Press, 2010.

Chadwick, Owen. *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990.

Church of England. *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*. GS / Church of England, General Synod 1557. London: Church House Publishing, 2004.

Church of England and Mission and Public Affairs Council. *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context.* London: Church House Publishing, 2009.

'Canons of The Church of England'.

www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-

services/canons-church-england.

'Ministry Statistics 2019'. The Church of England: Research and Statistics,

Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ.

www.churchofengland.org/researchandstats.

Declaration Assent. 'Declaration of Assent',

https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-

and-resources/common-worship/ministry/declaration-assent.

'SDF Project Summary'. Church of England.

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-

01/SDF%20project%20summaries%20Jan%202021.pdf.

'The Church of England Website'. Accessed 5 March 2021.

www.churchofengland.org.

'Church Revitalisation Trust'. www.crtrust.org. [Accessed 19 July 2021]

Clinton, Michael E., Neil Conway, and Jane Sturges. '"It's Tough Hanging-up a

Call": The Relationships between Calling and Work Hours, Psychological

Detachment, Sleep Quality, and Morning Vigor.' *Journal of Occupational

Health Psychology* 22, no. 1 (January 2017): 28–39.

Clutterbuck, Ivan. *Marginal Catholics: Anglo-Catholicism: A Further Chapter of

Modern Church History*. Leominster: Gracewing, 1994.

'Code of Practice: Mission and Pastoral Measures 2011. Part 7: Mission

Initiatives'. The Church of England, 2 July 2018.

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/GS%202109%20-

%20Code%20of%20Practice%20on%20Mission%20Initiatives.pdf.

Cohen, Louis, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison. *Research Methods in

Education*. Eighth edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2018.

Corbin, Juliet M., and Anselm L. Strauss. *Basics of Qualitative Research:

Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Fourth

edition. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015.

Corti, L. 'Using Diaries in Social Research'. *Social Research Update* 2 (1993).

Cottrell, Stephen. 'Letting Your Actions Do the Talking: Mission and the Catholic Tradition'. In *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*, 66–80. London: Canterbury Press, 2009.

Cray, Graham, Sudworth, Tim, Russell, Chris. *Mission-Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and Church.* Church House Publishing, 2007.

Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2003.

Croft, Steven. 'Persuading Gamaliel: Helping the Anglo-Catholic Tradition Engage with Fresh Expressions of Church'. In *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*, 36–51. London: Canterbury Press, 2009.

Croft, Steven J. L, and Ian Mobsby. *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009.

Cuff, Simon. *Love in Action: Catholic Social Teaching for Every Church*, 2019.

Davies, Madeleine. 'This Shows There's a Future for Us, Says New Traditionalist Bishop'. *Church Times*, 3 February 2015. www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/30-january/news/uk/this-shows-there-s-a-future-for-us-says-new-traditionalist-bishop.

Davies, W.D. *Worship and Mission*. London: SCM Press, 1966.

Davison, Andrew. '"With God There Is No Zero-Sum": A Sermon for the Closing Mass of the Anglican Catholic Future / Forward in Faith Conference 20 September 2018'. In *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission*, 118–21. Canterbury Press, 2020.

Davison, Andrew, and Alison Milbank. *For the Parish: A Critique of Fresh Expressions*. London: SCM Press, 2010.

Dean, Deborah, and Greene, Anne-Marie. 'How Do We Understand Worker Silence despite Poor Conditions – as the Actress Said to the Woman Bishop'. *Human Relations* 70, no. 10 (October 2017): 1237–57.

Denney, David, Jonathan Gabe, and Maria O'Beirne. 'Anglican Clergy as Victims of Routinized Violent Activities in Urban and Rural Localities'. *Sociology* 42, no. 1 (February 2008): 83–99.

Drane, John. 'What Does Maturity in the Emerging Church Look Like?' In *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church*, 90–101. London: Church House Publishing, 2008.

Dunlop, Sarah. 'Is "Being There" Enough? Explorations of Incarnational Missiology with Chaplains'. *Practical Theology* 10, no. 2 (3 April 2017): 174–86.

Elliott, H. 'The Use of Diaries in Sociological Research on Health Experience'. *Sociological Research Online*, no. 2 (1997).

Fallon, Christopher. 'Who Do We Think We Are? A Study of the Self-Understanding of Priests in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool'. Durham University, 2013.

Farrer, Austin, and J. L. Houlden. *Austin Farrer, the Essential Sermons*. Cambridge, Mass: Cowley Publications, 1991.

Fisher, K, and R Layte. 'Measuring Work-Life Balance Using Diary Data'. *Electronic International Journal of Time Use Research* 1 (2004): 1–13.

Flew, Sarah. *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856-1914*. Perspectives in Economic and Social History 37. London ; Brookfield, Vermont: Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

Forrester, D.B. *Theology and Practice*. Epworth Press, 1990.

Foulger, William. 'Present in Every Place: The Church of England and the Parish Principle'. DThM, Durham University, 2018. http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/12856/.

Francis, Leslie J., Susan H. Jones, Mandy Robbins, and Chris J. Jackson. 'The Personality Profile of Female Anglican Clergy in Britain and Ireland: A Study Employing the Eysenck Personality Profiler'. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 25, no. 1 (January 2003): 222–31.

Francis, Leslie J., Stephen H. Louden, and Christopher J. F. Rutledge. 'Burnout among Roman Catholic Parochial Clergy in England and Wales: Myth or Reality?' *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 1 (September 2004): 5.

Freire, Paolo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

Friendship, John-Francis. *Enfolded in Christ: The Inner Life of a Priest*, 2018.

Fry, A. D. J. 'Clergy, Capital, and Gender Inequality: An Assessment of How Social and Spiritual Capital Are Denied to Women Priests in the Church of England'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16 June 2021.

Galloway, Peter, and Christopher Rawll. *Good and Faithful Servants*. Worthing, West Sussex [England: Churchman Publishing, 1988.

Gaze, Sally, James, Graham. *Mission-Shaped and Rural: Growing Churches in the Countryside*. Church House Publishing, 2011.

Gogan, Brian. 'Clerical Celibacy'. *The Furrow* 61, no. 1 (2010): 52–61.

Greenacre, Roger, and Colin Podmore. *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of Women and Anglican Identity*. Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014.

Gruman, Jamie A, Frank W Schneider, and Larry M Coutts. *Applied Social Psychology: Understanding and Addressing Social and Practical Problems*, 2017.

Gunstone, John. *Lift High the Cross: Anglo-Catholics and the Congress Movement*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo, Caridad Inda, and John Eagleson. *A theology of liberation: history, politics and salvation*. London: SCM, 1988.

Härdelin, Alf. *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist*. Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965.

Harding, Jamie. *Qualitative Data Analysis from Start to Finish*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2013.

'HeartEdge'. www.heartedge.org. [Accessed 12 July 2021]

Herring, George. *The Oxford Movement in Practice: The Tractarian Parochial World from the 1830s to the 1870s*. First edition. Oxford; New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

What Was the Oxford Movement? London: Continuum, 2002.

Hobbs, Christopher. 'General Synod, Private Member's Motion: Canon B8, Background Paper', July 2014. www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/gs%201944a%20-%20pmm%20on%20canon%20b8_July14.pdf.

Hoekendijk, J.C. *Kirche Und Volk in Der Deutschen Missionwissenschaft*. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967.

Hope, Susan. *Mission-Shaped Spirituality: The Transforming Power of Mission.* Church House Publishing, 2006.

Houlding, D. 'The Crisis of 1992 and Its Aftermath: A Personal Reflection''. In *In This Sign Conquer: A History of the Society of the Holy Cross (Societas Sanctae Crucis), 1855-2005*, edited by Owen Higgs, 196–217. London ; New York: Continuum, 2006.

Howat, Irene, John Nicholls, and London City Mission. *Streets Paved with Gold: The Story of the London City Mission*. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland; London: Christian Focus; London City Mission, 2003.

'HTB Network Churches'. www.htb.org/network. [Accessed 12 July 2021]

'Is Our Minister a Puseyite? A Dialogue for the Unlearned', ca 1845. 5569. Pusey House.

Jones, Ian. 'Earrings behind the Altar? Anglican Expectations of the Ordination of Women as Priests'. *Nederlands Archief Voor Kerkgeschiedenis/ Dutch Review of Church History* 83 (2003): 462–456.

Jones, Peter, and Steven King. *Pauper Voices, Public Opinion and Workhouse Reform in Mid-Victorian England: Bearing Witness*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020.

Knight, Frances. *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society*. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998.

Koenig, Harold G. 'Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications'. *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012 (16 December 2012): 1–33.

Leech, Kenneth. 'The Radical Anglo-Catholic Social Vision'. Centre for Theology and Public Issues, 13 March 1989.

Lincoln, Y.S., and E Guba. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985.

London County Council. Housing and Public Health Committee. *London Housing*. London County Council, 1937.

Lucas, Susan. 'Introduction'. In *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*, edited by Susan Lucas, ix–xviii. Canterbury Press, 2020.

Mackenzie, Compton. *The Altar Steps*, 1922.

The Heavenly Ladder, 1924.

    The Parson's Progress, 1923.

Madden, Adrian, Catherine Bailey, and Reverend Canon Jean Kerr. '"For This I Was Made": Conflict and Calling in the Role of a Woman Priest'. *Work, Employment and Society* 29, no. 5 (October 2015): 866–74.

Marks of Mission. 'Marks of Mission'. www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx. [Accessed 23 April 2021]

Masters, J. *The Form of Godliness: Being Some Remarks on Catholic Ritual, by a Priest of the Church of England*, 1867. https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_Form_of_Godliness_Being_Some_Remarks.html?id=8C9WAAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y.

Matthews, Anna, and Robin Ward. 'Reflections on Vocation and Mission'. In *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission*, 71–85. London: Canterbury Press, 2020.

Mawer, Philip. 'House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Independent Reviewer)'. www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops. [Accessed 19 November 2020]

McIlhiney, David Brown. *A Gentleman in Every Slum: Church of England Missions in East London, 1837-1914*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 16. Allison Park, Pickwick Publications, 1988.

Milbank, Alison. 'The Gift of the Trinity in Mission'. In *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*, edited by Susan Lucas, 17–34. Canterbury Press, 2020.

Milbank, John. 'Stale Expressions: The Management-Shaped Church'. *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21, no. 1 (April 2008): 117–28.

Miller, Luke. 'Catholic Mission - God's Mission as Our Mission'. In *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*, edited by Susan Lucas, 35–60. Canterbury Press, 2020.

Moloney, Gerard. 'A Look at a Priest's Life'. *The Furrow* 64, no. 1 (January 2013): 10–17.

Munson, J. E. B. 'The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Anglo-Catholic Clergy'. *Church History* 44, no. 3 (September 1975): 382–95.

Murray, Paul D. 'Introducing Receptive Ecumenism'. *The Ecumenist* 51, no. 2 (2014): 1–8.

Nason-Clark, Nancy. 'Are Women Changing the Image of Ministry? A Comparison of British and American Realities'. *Review of Religious Research* 28, no. 4 (June 1987): 330.

'Ordaining Women as Priests: Religious vs. Sexist Explanations for Clerical Attitudes'. *Sociological Analysis* 48, no. 3 (1987): 259.

'New Wine'. www.new-wine.org [Accessed 12 July 2021]

Nickerson, Raymond S. 'Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises'. *Review of General Psychology* 2, no. 2 (June 1998): 175–220.

Nockles, Peter. ''Survivals or New Arrivals? The Oxford Movement and the Nineteenth-Century. Historical Construction of Anglicanism'. In *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition: Continuity, Change and the Search for Communion*, edited by Stephen Platten. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003.

Oddie, William. *The Roman Option: Crisis and the Realignment of English-Speaking Christianity.* London: HarperCollins, 1997.

Ollard, Sidney Leslie. *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*. Mowbray, 1915. https://archive.org/stream/ashorthistoryoft00ollauoft#page/n11/mode/1up.

Orchard, Helen. *Hospital Chaplaincy: Modern, Dependable?* Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Osmer, Richard Robert. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2008.

O'Sullivan, Barry. 'Priests under Pressure - the Less-Heard Voices'. *The Furrow* 67, no. 6 (2016): 337–45.

'The Sexual Abuse of Minors by the Clergy: The Effect of This Crisis on

Non-Offending Catholic Priests in England and Wales'. The University of Manchester, 2015.

Page, Sarah-Jane. 'Negotiating Sacred Roles: A Sociological Exploration of Priests Who Are Mothers'. *Feminist Review* 97, no. 1 (March 2011): 92–109.

Penhale, Francis, *The Anglican Church Today: Catholics in Crisis*, London: Mowbray, 1986.

Percy, Emma. 'Women, Ordination and the Church of England: An Ambiguous Welcome''. *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 1 (2017): 90–100.

Percy, Martyn. 'MP: Daily Telegraph Article, 2013'. In *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices*. 5-8, 2017.

'MP: Essay on "Discrimination", April 2017'. In *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices*, 25–34, 2017.

'MP: Guest Blog Reflection (Lenten) on "Abstinence"'. In *Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices*, 24–24, 2017.

'Old Tricks for New Dogs? : A Critique for Fresh Expressions'. In *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church: Responses to the Changing Face of Ecclesiology in the Church of England*, edited by Louise Nelstrop and Martyn Percy. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008.

'Questions of Ambiguity and Integrity?' *House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (Independent Reviewer)*, February 2019. www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops.

Percy, Martyn and Affirming Catholicism (Organisation). *Introducing Richard Hooker and the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999.

Peyton, Nigel, and Caroline Gatrell. *Managing Clergy Lives: Obedience, Sacrifice, Intimacy*. London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Pickering, W. S. F. *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008.

Podmore, Colin. 'Afterword: The Oxford Movement Today - "The Things That Remain"'. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement*, edited by Brown et al., 622–32. Oxford University Press, 2017.

ed. 'Foreword'. In *Fathers in God? Resources for Reflection on Women in the Episcopate*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015.

ed. 'Introduction'. In *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of Women and Anglican Identity*. Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014.

'New Directions'. *New Directions*, February 2017.

Ramsey, Michael. *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*. Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008.

Reed, John Shelton. *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism*. London: Tufton Books, 1998.

'"Ritualism Rampant in East London": Anglo-Catholicism and the Urban Poor'. *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 3 (n.d.): 375–403.

Rees, Christina, Martyn Percy, and Jenny Gaffin. *Apostolic Women, Apostolic Authority: Transfiguring Leadership in Todays Church*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010. www.vlebooks.com/vleweb/product/openreader?id=none&isbn=978184 8253469.

Report by the Independent Reviewer. 'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns'. The Church of England, 15 September 2017.

'Review of Nomination to the See of Sheffield and Related Concerns: Appendices'. The Church of England, 15 September 2017.

'Resource Churches Announcement', 15 November 2018. www.london.anglican.org/articles/london-diocese-announces-first-resource-churches

Robbins, Mandy, and Leslie J. Francis. 'Work-Related Psychological Health and Psychological Type among Church of England Clergywomen'. *Review of Religious Research* 52, no. 1 (2010): 57–71.

Robbins, Mandy, and Greene, Anne-Marie. 'Clergywomen's Experience of
    Ministry in the Church of England'. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 5 July 2017,
    1–11.

Rowell, Geoffrey. 'Foreword'. In *Part of the One Church? The Ordination of
    Women and Anglican Identity*. Norwich, Norfolk: Canterbury Press, 2014.

Rumsey, Andrew. *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place*, 2017.

Russell, Anthony. *The Clerical Profession*. London, 1984.

Russell, Anthony, and George Herbert. *The Country Parson*. London: SPCK, 1993.

Rütti, Ludwig. *Zur Theologie Der Mission: Kritische Analysen Und Neue
    Orientierungen*. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972.

'Sacramental Evangelism Network',
    https://sacramentalevangelism.wordpress.com/about/ [Accessed 23 July
    2020]

Salkind, Neil J., ed. *Encyclopedia of Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE
    Publications, 2010.

Sani, F., and S. Reicher. 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups: Opposing
    the Ordination of Women as Priests in the Church of England'. *The British
    Journal of Social Psychology* 39 (Pt 1) (March 2000): 95–112.

Schön, Donald A. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*.
    New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Seeley, Martin. 'Mission-Shaped Isle of Dogs'. In *Mission-Shaped Parish*, 69–77.
    Church House Publishing, 2009.

Shipley, Orby. *Church and the World: Essays on Questions of the Day in 1866
    (Classic Reprint).* Forgotten Books, 2016.

Simpson, W. S. J. *Christ and the Church*. SPCK, 1936.

Skinner, S. A. *Tractarians and the 'Condition of England': The Social and Political
    Thought of the Oxford Movement*. Oxford Historical Monographs. Oxford :
    New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2004.

Temple, William. *Christus Veritas: An Essay*. Macmillan, London, 1949.

The Society of St Wilfrid & St Hilda. 'National Missioner to the Society of St
    Wilfrid and St Hilda, Job Description'.

www.sswsh.com/uploads/National_Missioner_JD_FINAL_2.pdf. [Accessed
23 April 2021]

'Statement Regarding the See of Sheffield', 28 February 2017.
www.sswsh.com/archive.php?month=February&year=2017.
'The Society'. www.sswsh.com/aboutus.php. [Accessed 8 June
2019]

Spencer, Stephen. 'Catholic Mission within Anglicanism - Identifying Core
Principles'. In *God's Church in the World The Gift of Catholic Mission*,
edited by Susan Lucas, 125–44. Canterbury Press, 2020.

Stackhouse, Max. *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in
Theological Education*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Staley, Vernon. *The Catholic Religion: A Manual of Instruction for Members of the
Anglican Communion*. Morehouse-Barlow, 1904.

Steinke, I. 'Quality Criteria in Qualitative Research'. In *A Companion to Qualitative
Research*, 194–202. London: Sage, 2004.

Stevens, Lesley. 'Different Voice / Different Voices: Anglican Women in Ministry'.
Review of Religious Research 30, no. 3 (1989): 262–75.

Stuart-White, Bill, Jane Vaughan-Wilson, John Eatock, Judith A. Muskett, and
Andrew Village. 'Isolation among Rural Clergy: Exploring Experiences and
Solutions in One Diocese'. *Rural Theology* 16, no. 2 (3 July 2018): 65–79.

Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.
Second edition. London: SCM Press, 2016.

'The Bishop of Lewes'. www.chichester.anglican.org/the-bishop-of-lewes.
[Accessed 12 July 2021]

'The Catechism of the Catholic Church'.
www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a3.htm.
[Accessed 23 April 2021]

The Faith and Order Commission, Five Guiding Principles: *A Resource for Study.*
Place of publication not identified: CHURCH House Publishing, 2018.

'The Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication'. www.ccx.org.uk. [Accessed 12
January 2021]

'The Order of Mass'. Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2010.
www.missal.org.uk.

'The Society of Catholic Priests, Our Vision'.
www.societyofcatholicpriests.com/our-vision. [Accessed 7 January 2021]

Thomas, David R. 'A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative
Evaluation Data'. *American Journal of Evaluation* 27, no. 2 (June 2006):
237–46.

Thomas, Gabrielle. *For The Good Of The Church: Women, Theology, and
Ecumenical Practice.* SI.: SCM Press, 2021.
'"Mutual Flourishing" in the Church of England: Learning Receptively
from Saint Thomas Aquinas.' *Ecclesiology: The Journal of Ministry and
Unity* 15, no. 3 (2019): 302–32.

Thorlby, Tim. *A Time to Sow. Anglican Catholic Church Growth in London*. London:
The Centre for Theology & Community, 2017.

Thorne, Helen. *Journey to Priesthood: An in-Depth Study of the First Women
Priests in the Church of England*. CCSRG Monograph Series 5. Bristol:
Centre for Comparative Studies in Religion and Gender, University of
Bristol, 2000.

Tilby, Angela. 'What Questions Does Catholic Ecclesiology Pose for Contemporary
Mission and Fresh Expressions?' In *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining
Issues for Today's Church*, 78–89. London: Church House Publishing, 2009.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1. Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1951.

Tomlinson, John W B. 'Time to Sow in the North'. St John's College, Nottingham,
April 2020.
www.sswsh.com/uploads/Time_to_Sow_in_the_North_v3.pdf.

Trench, Maria. *James Skinner: A Memoir.* Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883.
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044081246985.

Turner, Lorraine. 'Help and Hindrance: Clergy Talking about Bullying'. *Practical
Theology* 11, no. 5 (20 October 2018): 450–61.

Urwin, Lindsay. 'What Is the Role of Sacramental Ministry in Fresh Expressions of Church?' In *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church*, 29–41. London: Church House Publishing, 2008.

Village, Andrew. 'English Anglicanism: Construct Validity of a Scale of Anglo-Catholic versus Evangelical Self-Identification'. In *Religious Identity and National Heritage*, 91–122. BRILL, 2012.

Walker, David S., David W. Lankshear, and Cherry E. Vann. 'How Are You, Vicar? A Study in Scripture, Psychology and Clergy Wellbeing in an English Diocese'. *Rural Theology* 16, no. 2 (3 July 2018): 80–92.

Ward, Pete. *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church*. London: SCM, 2008.

Ward, Rosie. *Growing Women Leaders: Nurturing Women's Leadership in the Church*. Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008.

Watkins, Clare. *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice*, 2020.

Welby, Justin, and Stephen Cottrell. 'Letter from Archbishops', 24 March 2020. www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/20200324%20Letter%20from%20Archbishops%20and%20bishops_0.pdf.

Wells, Samuel. *Incarnational Ministry: Being with the Church*, 2017. *Incarnational Mission: Being with the World*. London: Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2018.

Weston, Frank. 'Our Present Duty: Concluding Address, Anglo-Catholic Congress.' London: Society of SS Peter and Paul, 1923.

What Is Anglo-Catholicism?, 'Secondhand Religion' www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGwJzlpUd20 [Accessed 9 January 2022]

William J.E., Bennett. 'A First Letter to the Right Honorable Lord John Russell', 1850. https://archive.org/details/firstlettertorig00benn.

Withers, Margaret. *Mission-Shaped Children: Moving Towards a Child-Centered Church.* Church House Publishing, 2010.

Yates, Nigel. *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830-1910*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Yelton, Michael. *Anglican Papalism: An Illustrated History 1900-1960*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008.

Zimmerman, D. H., and D. L. Weider. 'The Diary: Diary-Interview Method'. *Urban Life*, no. 5 (1977): 479–98.