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# Who do we think we are?

A study of the self-understandings of priests  
in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool

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Thesis submitted for the award of a PhD in Practical Theology

Department of Theology and Religion

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2013

## **Abstract**

This mixed-methods study compares the self-understandings of a sample of priests in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool with the findings of an influential study in the United States. It reviews Liverpool's history of expansion and decline which has left fewer and older priests serving fewer active Catholics and an undiminished number who still expect the provision of baptisms, first communions, marriages and funerals. Through interviews, focus groups, a case study, a diary exercise and a survey, the study examines the models of priesthood which the priests adopt, their theological standpoints or views of Catholicity and their personality types and finds complex correlations between these factors. It concludes that the polarity revealed by the American study between the cultic and servant leader models of priesthood is present among this sample of priests, but less sharply and with more complex attitudes to ontological change, hierarchy and theological orthodoxy. It suggests a complex relationship between these models of priesthood and two views of Catholicity: a more world-affirming view commonly associated with Rahner and a more world-judging view commonly associated with von Balthasar. It reports some correlations between model of priesthood, view of Catholicity and personality type as measured by the NEO-FFI personality inventory. It argues that certain factors in the experience of religious order priests serving in parishes may tend to make pastoral ministry less stressful for them than it is for diocesan priests. It reports the priests' views on developments in the Church since the Second Vatican Council, details their hopes and concerns and makes recommendations to address those concerns.

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## Table of Abbreviations

CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (p.44)
Cath1	First view of Catholicity (p.225)
Cath2	Second view of Catholicity (p.225)
DMin	Doctor of Ministry (p.18)
EPI	Eysenck Personality Inventory (p.186)
EPQ	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (p.183)
EPQ-R	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Revised (p.187)
FMS	<i>Fratres Maristae Scholarum</i> , Marist Brothers (p.18)
LACE	Liverpool Archdiocesan Centre for Evangelisation (p.143)
MPI	Maudsley Personality Inventory (p.143)
MORI	Ipsos MORI, UK branch of Ipsos Group, research company (p.44)
nfpSynergy	nfpSynergy, UK research consultancy (p.44)
NEO	Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, personality theory (p.186)
NEO-FFI	NEO Five Factor Inventory (p.23)
NEO PI-R	NEO Personality Inventory – Revised (p.183)
NVivo	Data analysis programme (p.72)
p<.05	Common standard of probability for statistical significance (p.218)
QSR	Qualitative research software developer, producer of NVivo (p.93)
RAF	Royal Air Force (p.52)
RC	Roman Catholic (p.52)
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (p.128)
SEEM	Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (p.68)
SIMS	Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (p.68)
SL/C	Servant leader/cultic models of priesthood (p.225)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences, data analysis programme (p.182)
SVP	St Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic charitable organisation (p.128)
UCM	Union of Catholic Mothers (p.282)
ZKPQ	Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (p.189)

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## Acknowledgements

I am acutely aware that I could not have completed, or even begun, this research project without the support of countless individuals and communities who have provided encouragement, advice and material help. In expressing my gratitude to all of them, I will take the risk of naming some who have played a significant part in enabling me to arrive at the point of submitting the thesis for examination. The research was supervised for Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion by Professor Paul Murray and Dr. Roger Walton and was jointly sponsored by Porticus (formerly the Derwent Charitable Trust), Ushaw College and the Archdiocese of Liverpool. During the course of the research I enjoyed the hospitality and facilities of Ushaw College, St. Joseph's in Freshfield, the Loreto Centre in Llandudno, Minsteracres, Wistaston Hall and Liverpool Hope University. The people of St Teresa's Parish, Norris Green, where I have served for the last two years, have patiently accepted the time I have devoted to the project and my fellow priests have generously supplied for my absences. My family and friends have been unstinting in their interest and support. Obviously the project could not have proceeded without the willing commitment of the priests who agreed to participate in the research. To each of the following individuals I owe a specific debt of gratitude: each of them will know the unique ways in which they have helped to bring this project to fulfilment.

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Nathan Horne	Philip Inch	Aaron Kiely
Maureen Knight	Peter McGrail	Linda Mortimer
Paul Wennekes	Meg Whittle	

## **Dedication**

This research project has led me to wonder at the depth of generosity and faithfulness in the lives of the priests who have afforded me the privilege of sharing their reflections, their hopes and concerns. It is dedicated to the presbyterate of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, in gratitude for the past, in recognition of the present and in the hope that it may be helpful in facing the uncertain future.

## Introduction

This empirically-based study of the self-understandings of a sample of priests in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool arises from my own experience and that of my fellow-priests in the Archdiocese. Most of the time we are too busy getting on with the work of ministry to think about who we are as priests and how we understand our ministry, but sometimes situations arise which cause us to question and reflect on the models of priesthood we adopt, the theologies behind them and the part our personalities play in determining the way we minister. During the last thirty years, through my involvement in formation for ministry in a variety of settings, I have had more opportunities than most priests to engage in this kind of reflection and I have become increasingly curious about how we see ourselves as priests and what motivates us. I am also interested in the way we relate to other members of the Church but, since this study is part of a wider project in which two colleagues are exploring patterns of lay ministry and the views of permanent deacons (see p.18), my focus in this piece of work is the self-understandings of priests.

The primary research question for this study was ‘How do the priests currently ministering in the Liverpool Archdiocese understand their priesthood and how do their self-understandings influence the way they carry out their ministry?’

This question became more sharply focused in four ways. Firstly, a comprehensive recent study of Catholic priests in the United States by Dean Hoge and Jaqueline Wenger<sup>1</sup> claimed that the presbyterate of that country is defined by the polarity between two models of priesthood, the cultic model and the servant leader model (see p.83). Secondly, a review of that study by Jack Shea<sup>2</sup> suggested that these models of priesthood arose out of two differing theological world views or understandings of Catholicity, one a more world-affirming view associated with Karl Rahner and the other a more world-judging view associated with Hans Urs von Balthasar.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, I doubted whether the presbyterate in Liverpool was as sharply divided as that in the United States. Fourthly, I began to wonder

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<sup>1</sup> Hoge, D. R. and J. E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Shea, Jack, 'Models of Priesthood: The Cultic Model of Priesthood Is Back and Laity and Priests Are Heading in Opposite Directions', review of *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century*, *Catholic New Times*, Oct 24 (2004), [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0MKY/is\\_16\\_28/ai\\_n6335892](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MKY/is_16_28/ai_n6335892).

<sup>3</sup> The different approaches of these two theologians, both highly influential during and after the Second Vatican Council, are considered in Chapter 2 (see p.87).



whether the model of priesthood and the understanding of Catholicity each priest adopts might be influenced by his personality type.

The nature of these questions suggested that the project would best be explored by what is described by Creswell and Plano Clark as an ‘exploratory design’ of mixed methods research,<sup>4</sup> involving a type of grounded theory method,<sup>5</sup> in which evidence is gathered and analysed, hypotheses are formed and tested, other questions come more sharply into view and further evidence is gathered where necessary to refine the hypotheses. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews, focus groups and a case study. A review was conducted of the relevant literature. Some of the early findings were shared with the Ushaw Colloquium on Ministry in January 2008, but the initial research plan was modified significantly and further discoveries were made during the six-year span of the project. A quantitative element was added through a survey, which amassed new data, confirming some of the hypotheses which had emerged and offering some support for others. The evolution and methodology of the project is set out in Chapter 2.

The project concludes that the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood are present amongst this sample of priests but that the polarity between them is not so stark as that reported in the American research and that, on some specific aspects of priesthood, the relationship between these models is more complex than it appears. It further argues that there are correlations between these models of priesthood and the two views of Catholicity referred to above (see p.13) and explained in Chapter 2 (see p.87) but, again, these correlations are not straightforward. It offers evidence for some correlations between certain aspects of these models of priesthood and understandings of Catholicity and some personality traits. The project reports the views of the participating priests on a number of developments in the Church since the Second Vatican Council,<sup>6</sup> it details their hopes and concerns and it makes recommendations to address those concerns.

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<sup>4</sup> Creswell, J. W. and Plano Clark, V. L., *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage, 2007), pp.75-79.

<sup>5</sup> Charmaz, Kathy, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (London: Sage, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> The Second Vatican Council, also known as Vatican II, was opened by Pope John XXII in October 1962 and closed by Pope Paul VI in December 1965. More than 2,000 bishops and a large number of *periti*, or experts, met in Rome for four sessions and 16 documents were produced, addressing many aspects of the Church’s relationship with the contemporary world. The Council brought about major changes in the Church’s practice and its legacy remains controversial.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that the Archdiocese of Liverpool exemplifies many of the challenges facing the Catholic Church and its priesthood in the developed world: massive expansion has been followed by rapid decline and patterns of priestly ministry which were successful in former generations no longer seem effective or even possible. From discovering the self-understandings of this sample of its priests and from listening to their concerns, it has been possible to take a positive view of their ministry and to make recommendations which will enable them and their colleagues to minister more effectively, not just individually but as a presbyterate. Some of these recommendations will be applicable to the presbyterates of other dioceses facing similar challenges.

This introduction will fill out the background to the study and describe the account the thesis gives of the development of the research project and its argument.

## **Personal background**

I was born in 1954 and grew up mainly in the mining and cotton towns of South Lancashire. My parents were born in Atherton and Hindsford, two parishes whose churches were only a mile apart, in the Leigh area, just inside the Archdiocese of Liverpool's border with its neighbour, Salford. My father's father was born in England but descended from Irish immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century, while his mother's family were Lancashire Catholics whose surnames can be traced back to penal times. My mother's parents were born in Ireland and came to England in 1920 and 1922, seeking work and refuge from what they always referred to as 'the troubles'. My parents eventually settled some eleven miles to the North West of Leigh, in the parish of Standish, which has its roots in the sixteenth century. I mention this family background because it connects closely to the demographic history of the Archdiocese itself, which is considered in Chapter 1 of the thesis.

I grew up in the largely Irish Catholic parishes in the Lancashire mining towns of the 1950s and 60s, the kind of parish that developed in England after 1850, that flourished during the first half of the twentieth century and that has been described by Michael Hornsby-Smith and other sociologists as the 'Fortress Parish'. It was a tightly organised, enclosing community, within which virtually every aspect of life (marriage, education, social life,

religious life) took place.<sup>7</sup> The defences of the ‘fortress’ were: parish schools; the expectation (and patrolling) of weekly Mass attendance; parish devotions; all recreation going on within; the expectation of marrying within the community; and the marking of rites of passage.

The last five decades have seen major changes, in the society in which we live and in the way Roman Catholics relate to that society. Change in society in general (increasingly rapid after World War II) has been matched by change within the Roman Catholic community that broke down the ‘fortress’. Some of the more obvious changes in parish life are a decline in Mass attendance, in the number of priests and religious and in the membership of sodalities, and an increase in the number of parishes and of laypeople involved as Eucharistic ministers, readers, catechists, pastoral assistants and lay chaplains. Within the last three decades, some of the increases have begun to be reversed, so, for instance, the number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Liverpool, which rose to around 230 in the late 1908s, has since fallen back to just less than 200, the same level as in the mid-1950s.<sup>8</sup>

I entered the Liverpool diocesan junior seminary at Upholland in 1965, just as the Second Vatican Council was coming to an end, transferred to the provincial senior seminary at Ushaw in 1972 and was ordained priest for the Archdiocese in 1978, the year of three popes. For the next nineteen years I served in five parishes in and around the city of Liverpool and from 1982 was involved in setting up, and later leading, the Pastoral Formation Department of the Archdiocese, which supported adult formation, family ministry and pastoral development, including the re-formed Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. One of the responsibilities of the Department was supporting parishes which, from the 1980s onwards, were being clustered or twinned because of a reduction in the number of active priests. From 1997 to 2007 I worked at Ushaw College, where I was involved in the pastoral formation of seminarians and in setting up courses of ministerial formation for laypeople and clergy through St Bede’s Institute, which later became known as Ushaw’s Educational Outreach. After leaving Ushaw I returned to Liverpool to continue working on

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<sup>7</sup> Hornsby-Smith, M. P., ed., *Catholics in England 1950-2000: Historical and Social Perspectives* (London: Cassell, 1999), pp.22-3. I am indebted to Peter McGrail for this concise summary.

<sup>8</sup> *The Catholic Directory, Ecclesiastical Register, and Almanac*, (London: Burns and Lambert; Burns, Lambert, and Oates; Burns and Oates London; Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1856-1943); *The Catholic Directory*, (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1944-1970); *The Catholic Directory of England and Wales*, (London: Associated Catholic Newspapers 1912 Ltd; The Universe, Associated Catholic Newspapers Ltd.; Gabriel Communications, 1973-2012).

this research project whilst doing supply work in parishes. In 2008 I became Pastoral Area Leader (i.e. Dean) of the area of the city of Liverpool comprising Croxteth, Fazakerley, Walton and Norris Green, and in 2010 I was appointed parish priest of St Teresa's, Norris Green, a parish founded in 1928 and served from 1932 to 2010 by a religious community, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In its heyday St Teresa's was served by nine priests, 2000 children attended its five schools and the 600-seater church would be full six times each Sunday. By 2010 it had a nominal Catholic population of 5,000, a weekly Mass attendance of around 500 and in that year celebrated around 120 baptisms, 60 first communions and 96 funerals.

So for more than thirty years I have been involved in parish ministry and in the formation of laypeople, clergy and, more recently, seminarians, who have been, in various contexts, facing changes in the local church. Whilst at Ushaw I worked with a group of priests in Liverpool who were serving more than one parish and then with groups of laypeople and priests facing similar situations in Liverpool and other Roman Catholic dioceses in Northern England.

The priests in Liverpool gave their group the acronym 1P2P (1 Priest 2 Parishes), while the first group of laypeople and priests meeting at Ushaw quite independently chose the acronym 2P1P (2 Parishes 1 Priest), an interesting difference of perspective. In fact both groups included a wide variety of situations: a parish priest being asked to take over the neighbouring parish; team ministries; long-established twinned or clustered parishes; families living in presbyteries without a parish priest; voluntary or employed pastoral assistants caring for parishes; and a parish council running a parish with a neighbouring priest providing Mass.

A fuller account of the concerns and reflections emerging from these consultations was set out in 'Parish Life, but not as we know it', an unpublished paper I gave at the Lampeter Conference in 2002 on Ministry, Authority and Leadership.<sup>9</sup>

Positive reactions to presentations and conversations based on this work between 2002 and 2006 led to the formulation of the current research proposal, which was closely linked to two other projects undertaken by colleagues. Since Rev. Mike Fitzsimons was beginning a

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<sup>9</sup> Fallon, C. A., 'Parish Life, but Not as We Know It', (paper presented at Ministry, Authority and Leadership, Lampeter University, 2002).

DMin project on emerging patterns of lay ministry in the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Dr. Brendan Geary FMS was preparing a survey of all the permanent deacons and their wives in England, Wales and Scotland (by far the largest number being in Liverpool), I decided to focus my research on the perceptions and attitudes of the priests, so that the Archdiocese would have the benefit of ministry being studied from the three perspectives of laity, deacons and priests. These three linked studies were the subject of a successful research grant application to the Derwent Charitable Trust (now known as Porticus). A copy of the grant application is included as Appendix 1. Preliminary findings of the three studies provided the current research element of *Formation for the Future - Discovering Mutually Receptive Gifts*, a three-day colloquium on ministry which formed part of the Bicentennial Celebrations of Ushaw College in January 2008. This thesis will set out in five chapters the argument of my research project into the self-understandings of priests in the Liverpool Archdiocese.

## **Chapter 1: The historical context for this study**

The particular culture and character of the Archdiocese of Liverpool is the result of its specific history. This chapter will set out some of the major themes in the history and culture of the Catholic community in Liverpool since the Reformation which still have influence and resonance for priests serving there in the present day.

The persistence of the recusant Catholics in the face of persecution, which was stronger in Lancashire than anywhere else in England, is seen by some historians as a matter of survival, a grim hanging on to a valued but threatened tradition. Others view it as the beginning of a renewal, the flowering of a new style of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Similar debates continue today as to whether the Catholic community is experiencing a threat from secularisation which must be resisted at all costs or is entering a new phase of enforced purification and renewal.

The history of the provision, financing and governance of the buildings and institutions of the diocese has often reflected tensions and struggles between clergy and laity. It was principally the laypeople who ensured the survival and rebuilding of the Catholic community in the absence of an effective hierarchy during the penal times and they were frequently in dispute with the Apostolic Vicars appointed by Propaganda Fidei, the missionary arm of the Vatican. Once the hierarchy was restored, the Bishops were keen to

re-establish their control over the financial and administrative governance of the diocese, whilst the tension between the roles and responsibilities of lay and ordained members of the Church remains a hotly debated issue today.

The governance of the diocese was often complicated by the presence of the religious orders, with their own historic rights, traditions and structures. Their contribution to the life and mission of the local church has been significant and indispensable, but their relationship with the secular clergy and with the diocesan administration has sometimes been troubled. The diversity of charisms and vocations continues to be a source both of richness and of tension within the diocese today, and this study pays particular attention to the specific ways in which the experience of religious priests in parish ministry may differ from that of the secular or diocesan priests.

Liverpool is often jokingly called the capital of Ireland. Vast numbers of Irish Catholics came to Liverpool, especially from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Many of them moved on to other parts of England or re-embarked for America and Australia, but so many settled in the city of Liverpool and the surrounding Lancashire towns that they overwhelmingly outnumbered the native English Catholics, creating a distinct Liverpool-Irish style of Catholic identity which remains a powerful influence.

Allied to this issue is the complex story of the relationship between Catholics in the Liverpool diocese and their Protestant neighbours, beginning with the persecution and murderous violence of penal times, progressing through episodes of bitter competition, uneasy compromise and peaceful co-existence, rising to the high points of expectant collaboration that became known in the 1980s as the Mersey Miracle and then settling back into the present situation, described by many priests as ‘getting on well but not doing much together’.

The rapid and massive expansion of the Catholic community in Liverpool, which was sustained until the mid-twentieth century, made Liverpool the largest diocese in the country. However, in recent decades the decline in Church practice, coupled with the economically driven shift of population from the North West to the South East and the concentration of recent immigrants in and around London, has caused Liverpool to slip into second place behind Westminster, where immigration and internal migration have

contributed to continuing growth of the Catholic population, against the national trend of decline.

In Liverpool the legacy of buildings and institutions set up in the days of growth, many of them in inner city areas now largely depopulated, has created huge logistical and financial challenges, with the attendant danger of disproportionate energies being devoted to managing decline rather than promoting evangelisation. The current pastoral strategy, *Leaving Safe Harbours*,<sup>10</sup> (see p.61) attempts to avoid that danger, encouraging creative local initiatives, but these are still often perceived in the context of ‘downsizing’.

## **Chapter 2: The evolution and methodology of the project**

From its inception in 2006 to its conclusion in 2012, the study went through a number of significant changes in design, content and projected timescale. Some of these changes arose from the grounded theory methodology,<sup>11</sup> in that tentative theories which emerged from the collection and analysis of the data suggested different avenues for exploration and research. Other changes were brought about by external issues, including new pastoral responsibilities within the diocese and a period of illness. This chapter will describe the initial research plan and the ways in which it evolved.

Although the study emerged from current concerns in the Liverpool Archdiocese and in my own pastoral experience, many of the issues it addresses are significant for the Catholic Church in the northern hemisphere and have been researched in other settings. This chapter will set out how the present study relates to academic literature in several relevant fields: demographic trends and social history of the Catholic community; recent diocesan strategies in England, France, Holland and North America; theological world views and trends in the theology of ordained ministry; methodologies for qualitative research in practical theology; personality and identity theory; and previous studies of priests' perceptions of their ministry.

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<sup>10</sup> The *Leaving Safe Harbours* process was introduced in 2006 in a DVD presentation by Archbishop Kelly and an Implementation Document which appear as Appendices 2 and 3.

<sup>11</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

The fact that I belong to the community which I am researching has a number of advantages but also means that care has been needed to avoid a purely personal view. As a participant researcher, I consciously bring to the research a wealth of background information, a sensitivity to the language and culture of the setting and a network of relationships with the other participants in the research. Several of the priests, in agreeing to participate in the study, indicated that they were prepared to do so because of the goodwill and trust they felt towards me, and this is certainly reflected in the high response rates. The safeguards against personal bias which were built into the process include: the selection of participants to reflect a range of ages and experiences; the use of a variety of data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, case study, diary exercise, survey, personality type inventory); consultation with supervisors and other expert advisers about the topics for the interviews and focus groups and the questions for the survey; regular reporting of progress and initial findings to groups of the Liverpool clergy and to students and colleagues in seminars and conferences; and comparison of the data with similar studies elsewhere. The section of Chapter 2 dealing with methodology will set out these processes in detail. My position in the diocese also provides unique opportunities to share the findings with the diocesan community and with the wider Church. The conclusions I have drawn are certainly influenced by my personality, my experience and my interaction with the other participants and with the data. A different researcher would certainly have approached the study differently, interacted differently with the participants and perhaps drawn different conclusions: that is both the strength and the weakness of participant research.

### **Chapter 3: Five theories emerging from the qualitative data: interviews, diaries, focus groups and case study.**

Following a form of grounded theory methodology,<sup>12</sup> the interviews were designed as semi-structured conversations in order to allow the participants to describe their views of priesthood, their priorities in carrying out their ministry, their hopes and concerns in relation to priesthood and their attitudes to developments in the Church since the Second Vatican Council. The diary exercise added a quantitative element to the question of what activities were in fact prioritised. The case study tracked the development of the views, over a five-year period, of a small group of priests serving in one of the pilot areas for the

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<sup>12</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.



diocesan strategy known as *Leaving Safe Harbours*.<sup>13</sup> The focus groups, made up of priests who had experience of ministering in multiple parishes, which is likely to become the normative experience in the near future, served as a sounding board for checking out the emerging theories.

Chapter 3 describes the emergence from the initial analysis of the interviews of five theories relating to models of priesthood, views of Catholicity, personality types and the differing experiences of religious and secular priests in parish ministry.<sup>14</sup>

- a) That the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood prevalent in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual's view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes.
- b) That the divisions between adherents of these models of priesthood on attitudes to ontology,<sup>15</sup> the Church's magisterium (or teaching authority) and theology are more complex than they appear in the Hoge-Wenger analysis.<sup>16</sup>
- c) That the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>17</sup> described here as the first and second views of Catholicity and explained in Chapter 2 (see p.87).

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3.

<sup>14</sup> The technical terminology distinguishing members of different kinds of religious institutes is complex but within this study the term 'religious' is used for priests belonging to a religious order or congregation (e.g. Benedictines, Salesians, or Jesuits) whilst the terms 'diocesan' and 'secular' are used interchangeably for those priests who do not belong to such institutes but whose allegiance is to the diocese (or Archdiocese). The terms 'religious sister' or 'parish sister' are used interchangeably to refer to women who belong to a religious institute but are working in parish ministry.

<sup>15</sup> This term refers here to the doctrine that ordination, like baptism, brings about an essential change in the person, thus distinguishing them from the baptised who have not been ordained.

<sup>16</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

<sup>17</sup> The Second Vatican Council's 1965 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, known by the Latin version of its opening words: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.' [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

- d) That the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals can be related to their personality types.
- e) That the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity) which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests.

This chapter reports the development and refinement of these theories through the detailed analysis of the data from the interviews, diaries, case study and focus groups. A significant feature of the analysis is consideration of whether the alleged polarity between the servant leader and cultic models does justice to the complexity of the views amongst the priests on ontology, the Church's magisterium and theology. The chapter also considers the issue of personality types and their possible relevance to the models of priesthood and theological world views, or views of Catholicity, adopted by individual priests.

#### **Chapter 4: Confirmatory data from the survey**

In order to gather data about the personality types of the participants, to add a quantitative dimension to the qualitative evidence on models of priesthood and theological world views, and to test the validity of the polarity posited by the American research, the participants in the study were invited to complete both the NEO-FFI personality inventory<sup>18</sup> (see p.182) and a survey of their stances in relation to the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood and to the two contrasting views of Catholicity, along with some biographical information.

Chapter 4 describes in detail how the results of this survey both confirmed and refined the theories emerging from the analysis of the qualitative data. It reports strong internal correlations between most of the individual elements of the servant leader and cultic models (but significant divergence on the issue of ontology – see p.191), less strong but still significant internal correlations between the elements of the two views of Catholicity and some significant correlations between these two sets of responses, suggesting that those

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<sup>18</sup> Costa, P. T. Jnr. and McCrae, R. R., *NEO PI-R Professional Manual: Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI)* (Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992).

priests who adopt the servant leader model of priesthood are more likely to support strongly the first view of Catholicity, whilst those who favour the cultic model are more likely to support the second view of Catholicity. This section acknowledges some limitations in the design of the survey and considers their impact on the results. The chapter also considers the evidence from the personality inventory, reporting that, whilst there are few correlations between personality type, model of priesthood and view of Catholicity, almost all of those that appear are broadly consistent with the hypotheses which had emerged from the qualitative data: the exceptions are commented upon at that point.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

This final chapter evaluates the research that has been undertaken, summarising the theories and hypotheses which have emerged and assessing the weight which can be given to each of them and their relevance both to the pastoral strategy of the Archdiocese and to the wider debate about priesthood and ministry. It reviews the concerns raised by the priests, making some recommendations for action within the Archdiocese and reporting some progress already made towards implementing the recommendations. Finally it identifies areas for further research, including the larger survey which was part of the original research plan.

## **1. The historical context for this study:**

### **a story of survival, revival, expansion and decline**

Edmund Burke is often credited with having said or written ‘Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it’ though I have been unable to find direct evidence attributing the quotation to him. Whatever its source, the saying conveys a significant truth: in order to understand our present reality and discern the most positive way into our future, we need to bring to consciousness the influences that have formed us and shaped our way of thinking. The purpose of this chapter is not to attempt a history of the Archdiocese but to outline certain themes from its history which may have resonances in the consciousness and experience of priests serving in the Archdiocese today.

### **Catholics in Lancashire during penal times: survival or revival?**

The identity of Catholics in the Archdiocese today is influenced, consciously or subconsciously, by the stories handed down about the experience of being a persecuted minority. In legal terms the period of persecution lasted 270 years, from Elizabeth’s Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity in 1559 to the Catholic Emancipation Bill of 1829, but that simple statement masks a complex process with periods of relative tolerance and stability punctuated by waves of fierce persecution, reflecting the turbulent political situation throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although Henry VIII began the process with the dissolution of the monasteries, it was under Edward VI that serious attempts were made to impose a Protestant form of religion. These met with limited success, especially in the North, and were quickly reversed during the short and bloody reign of his Catholic successor Mary. The reforms introduced by Elizabeth I were more rigorously enforced and, in the years immediately following 1559, many clergy converted, at least outwardly, to the new religion, whilst those most loyal to Catholicism either fled the country or were sheltered by local Catholic gentry. Some of those who had left returned quite soon and these ‘Massing’ or ‘Marian’ priests maintained a clandestine service to those Catholics who themselves refused the oath of allegiance, thereby becoming known as recusants and incurring fines and confiscation of property, recorded in local court papers and collated nationally in the Recusant Rolls from 1592 onwards. Among these priests

were Laurence Vaux and William Allen, both of whom toured Lancashire in the 1560s, encouraging adherence to the old religion.

Eamonn Duffy has described the reluctance of the majority of the population to conform to the Elizabethan reforms, contrasting it with the alacrity with which the earlier iconoclastic measures of Edward VI had been reversed during Mary's short reign. He draws this conclusion from his examination of the visitation returns in 1559 and 1566:

The picture that emerges from them is unmistakably that of a slow and reluctant conformity imposed from above, with little or no evidence of popular enthusiasm for or commitment to the process of reform.<sup>19</sup>

Duffy also describes the varying reactions of the clergy to the Elizabethan reforms, including that of Christopher Trychay, the priest of Morebath in Lincolnshire:

Some priests had led their people against the new religion, and had been hanged in their chasubles for their pains, and still the altars had come down, the Royal arms replaced the rood, the beloved images been axed and burned. Some priests, probably more than we are likely to be able to count, refused to serve the new order and moved away – to secular life, to a diminished role as a schoolmaster or a chaplain in a traditionalist and ultimately recusant household, to exile abroad. But for a man like Trychay there was nowhere to be except with the people he had baptized, shriven, married, and buried for two generations.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst he focuses particularly on the parishes in Lincolnshire, Duffy quotes a contemporary Protestant complaint about the persistence of the old devotions in Lancashire and Cheshire:

In 1590 the situation in the north-west had hardly improved, ministers complaining that throughout the county of Lancaster and in much of Cheshire whenever there was a death “the neighbours use to visit the Corse, and there everie one to say a Pater Noster (or De Profundis) for the Sole: the Belles (all the while) beinge ronge many a solmene peale. After which, they are made partakers of the ded manse dowle or Banquet of Charitie”.<sup>21</sup>

An article by my brother on the Roman Catholics in our home parish of Standish examines some of the reasons frequently offered as to why Lancashire was a particularly strong centre of recusancy, including its relative remoteness from the centres of civil and religious government, the sympathy of some officials and the inefficiency of others, and the fact that

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<sup>19</sup> Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p.573.

<sup>20</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p.592.

<sup>21</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p.578.

many of the gentry who, as Justices of the Peace, were responsible for enforcing the law, were themselves recusants.<sup>22</sup>

Christopher Haigh takes a more negative view of the state of Lancashire Catholicism immediately before the Reformation:

The condition of the late-medieval Church in Lancashire was not very good. The church buildings were in consistently poor repair ... Some of the clergy were also very bad ... if the people of Lancashire despised their clergy it is hardly surprising, since they were often but poorly served. Lancashire could hope to attract only the dregs of the clerical population, for, as a backward and underdeveloped county, it could provide only meagre income for its priests.<sup>23</sup>

Haigh also argues that the poor condition of religion in Lancashire did not prevent the people remaining strongly attached to it, giving examples similar to the one above from Duffy of the strength of recusancy under Elizabeth and citing the Privy Council's description of the county, in 1574, as 'the very sink of popery, where more unlawful acts have been committed and more unlawful persons holden secret than in any other part of the realm'.<sup>24</sup> His answer to the question of why Protestantism did not develop in Lancashire is that the religious evolution of the county was about half a century behind that of the rest of England:

Lancashire simply was not ready for the Reformation when it came, and change had to be forced upon the county, because pre-Tridentine Catholicism was still an integral part of the life and thought of the people.<sup>25</sup>

Michael Mullett, in the first chapter of his review of the history of the period, outlines the contrasting views taken of the early recusant community, with historians such as Haigh arguing that it was simply a case of the survival of pre-Reformation Catholicism whilst others, such as A.G. Dickens, maintain that it represented a radically new approach, based on the Counter-Reformation initiated by the Council of Trent.<sup>26</sup> Mullett concludes:

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<sup>22</sup> Fallon, G. A., *The Roman Catholics in Standish*, (Standish, Lancashire: Standish Local History Group, 1976), p.25.

<sup>23</sup> Haigh, Christopher, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1969), pp.1-2.

<sup>24</sup> Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries*, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries*, p.3.

<sup>26</sup> The Council of Trent, 1545-1563, defined Catholic doctrine and liturgy in opposition to the Reformation and led to the production in 1570 of the Tridentine Missal, which shaped Catholic liturgy until the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965.

There are good grounds for accepting the proposition that the older, pre-Elizabethan styles of English Catholicism, with their roots in a vigorous late medieval devotional tradition, remained extensively alive in the decades following 1559. After all, whatever the extent of ‘revival’ in early modern Catholicism, whether specifically in England or in Europe at large, it stood for essential continuity with medieval doctrines and practices ... And if – as we are led by Eamon Duffy and J. J. Scarisbrick to believe – English Catholicism before the Reformation was essentially vital, creative and popular, there is no reason to disbelieve that its vigour should have continued on an upward curve in the, admittedly restrictive, circumstances following 1559.<sup>27</sup>

This debate has echoes in the arguments aired today as to whether the present reality of the Catholic community is due to the unfortunate loss of a vibrant and precious spirituality or whether a tired and moribund church is undergoing a painful but necessary rebirth.

In 1568 William Allen founded Douai College in the Netherlands, initially to educate Catholics in exile, but it very soon became a centre to train priests for what became known as the English mission. From 1574 onwards, the recusant Catholics were served by priests from the continental seminaries, who, alongside the surviving Marian priests, travelled in secret and celebrated Mass in Catholic houses. Because loyalty to Catholicism was associated with allegiance to the Pope and the Catholic countries, especially Spain and France, which supported Rome in its dispute with the English regime, new laws in 1581 and 1585 made it high treason, and therefore a capital offence, to convert English people to Catholicism or to be so converted, for a priest ordained abroad to be in England and for anyone to shelter such a priest. Although these laws were enforced only spasmodically, particularly in Lancashire, and the private practice of the old religion was sometimes tolerated, there was always the risk of arrest, prosecution, imprisonment and execution, especially at times of political instability or perceived threats of invasion, revolts or internal plots.

Bossy’s contrast of this itinerant style of priesthood with what had gone before raises interesting questions for contemporary models of priestly ministry:

... as a permanent condition the status of a missionary priest could scarcely prove attractive to anyone who had received from the pre-Reformation Church, directly or indirectly, a high doctrine of the public role of the clergy. The contrast might well have been conveyed even with the blunt weapons of

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<sup>27</sup> Mullett, M. A., *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, ed. Jeremy Black, *Social History in Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p.6.

sixteenth-century caricature. On one side, the priest as governor, judging, determining, ordering a uniform Christian society regulated by the comprehensive machinery of the canon law; on the other – the terms were to become familiar to missionaries in England – the priest as a ‘merchant’ doing ‘business’ with ‘customers’, a commercial traveller for an old-established firm offering to the householder, in competition with new and vigorous rivals, a commodity for whose consumption there was a limited demand.<sup>28</sup>

Mullett’s statement of the problem facing the Catholic community at this time is instructive:

The foremost social challenge of this community of aristocrats, peasants and priests between the 1580s and the civil war was one of adjustment to the permanence of a Protestant regime, a process that induced acute divisions within the Catholic clergy. What sort of body was the clergy and laity of the Catholic Church in England to form?: was it to be a church in essential continuity with the Catholic Church that had existed in the country since Augustine ... a canonical province of the Church, recognising the ultimate authority of Rome while at the same time preserving its own ancient autonomous jurisdiction [*or*] ... facing up to the reality of and irreversibility of the Protestant settlement and adjusting to a missionary status as a minority, its time-honoured Episcopal and canonical structures superseded, taking its orders direct from Rome and given its momentum by the Jesuits, missionary cadres for a missionary body.<sup>29</sup>

One of the seminary priests, Ambrose Barlow, having trained in Douai and Valladolid, came to England in 1620 and made Leigh, the area in which my parents grew up, the main centre of his mission. He was arrested several times in the next two decades but, in between these events, was able to conduct a relatively stable ministry.

In Lancashire, priests such as Ambrose Barlow acted virtually as parsons to the recusants in the 1620s and 1630s; a near-parochial system ... existed in the county, funded by lay patronage and with responsibility shared between Benedictines, Jesuits and seculars.<sup>30</sup>

The accounts of Barlow’s martyrdom state that on Easter Sunday 1641 a mob of 400 people, led by the vicar of Leigh, burst into Mass at Morleys Hall and arrested him. He was taken to Lancaster Castle, where he was tried on 7<sup>th</sup> September and executed three days later. Ten other priests were executed in this particularly fierce period of persecution in 1640 and 1641, occasioned by, and contributing to, the tensions preceding the English Civil

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<sup>28</sup> Bossy, John, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), p.20.

<sup>29</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, pp.21-22.

<sup>30</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, p.26.



War. A macabre addition to the story is that after his execution, Barlow's head was impaled, either at Lancaster Castle or at the Collegiate Church in Manchester, and then retrieved and hidden by Francis Downes of Wardley Hall. A skull thought to be Barlow's was later rediscovered at Wardley Hall, now the residence of the Bishop of Salford, and is displayed on the main staircase there.

The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 heralded a period of greater tolerance, though Charles II's attempts to remove penal measures were opposed by Parliament, his Declarations of Indulgence of 1662 and 1672 being followed by the Test Act of 1673 which reinforced the penal laws and forced from public office the King's Catholic brother, James, Duke of York. The Popish Plot allegations in 1678 provoked a further crisis between 1679 and 1681 during which 24 Catholics, including 17 priests, were executed.<sup>31</sup> After the last clerical execution, of Oliver Plunkett, in 1681, the return to government of James in 1682 and his accession to the throne as James II in 1685 produced a rapid fall in the recusancy fines, 'from about £5,500 in 1681 to £2,000 in 1683-4 and to a mere £384 in 1684-5',<sup>32</sup> and the Recusant Rolls were discontinued in 1691.

The gradual relaxation of penal measures encouraged an upsurge of Catholic life. In 1685 John Leyburn was appointed Vicar Apostolic for England and, in 1687 undertook a tour of the Northern Counties during which he confirmed 20,889 people (including 1,332 in Wigan and 1,153 in Preston) in 60 services during a 14 week period. The following year, the country was divided into four Districts, each with its own Apostolic Vicar. This revival suffered a temporary setback when James's expulsion in 1688 sparked a new suspicion of Catholics. There was an attack on the newly refurbished Franciscan chapel in Birmingham<sup>33</sup> and all four Vicars Apostolic were briefly imprisoned during 1689.

The English Catholic Community, especially in Lancashire, not only survived but grew through the first seven decades of the eighteenth century, by a process Mullett describes as de-politicisation. The majority of Catholics (especially the common people) did not support the Jacobite risings in 1715 and 1745 and the government responded by tolerating the building up of Catholic communities, usually under the patronage of the local gentry,

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<sup>31</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, p.77.

<sup>32</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, p.79.

<sup>33</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, p.81.

concentrated ‘as had been the case since the Reformation, in south and west Lancashire, the Ribble Valley and the Fylde, and the hinterlands of Preston, Wigan and Liverpool’.<sup>34</sup>

The pragmatic tolerance of Catholicism’s growth in the eighteenth century was only enshrined in law with the Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791. The first removed the ban on Catholic priests and school teachers living in England and allowed the private celebration of Mass whilst the second ‘allowed the public celebration of Mass as long as Catholic chapels were registered and the priest took an oath of loyalty - and as long as the chapels did not have a steeple or bell and its doors were not locked during service!’<sup>35</sup> The Relief Acts were followed in 1829 by the Catholic Emancipation Bill which allowed Catholics to serve in the House of Commons and the Lords, but these did not put an end to continuing prejudice and occasional outbursts of violence against Catholics.

### **Industrialisation, immigration and expansion**

Long before these legislative concessions the Catholic community had been growing steadily and from 1770 onwards it expanded dramatically. A major factor in the growth of the Catholic community in Liverpool in the eighteenth century was the rapid expansion of the city itself at that time. Rupert Jarvis, in the introduction to a collection of Customs documents from 1711 to 1813, describes the origins of the town and explains its subordination to its older neighbour, Chester:

The origin of the port of Liverpool is now generally seen in the charter of 1207 [when] John granted the place “all the liberties of free customs which any free borough on the sea has in our land”; but the occasion was a military one rather than a civil – the preparations for the projected invasion of Ireland. The clear intention of the crown was to erect a port-town into a borough as a base for the conquest of Ireland ... in the time of Edward III “the ports of Cestre and Lytherpool” were used by the Earl of Ulster for shipping men and horses to Ireland, and generally for shipping corn both coastwise and for Scotland ... the “head” port for purposes of fiscal and other crown administration in the north-west was Chester and not Liverpool ... until late Tudor times, the limits of the port of Chester extended from the northernmost limits of the port of Milford (namely from the Mawddach at Barmouth) as far as the Scottish border ... it was not until 1565 that even Carlisle was erected into a port independent of Chester, which as a matter of fact left the strapping infant of Whitehaven as

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<sup>34</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*, p.89.

<sup>35</sup> Doyle, Peter, *Mitres & Missions in Lancashire: The Roman Catholic Diocese of Liverpool, 1850-2000* (Liverpool: Bluecoat Press, 2005), p.19.

absurdly “dependent” upon its “parent” Carlisle, as the infant Liverpool was left “dependent” upon its “parent” Chester.<sup>36</sup>

In the case of Liverpool and Chester, the infant soon outgrew the parent, largely because of the silting up of the River Dee:

The Dee has always been an unpredictable river, with constantly shifting sands, which affected the suitability of different anchorages from time to time. The river was however navigable as far as Chester for passenger and freight traffic up to the 17th century, when silt around Chester began to be a major problem ... The depth of water limited the size of the ships using the River Dee, so trade remained mainly with Dublin. Liverpool, which had far greater depths of water in the River Mersey, built larger ships and thus developed trans-Atlantic trade. With the advent of steam power, larger ships could be built, ferries across the Mersey were more reliable and with the improvement in the transport system, Liverpool developed as a much more viable port ... By the mid nineteenth century increasing silt had made the River Dee no longer viable for ferry services across to Wales or Ireland.<sup>37</sup>

Jarvis lists some of the factors which caused problems for the Customs officers; the same factors help to explain the sudden and massive growth of Liverpool as a port:

In the first place the wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries immensely increased the burden of Customs taxation and made specifically liable to relatively high additional duties, goods and articles never before separately enumerated. In the second place, a coincidental technical development in the rig of vessels – the fore and aft rig as distinct from the square rig – enabled craft to sail now much closer to the wind than ever had been possible before. Thus, quite fortuitously, there came together at about the turn of the century a great financial inducement to smuggle, and also a means to do it easily.<sup>38</sup>

He explains that the Isle of Man, with its peculiar political status, had a low rate of duties and a constitutional immunity from the officers of the Imperial Customs and so quickly became ‘an immense magazine, a great island warehouse, in which to store high-duty goods, tobacco, rum, brandy and gin, until conditions were favourable to run them illicitly to the mainland’. This situation pertained until 1765 when the Collector of Customs at Liverpool bought the fiscal rights of the island with £70,000 of Customs money. Jarvis also mentions ‘the immense increase in the plantation trade’ (particularly tobacco) and ‘such

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<sup>36</sup> Jarvis, Rupert, ed., *Customs Letter-Books of the Port of Liverpool 1711-1813* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1954), pp.ix-xiii.

<sup>37</sup> *National Oceanography Centre* (2010 [cited 20th April 2010]); available from <http://www.pol.ac.uk/home/insight/dee.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Jarvis, ed., *Customs Letter-Books 1711-1813* pp.xix-xx.

new ventures as the Greenland fishery and the southern whale trade', completing his list with the comment:

Add to all this the complications of the trade with America before, during and after the war of Independence, plus the slave trade, plus privateering – and you have the port of Liverpool in the eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

Jarvis makes two comments on the content of the letters in the collection which provide further insight into the port's rapid and massive expansion: 'We find the trade of the port continuously outstripping the growth of the staff and the accommodation at the Custom House'<sup>40</sup> and 'What we see in Liverpool are the growing pains – but the growing pains of the principal plantation port'.<sup>41</sup>

Doyle gives statistics which confirm the link between the growth of Liverpool's population and its expansion as a port:

Its population of 34,400 in 1773 increased to 77,650 in 1801 and by 1804 it was the second largest port in the country – the tonnage of shipping using it had increased more than thirty-fold over the eighteenth century and its export of coal alone increased from 14,000 tons in 1752 to 186,000 tons in 1820.<sup>42</sup>

Doyle's description of the Catholic community in eighteenth century Liverpool raises a number of significant issues. Noting that from the 1740s Irish names begin to occur more frequently in the baptismal registers, he mentions that Catholics lived in both the poor and better-off areas and whilst they seem to have been under-represented among the professional classes, individuals among them were involved in shipping, the slave trade, whaling and privateering, as well as the general Irish trade. He also refers to the existence of a small Italian Catholic community.<sup>43</sup>

Doyle recounts the story of the Jesuit mission in Liverpool, begun in 1701. The first chapel was destroyed in 1746 by an anti-Jacobite mob and replaced by another, disguised as a warehouse, which was also destroyed by a mob in 1759 and was again rebuilt. A long dispute followed between on the one hand the members of the congregation who, having

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<sup>39</sup> Jarvis, ed., *Customs Letter-Books 1711-1813*

p.xx.

<sup>40</sup> Jarvis, ed., *Customs Letter-Books 1711-1813*

p.xvi.

<sup>41</sup> Jarvis, ed., *Customs Letter-Books 1711-1813*

p.xvii.

<sup>42</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.25.

<sup>43</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.26.

paid for the chapel and for the services of the Jesuit missionary, insisted on electing their own trustees and taking charge of the mission's finances, and on the other hand the Jesuit superior who wanted to retain control both of the finances and of the appointment of the missionary. The situation was further complicated by the presence of an assistant to the missionary, a Spanish Jesuit who had the support of the lay trustees because he spoke in favour of the slave trade. The Vicar Apostolic, when his arbitrators failed to resolve the dispute, suspended both the missionary and his assistant (by this time referred to as 'ex-Jesuits' because of the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773) and invited the Benedictines to send a priest to run the chapel. When this priest also failed to resolve the dispute, after further violence and a civil law-suit, two new chapels were built, one served by the Benedictines and the other run by the ex-Jesuits and the lay trustees. Doyle notes:

The Liverpool row was not settled until Bishop Brown, as Vicar Apostolic for a new Lancashire District, abolished the system of lay trustees for missions.<sup>44</sup>

The tensions evident in this episode, between lay responsibility and clerical control, between the Catholic community and its Protestant neighbours, between the different religious orders and between the orders and the hierarchy, all have their echoes in the life of the Archdiocese in the twenty-first century, while the presence and popularity of the slavery museum in Liverpool's Albert Dock indicates that its citizens today are aware of the complex and ambivalent origins of its prosperity.

The nineteenth century was to see even more rapid growth both of the city of Liverpool, through shipping, commerce and industry, and of the industrial towns of Lancashire, through mining, cotton mills and manufacturing.

John Bossy estimated that, in the eight decades before the restoration of the hierarchy, the Catholic community in England grew from about 80,000 in 1770 to about 750,00 in 1850.<sup>45</sup> He highlighted the migration of workers from rural areas to the new industrial centres, as well as successive waves of Irish immigration around 1790, in the 1820s and in the 1840s, especially during and after the famine in Ireland in 1846. His study of church records in four Lancashire towns (Preston, Wigan, Manchester and Liverpool) led him to estimate that their combined Catholic congregations (as distinct from total Catholic populations) grew

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<sup>44</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.28.

<sup>45</sup> Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, p.298.

from around 4,500 in 1783 (of whom less than 20% were Irish) to around 120,000 in 1851 (of whom around 75% were Irish). The significant fact here is that while the English Catholic community in these towns was growing rapidly during this period, from about 4,000 in 1783 to about 30,000 in 1851, its growth was overshadowed by the vastly greater increase in practising Irish Catholics, whose numbers rose from less than 1,000 in 1783 to around 90,000 by 1851. Bossy and others also estimate that these numbers of practising Irish Catholics represent only about half of the total number of Irish Catholics, since a 50% practice rate was usual both in Ireland and among the Irish immigrants to this country.<sup>46</sup>

John Belchem's 2007 history of the Liverpool-Irish between 1800 and 1939 broadly concurs with Bossy's estimates of the proportion of Catholics amongst the Irish immigrants and of the Irish majority amongst Catholics in Liverpool at this time. Belchem quotes Hume's earlier rule of thumb that, when speaking of mid-nineteenth century Liverpool, 'the number of Irish is just equal to the number of Roman Catholics, the Protestants of Irish birth being exactly balanced by the Roman Catholics of English birth' and explains that both minorities would be around 25%, i.e. that about one quarter of the Irish population were Protestants and about one quarter of the Catholic population were English.<sup>47</sup>

Belchem reports that during this period Irishness quickly came to be identified with Catholicism because the Catholic majority among the Irish immigrants forged a cultural identity which was an amalgam of their ethnicity and their religion, whereas the Protestant minority 'were enthusiastic (often demagogic) advocates of Britishness, the populist Protestant identity which secured Tory hegemony in Liverpool until the Second World War and beyond' and so assimilated more readily with their English co-religionists.<sup>48</sup> He goes on to assert that Catholic Irishness was 'replenished in Liverpool by the continuing influx of Irish priests, for many of whom the best testimony of fidelity to the faith was commitment to the Irish national cause.'<sup>49</sup> This assertion will be explored later in this chapter (see p.51).

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<sup>46</sup> Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, pp.298-316,423-27.

<sup>47</sup> Belchem, John, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p.8.

<sup>48</sup> Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, p.9.

<sup>49</sup> Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, pp.18-19.

Although the new port of Liverpool had by far the largest number of Irish immigrants, Bossy's figures for the other Lancashire towns (see above)<sup>50</sup> show that the increasing presence of the Irish was also the main reason for the massive expansion of the Catholic community in the nineteenth century right across the diocese. This is further instanced by figures from Leigh, where until 1867 the whole area was served from one mission, St. Joseph's, at Bedford. In 1778 the Anglican records give this report:

The number of papists in this parish is about 100. Very few of the better sort are among them. They have not increased much of late. A popish priest resides in this parish. The place in which they assemble for worship is in the township of Bedford near Leigh. No confirmation has lately been held by any Popish Bishop.<sup>51</sup>

By 1859, the Visitation records for St. Joseph's report at least a ten-fold increase:

Easter Communion 977. Not made Easter duty, about 100, mainly Irish, Average Attendance 1200. Upwards of 100 out of Church, including great numbers of our brethren from Ireland who had suffered severely during the last winter.<sup>52</sup>

The sermon notes from Bishop Goss's visitation to St. Joseph's in 1867 give an insight into the concerns of the time:

After the Gospel the Bishop ascended the pulpit and preached. He alluded to the fall of Satan and his precipitation into hell, to the disobedience of our first parents and their expulsion from paradise with the curse of death with the ills to which man is heir; to the general corruption of the human race and the universal deluge; to the wickedness of Sodom and the destruction ... he then spoke of the Christian life and grace and then dealt with particular issues: Drunkenness; Condemned the opposition of parents to early marriages on the score of loss of wages; Blamed the practice of children leaving their homes and living with lodgers.<sup>53</sup>

Goss, the descendant of Lancashire recusants, was intensely English. Doyle recounts that he was always telling his people 'I am English, I am a real John Bull, indeed I am a Lancashire man' and quotes him appealing to Catholics for loyalty to the English establishment:

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<sup>50</sup> Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, pp.423-27.

<sup>51</sup> *Cheshire County Archives*.

<sup>52</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*.

<sup>53</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*.

We have been born of the soil and have all the feelings of Englishmen. And we are proud of the government under which we now live. We believe it to be the best, the most perfect government in the world ... We belong to the nation; in heart we are English, in purpose we are loyal.<sup>54</sup>

Doyle summarises Goss's well-intentioned but unrealistic attitude to the Irish immigrants, which was in clear contrast to Belchem's analysis (see p.35 above) of the way the Liverpool Irish forged their identity from their ethnicity and their religion:

It is clear that he felt it that it was only by playing down their nationality that the Irish could be fully accepted in English society and so gain the position that 'their natural ability and the fertility of their mental resources' deserved. On one occasion he went so far as to claim that he had no Irish priests in his diocese, for it was an English diocese ruled by an English Bishop, and the clergy who served it were English, whatever their country of origin.<sup>55</sup>

The mass immigration of the Irish still has its influence today, but it also has lessons for the way in which the contemporary Catholic community in Liverpool responds to less dramatic phases of immigration from other Catholic countries, notably Poland, other Eastern European states, South India and the Philippines.

Doyle places the issue of the integration of the Irish first in his list of the complexities facing the newly created Diocese of Liverpool in 1850:

One of those complexities was the need to fuse into a coherent whole the huge number of the immigrant Irish and to incorporate them into a diocese with its tradition of strong English Catholic recusancy that had developed its own Catholic subculture. Part of this task was to provide and encourage a base of regular and commonly shared devotions that would unite English and Irish, well-to-do and poor, and satisfy both the pious and the ordinary practising Catholic. Another was to build a network of parish communities and agencies (secular as well as spiritual) to serve and protect the interests of the people. Chief among these agencies was a Catholic school system.<sup>56</sup>

A key figure in the Church's response to the challenges arising from the rapid growth of the city and the influx of poor immigrants, with all the attendant problems of housing, public health, education, and crime, was James Nugent. The son of well-to-do Irish Catholics, he was trained at Ushaw (though for only three years, as priests were in such short supply), ordained in 1846 and appointed first to Blackburn. In the summer of 1847 an epidemic of

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<sup>54</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.45.

<sup>55</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.46.

<sup>56</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.7.



typhoid and dysentery broke out in the overcrowded slums along the dockside in Liverpool. Ten of the 24 priests serving the city died in this epidemic (three Benedictines and seven seculars) and a further eight caught the fever but recovered. Nugent was one of those brought in from other parts of the district to take their place. His biographer, Canon Bennett, drawing on contemporary sources and Nugent's own recollections in a sermon to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ten who became known as the Liverpool Martyrs, wrote this account in 1949, indicating a view of priesthood which still has influence today:

Some three hundred thousand fugitives landed in Liverpool in this one year [1847], of whom between sixty and eighty thousand remained to settle or die. Fever soon sent up the death rate 2,000 per cent. In Vauxhall ward alone one seventh of the population perished. The death roll was 5,845 from fever and 2,589 from diarrhoea. Duncan [*the first Medical Officer of Health in the country, appointed in 1847*] estimated that nearly 60,000 suffered from fever and nearly 40,000 from diarrhoea and dysentery ... [Nugent] described how "In the midst of the panic created by this terrible scourge the devotion and calmness of the priests commanded universal admiration. Day and night they were with the people. Into the dwellings of the poor, in attic and cellar, in the courts and alleys, where to breathe the fetid and pestilential atmosphere was death, they went fearlessly to give the Sacraments. They were at the bedside of the dying, and where the dead were left unburied more than one of that heroic band lifted the dead body, all covered with typhus spots, and placed it in a coffin ... That day [16<sup>th</sup> June 1847, when one of the priests died] there were, if I remember rightly, forty-three sick calls. The Rev. Robert Gillow [*who died a few weeks later*] and myself divided them. Never can I forget the scenes I that day witnessed of the dead and dying. A mother lying dead of her fever on a heap of shavings in a cellar, a baby at her breast, and two young children playing on the floor."<sup>57</sup>

Nugent was to spend the next fifty-eight years, until his death in 1905, in the task Doyle identified above: establishing agencies to serve and protect the interests of the people and especially of the poor. He established shelters and orphanages, was the first Catholic priest in England to be appointed chaplain to a prison, invited religious sisters to the diocese to set up schools for the poor and founded the diocesan social care agency, later known as Catholic Social Services, which was renamed after him in 1992 as the Nugent Care Society. In his pioneering work in child welfare, poverty relief and social reform, Nugent frequently collaborated with Protestant and secular agencies and his contribution to the life of the city was recognised by the erection by public subscription of a statue in his honour in St. John's Gardens within six months of his death. The continuing relevance of his life and work is

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<sup>57</sup> Bennett, J., *Father Nugent of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Catholic Social Services, 1993), pp.15-16.

evidenced by the fact that today the Nugent Care Society's website describes it as one of the oldest, largest and most diverse charities in the North West, supporting more than a thousand people in care homes, in special schools and through community teams working with people who have learning disabilities, who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who are older people in need of support or befriending, and offering specialist services including a welfare and material aid project, support for homeless people and a drug and alcohol intervention programme.<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that, although the Archbishop chairs the Trustees of the Society, it has been under lay leadership for more than thirty years.

### **From expansion to decline**

At the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, Liverpool was established as one of the 12 suffragan sees in the single province of Westminster covering the whole of England and Wales, amidst some initial confusion as described by Plumb:

The history of the diocese begins in territorial dispute. When the Hierarchy was restored in 1850, Propaganda assigned the Hundreds of Blackburn, Leyland and Salford to the new diocese of Salford, and the Hundreds of Amounderness, Lonsdale and West Derby to Liverpool, not realising that a geographical wedge was being driven between the northern and southern portions of Liverpool diocese. A rescript of 27 June 1851 corrected the abnormality by transferring the nine missions in the Leyland hundred to Liverpool. The Isle of Man was assigned to Liverpool, presumably on account of the daily connection by steamer. Until the formation of the diocese of Lancaster in 1924, Liverpool diocese extended some seventy-six miles from Lake Windermere to the Mersey. Its widest span was, and remains, the twenty-eight miles from Formby Point to Astley. Its northern boundary is now the River Ribble.<sup>59</sup>

Plumb comments that Liverpool was quick to develop the pattern of each mission having its own priest, church and school, leaving very few places dependent on services from another mission. He explains that, despite the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, it was not until 1918, with the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law, that the Catholic missions in England were constituted as parishes. He quotes a priest writing to the Vicar General in 1882 about his dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity about the standing of the priest in this situation:

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<sup>58</sup> *Nugent Care Society* ([cited 7th March 2010]); available from <http://www.nugentcare.org/>.

<sup>59</sup> Plumb, Brian, *Found Worthy: A Biographical Directory of the Secular Clergy of the Archdiocese of Liverpool (Deceased), 1850-2000*, Second ed. (Wigan: North West Catholic History Society, 2005), 4.

When the Hierarchy was re-established in this country it was thought undesirable to at once change all the existing missions into parishes of strict right, but with a view to gradual introduction of the Parochial System, the Holy See prescribed that at least some churches in every diocese should be selected by the Bishop with counsel from the Chapter, churches where an appointment was to be permanent and the priest receiving it to bear the distinctive name of Missionary Rector.<sup>60</sup>

Plumb adds that before 1918, unless a priest happened to be a Missionary Rector ‘he was no more than the manager of a mission, often a solitary resident priest, removed from one position to another with a bewildering rapidity’.<sup>61</sup> Similar concerns frequently surface today in discussions about the appropriateness of clergy appointments and about the status and security of parish priests in proposed new arrangements for sharing responsibility for multiple parishes.<sup>62</sup>

By 1911, following the subdivision of three of the original dioceses, Westminster had more suffragan sees than any other province in the world and the Catholic population was continuing to expand, so Pius X divided the territory into three provinces: Liverpool became an Archdiocese and the Metropolitan See of the new Northern Province which at that time included the dioceses of Hexham and Newcastle, Leeds, Middlesbrough and Salford. Debate continued about the remoteness of the Northern part of the diocese until, at the end of 1924, after a lengthy period of consultation and speculation and in spite of opposition from the Archbishop of the time (Frederick Keating), the area of the diocese North of the River Ribble, including the staunchly Catholic town of Preston, became part of a new diocese of Lancaster as described by Doyle:

The new diocese took from Liverpool 46 parishes, containing 67,647 Catholics and served by 91 priests (60 Seculars, 25 Jesuits, 1 Benedictine and 5 Holy Ghost Fathers), and from Hexham and Newcastle diocese a further 18 parishes in the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland, with 21,098 Catholics and 32 priests (16 Seculars and 16 Benedictines).<sup>63</sup>

Doyle and others testify to Archbishop Keating’s generosity in ensuring that the new diocese had sufficient priests and financial resources to place it on a sound footing, despite his opposition to its creation.

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<sup>60</sup> Plumb, *Found Worthy*, p.6.

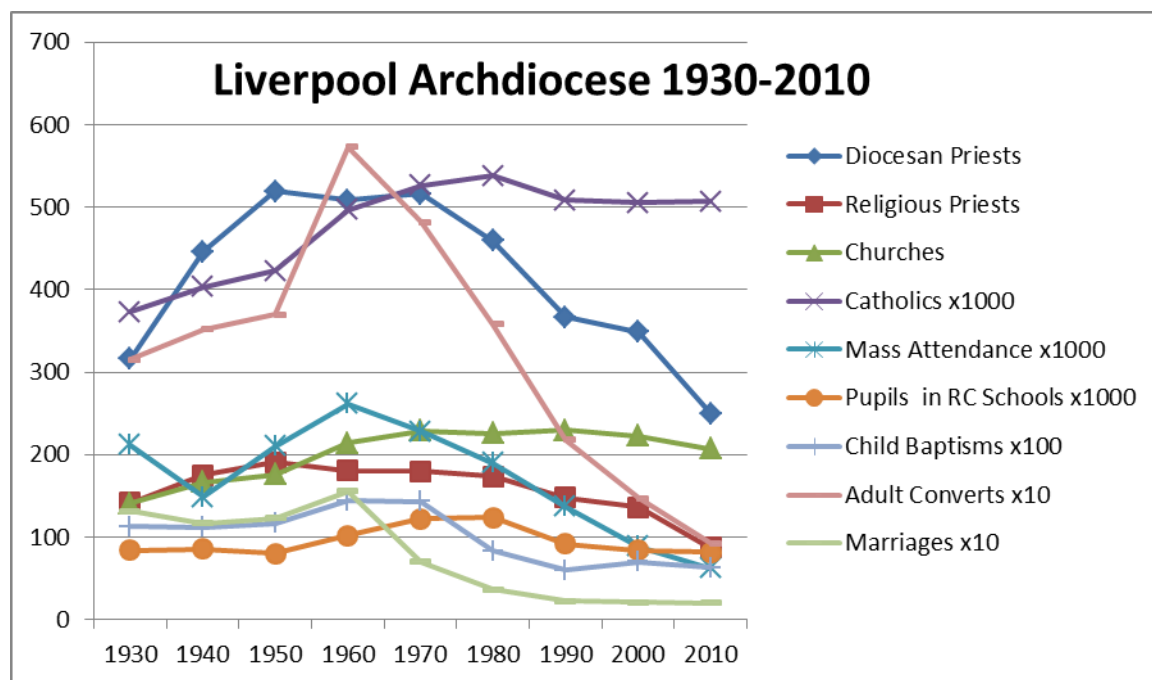
<sup>61</sup> Plumb, *Found Worthy*, p.6.

<sup>62</sup> See the discussion of Canon 517 in the section of Chapter 3 on Hopes and Concerns (p.102)

<sup>63</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.225.

The provision of churches, priests, schools and other services to the rapidly expanding Catholic population required a massive effort. Whilst the growth was more rapid in some phases than others, it continued almost unabated until the 1960s, and the founding of new parishes continued even into the 1990s because of the movement of population out of the city of Liverpool into the surrounding areas. The chart below, Figure 1.1, summarises the trends in the most frequently measured indicators of vitality in the diocese. The figures are taken from the Catholic Directory for 1930, 1940 and so on.<sup>64</sup> In most cases the figures refer to the previous year, and in some cases two years previous. A small number of the figures have been adjusted after comparison with other sources, where it appears that those given in the Directory are incorrect or not directly comparable with others. The overall pattern of the trends is one of steady growth from the late 1920s (after the division of the diocese) until the 1960s or 1970s and increasingly rapid decline in the last five decades. Departures from that trend include a big drop in Mass attendance during World War II, and a decline in the numbers of both religious and secular clergy after 1950, though the number of secular clergy rose slightly again in the 1960s before resuming its downward trend.

**Figure 1.1: Growth and decline of Liverpool Archdiocese 1930-2010**



<sup>64</sup> *The Catholic Directory, Ecclesiastical Register, and Almanac; The Catholic Directory; The Catholic Directory of England and Wales.*

In the major changes from around 1960 onwards it is notable that Mass attendance, adult converts and marriages fall first and furthest while the number of churches falls last and least. Only the number of churches and the estimated Catholic population have not fallen below the 1930 level, but the latter figure is unreliable, as will be explained below. The actual peak years for each of the measures (most of which do not appear in the summary chart as it is based on the 10 year points) are as follows: 1959 Adult Converts (1,630); 1962 Marriages (5,252); 1963 Mass attendance (267,251); 1966 Child Baptisms (16,288); 1967 Diocesan Priests (544);<sup>65</sup> 1969 Religious Priests (200); 1974 Pupils in Catholic schools (136,101); 1978 Catholic Population (554,737); 1990 Churches (230).<sup>66</sup>

The only measure which appears to buck the trend is that of the Catholic population, which appears to have declined only slightly. The chart shows the estimated Catholic population in 2009 as 506,772 and the Mass attendance (counted in most parishes as the average over four Sundays in October 2008) as 62,491 which, at 12.33%, is the lowest of any diocese in England and Wales.

However, a major note of caution must be sounded about these figures.<sup>67</sup> All the figures are based on annual returns from the parishes. As completing and returning these forms is not the highest priority for some priests, each year a proportion of parishes do not send in their figures and the figure from the last return they sent is simply repeated, so whether the trend is upwards or downwards, the reported figures inevitably lag behind the real changes to some extent. There is an additional problem with the estimate of the Catholic population: whilst the other figures are compiled from documentary sources such as parish registers, since most priests long ago gave up the systematic visiting of houses and the keeping of census books, the Catholic population figure is usually a guess, often the same figure repeated from previous years. For many years the Catholic Directory has included a note stating that the estimate of the Catholic population is not to be regarded as reliable. Each edition from at least 2001 to 2010 has added this comment:

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<sup>65</sup> I have ignored the figure of 550 diocesan priests given for 1957 in the Catholic Directory, assuming it to be an error, since the figure for 1956 is 508 and that for 1958 is 500, and there were in 1956 only 8 ordinations and 2 deaths, and in 1957 only 7 ordinations and 7 deaths. No figures are given for priests who leave active ministry.

<sup>66</sup> The figure for churches excludes private chapels such as those in convents.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Spencer's Pastoral Research Centre has detailed the inadequacies and discrepancies in the collection and publication of data in recent decades by the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as summarised in Spencer, A. E. C. W., ed., *Digest of Statistics of the Catholic Community of England & Wales, 1958-2005*, vol. 1 (Taunton, Somerset: Russell-Spencer Ltd., 2007).

It is generally agreed that the resultant figures underestimate the Catholic population and should not be regarded as a reliable guide to the size of the total Catholic community which is thought to be about 12% of the national population.<sup>68</sup>

Whilst the general comment about unreliability applies to all dioceses, the estimate of the Catholic population is particularly unlikely to be accurate in relation to Liverpool for two reasons. First, the percentage of Catholics in the general population has historically been much higher in Liverpool than in England and Wales and, secondly, there has been a major decline in the total population of the city of Liverpool and the surrounding region.

Between 1981 and 2001 the population [*of the North West region*] decreased by 2.4 per cent in contrast to an increase of 5.6 per cent for England. But in the period 2001 to 2007, the population of the North West grew 1.3 per cent, although this was the second lowest growth among the English regions. Within the region, Manchester showed the largest increase at 8.3 per cent between 2001 and 2007, with the population of Sefton UA [*Sefton Unitary Authority, the authority immediately to the North of Liverpool City*] decreasing by 2.4 per cent.<sup>69</sup>

The chart below, Figure 1.2, based on figures from Liverpool City Council's website,<sup>70</sup> indicates that both the City of Liverpool and the Merseyside region have continued to decline in population whilst the North West region and the United Kingdom as a whole have grown.

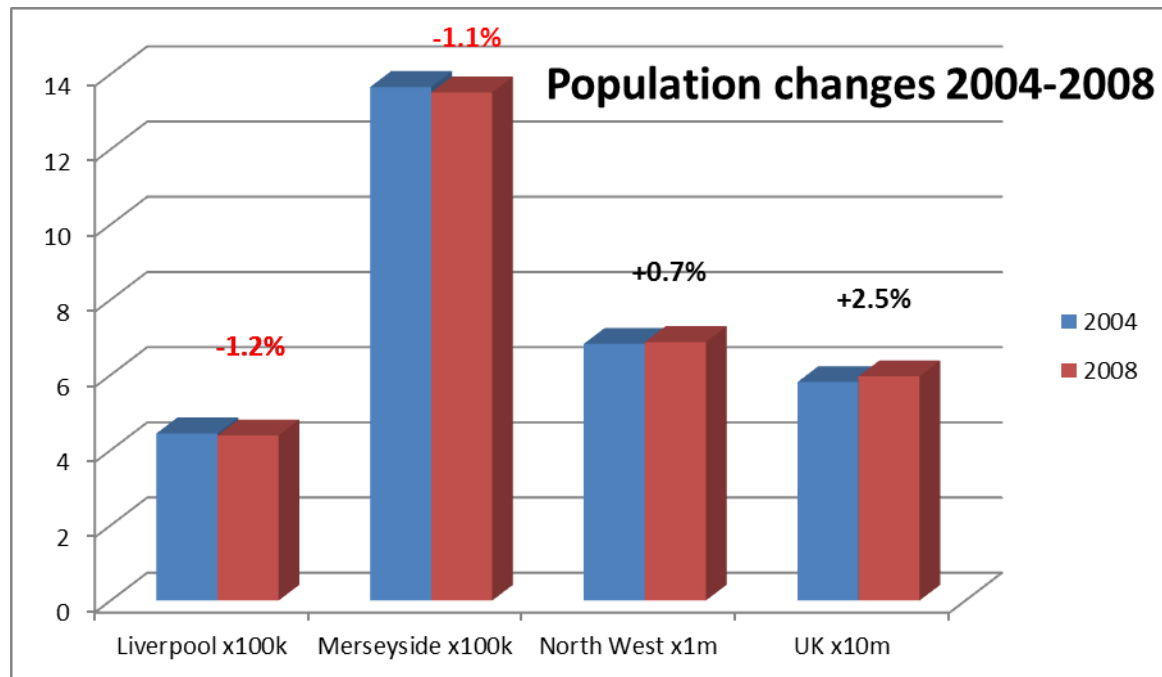
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<sup>68</sup> *The Catholic Directory of England and Wales*.

<sup>69</sup> Statistics, Office for National, (2010 [cited 21 May 2010]); available from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2230>.

<sup>70</sup> Liverpool, City Council, *City of Liverpool Key Statistics Bulletin* (Issue 1, May 2006) (2006 [cited 25th March 2010]); available from [www.liverpool.gov.uk/Images/tcm21-63085.pdf](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/Images/tcm21-63085.pdf); Liverpool, City Council, *City of Liverpool Key Statistics Bulletin* (Issue 8, January 2010) (2010 [cited 25th March 2010]); available from [www.liverpool.gov.uk/Images/tcm21-169856.pdf](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/Images/tcm21-169856.pdf).

**Figure 1.2: Population changes 2004-2008 in Liverpool, Merseyside, North West England and the UK**



The combination of these two factors means that the Catholic population figure for Liverpool is likely to overestimate, rather than underestimate, the actual number of Catholics living in the Archdiocese. Consequently, the Mass attendance figure (which is presumed to be reasonably accurate) probably represents a higher percentage of the Catholic population than 12.33%. It is also worth noting that many priests have commented on the number of Catholics who now attend Mass irregularly: this means that the average of 62,491 attending Mass each Sunday in October 2008 does not represent the total number of Catholics attending Mass but probably indicates that a much larger number attend occasionally.

This last point is confirmed by two professional research projects commissioned by CAFOD and carried out in October and November 2008 by MORI and nfpSynergy, which give a picture of the Catholic community in England and Wales significantly different from that provided by the statistics in the Catholic Directory.

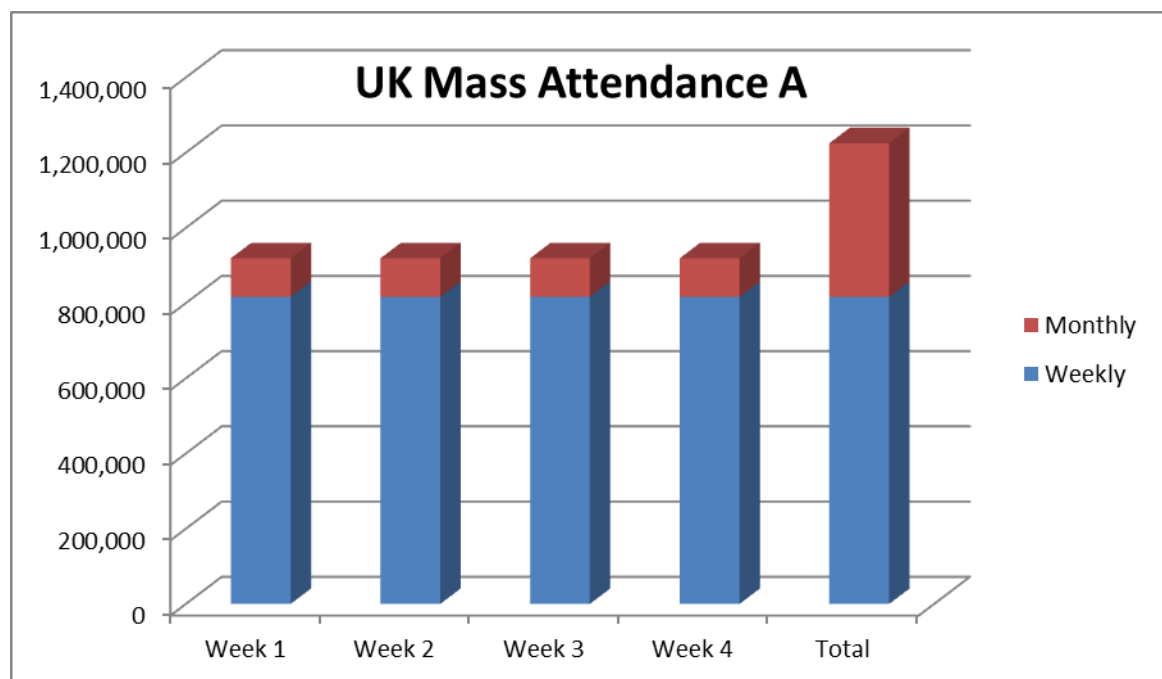
The researchers estimated that the number of people identifying themselves as Catholics in England and Wales was 5,180,000 (9.6% of the total population), that they were concentrated heavily in the North and London and that 38% of them claimed to attend Mass

regularly, about two thirds of those saying they attended weekly and one third at least once a month. They noted that there was probably a good deal of over-reporting in this result as, when surveyed, people generally exaggerate behaviours they see as good.<sup>71</sup>

If these figures were accurate there would be at least 1,469,000 at Mass in England and Wales on each of those Sundays compared with the 918,844 Mass attendance figure from the count averaged across four Sundays in October, so there is certainly some over-reporting.

However, it may well be that the proportions, rather than the total figures, are accurate (i.e. that approximately two thirds of Catholics who attend Mass regularly do so weekly and one third go at least once a month). On that basis, it is possible to extrapolate from the Mass count figure to make a rough estimate of the total number of regular Massgoers. If we assume that each of the 'at least once a month' people goes once in the four weeks of the count, we get the chart below, Figure 1.3, showing a total of 1,225,125 over the month.

**Figure 1.3: UK Mass attendance estimate A**



<sup>71</sup> CAFOD, *Understanding and Engaging with the Catholic Community in England and Wales*, (2010).



The equation for this calculation is given below, where T = total number of Catholics attending Mass over the four weeks; W = Catholics attending weekly; M = Catholics attending monthly; 918,844 = average number attending over 4 Sundays in October 2008:

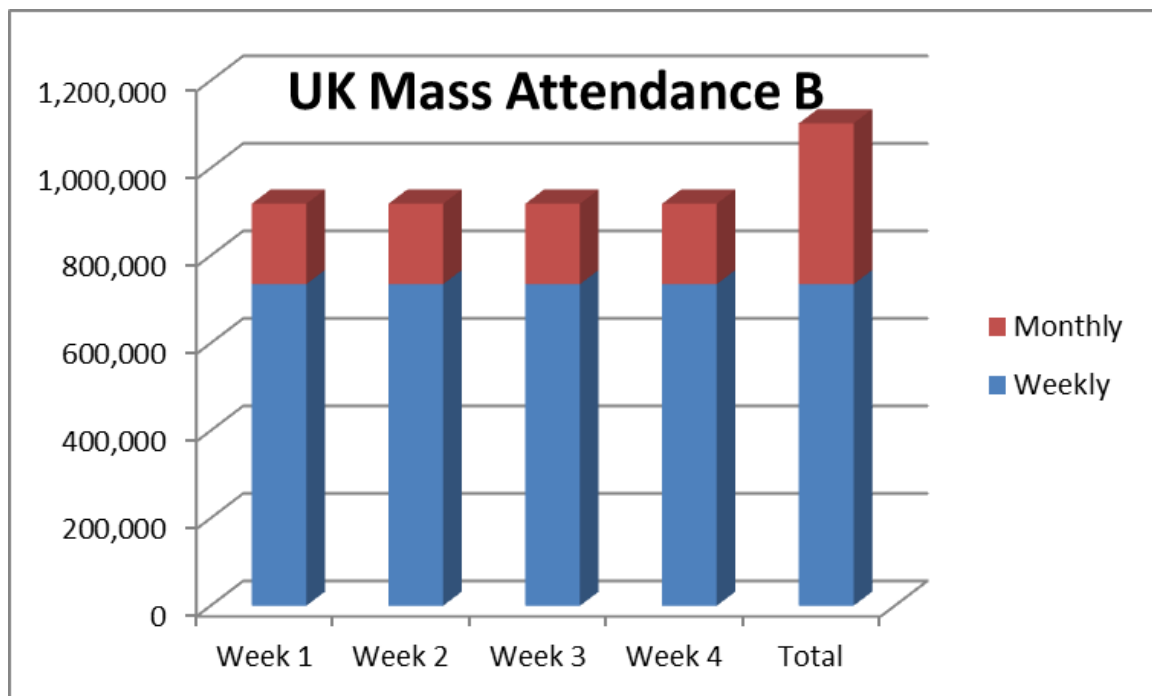
$$T = \left[ W \left( = \frac{2}{3} T \right) + M \left( = \frac{1}{3} T \right) \right]$$

$$918,844 = \left[ W \left( = \frac{2}{3T} \right) + \frac{M}{4} \left( = \frac{1}{12T} \right) \right] = \frac{9}{12T}$$

$$T = \frac{11,026,128}{9} = 1,225,125$$

If, however, we assume that each of the ‘at least once a month’ people goes twice in the four weeks, we get the following chart, Figure 1.4, showing a total of 1,102,613 across the month.

**Figure 1.4: UK Mass attendance estimate B**



Equation:

$$T = \left[ W \left( = \frac{2}{3} T \right) + M \left( = \frac{1}{3} T \right) \right]$$

$$918,844 = \left[ W \left( = \frac{2}{3T} \right) + \frac{M}{2} \left( = \frac{1}{6T} \right) \right] = \frac{5}{6T}$$

$$T = \frac{5,513,064}{5} = 1,102,613$$

It therefore seems likely that the total number of Catholics attending Mass in England and Wales over the four weeks is somewhere between 1.1m and 1.2m (i.e. between 21% and 23% of the nominal Catholic population). Applying the same formulae to the 2009 Liverpool Mass attendance figure of 62,491 produces an estimate of the total number of Catholics attending Mass at least once a month of between 74,989 and 83,321.<sup>72</sup> It is also worth noting that the Liverpool Mass attendance figure of 62,491 (published in the 2010 Directory but based on the count in October 2008) represents, for the first time in many years, a slight increase (just over 1%) on the previous year's figure, which was 61,527. Only time will tell whether this is a temporary blip or a significant turning point. The present position is analogous and opposite to that in the late 1960s, when the sustained period of growth led to expansionist policies continuing long after the growth had ceased. Today we may be in danger of planning for continued decline, when it is just possible that the tide may be turning in the opposite direction.<sup>73</sup>

Analysis of the chronological list of missions given in the 2008 Directory of the Archdiocese of Liverpool<sup>74</sup> reveals that 57 missions were in existence in 1850 in the area that is now the Archdiocese of Liverpool. 68 more were added between 1850 and 1899, followed by 61 between 1900 and 1949 and a further 54 between 1950 and 1999, making a total of 238 (see Figure 1.5 below). So the second half of the nineteenth century saw the highest number of new foundations, though the decade which saw more than any other was

<sup>72</sup> I am indebted to Philip Cunah, a student at Ushaw College in 2010, for help with these statistical calculations.

<sup>73</sup> At the time of submission of this thesis, it appears that the slight rise in Mass attendance in 2008 was indeed a blip: the 2009 figure was 57,857 and the 2010 figure (published in the 2012 Directory) was 54,505: *Archdiocese of Liverpool Directory*, (Liverpool: Gemini Print (Wigan) Ltd, 2012), p.162.

<sup>74</sup> The chronological list does not appear in editions of the Directory after 2008.

the 1960s, when 28 new parishes were started (more than half of the total between 1950 and 1999). The fact that it had become usual for priests to celebrate their Silver Jubilee as curates, only becoming parish priests 26 or 27 years after ordination (the phenomenon of ‘grey-haired curates’) is thought by some to have been a factor in the continued creation of new parishes during and immediately after the episcopate of John Carmel Heenan, (Archbishop of Liverpool 1957-1963), when Mass attendance had already begun to decline, though Doyle cites St Cyril’s parish, Netherley (opened in 1967, combined with neighbouring parishes in 2005 and closed in 2009) as an example of a well-intentioned response by the Archdiocese to projected development which failed to materialise.<sup>75</sup> Technically speaking, several new parishes have been founded since 2005 but each of them is in fact an amalgamation of several existing parishes rather than a new foundation, so they represent contraction rather than expansion.

**Figure 1.5: Mission foundation dates in Liverpool Archdiocese**



The Archdiocesan Directory for 2012<sup>76</sup> listed the churches which had been closed by the end of 2011: two in the 1960s and four in the 1970s (all but one as a result of re-development in the inner city), seven in the 1990s and 30 between 2000 and 2011. A source

<sup>75</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.382.

<sup>76</sup> *Archdiocese of Liverpool Directory*, pp.45-47.

at the diocesan office confirmed at the end of July 2012 that a further three churches had been closed in 2012,<sup>77</sup> bringing the total of churches closed to 46.

The variations in the numbers of diocesan clergy in Figure 1.1 (see p.41) warrant further examination. Belchem's comment that Catholic Irishness was 'replenished in Liverpool by the continuing influx of Irish priests'<sup>78</sup> only holds true until the beginning of the 1950s and it is intriguing that the influx stopped then, since it continued in other dioceses well into the 1960s, when vocations in Ireland also began to decline. A number of factors may have influenced the early cessation of the flow of Irish priests into Liverpool.

Doyle reports a rise in the number of diocesan priests, outstripping the growth in number of parishes, whilst Richard Downey, himself an Irishman, was Archbishop of Liverpool (1928-1954):

While the number of parishes had increased by 32% between 1930 and 1955, the number of secular clergy had risen by 58%. By 1947, indeed, the Archdiocese had a surplus of priests and was in a position to lend newly ordained ones to other dioceses. The surplus was composed of Irish priests, ordained in Ireland for the Archdiocese – the number of Irish priests had risen significantly during the Downey years.<sup>79</sup>

Behind this accurate statement lies a complex picture. Whereas entry to the English seminaries depended on the sponsorship of a diocese, the Irish seminaries accepted students who paid their own fees until such time as they were adopted by a bishop, whether from Ireland or abroad. Downey, along with other bishops outside Ireland, regularly sent senior priests to visit the Irish seminaries and recruit seminarians for service in his diocese, while Irish priests already serving abroad would sometimes recruit their younger nephews, cousins or family friends to their adopted dioceses. Fr. Michael Gaine, who was secretary to Downey's successor, Archbishop Godfrey, recalled that the new Archbishop did not continue Downey's practice of sending senior priests to Irish seminaries to recruit for the diocese and was at best lukewarm towards the Irish cause,<sup>80</sup> while Canon Brian Mullan, ordained in 1945, states in his unpublished memoir:

It was during Archbishop Godfrey's time that the decision was taken to discontinue the practice of accepting students in Irish seminaries for future

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<sup>77</sup> Aaron Kiely, personal communication, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, pp.18-19.

<sup>79</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, 269.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Gaine, personal communication, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

service in the Liverpool Archdiocese, a rash, unwise and ill considered option as future developments would prove.<sup>81</sup>

An Irish-born priest ordained in 1965 for the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle told me that when he left school in 1959 and was turned down by his own Irish diocese, he was advised that Liverpool, Westminster and Glasgow were closed to Irish priests but Hexham and Newcastle was open to Irish priests, and that a priest from his own area, serving as a parish priest in that diocese, would put in a good word for him, so he applied to and was adopted by Hexham and Newcastle.<sup>82</sup>

Plumb, in his biographical directory of deceased clergy of the Archdiocese 1850-2000, gives this description of the 'typical' priest:

Observed collectively, the deceased clergy of the diocese present a remarkable similitude. In the vast majority of cases theirs is the story of the boy from the Catholic home being sent to college or junior seminary, then on to major seminary and reaching ordination in his mid-twenties. Late vocations form a very small proportion, as do converts and men who had previously been married. And great though the Irish contribution has been, with 294 out of 1,012, contrary to popular belief it forms no overwhelming majority.<sup>83</sup>

The chart below, Figure, 1.6, compiled from Plumb's directory of deceased priests, supplemented (in respect of those still living) by information from the present Chancellor of Liverpool Archdiocese and by personal conversations with the Irish-born priests of that era who are still living, shows the number of priests ordained for or incardinated<sup>84</sup> into Liverpool for each year from 1931 to 1960, and the proportion that were Irish-born in each year.

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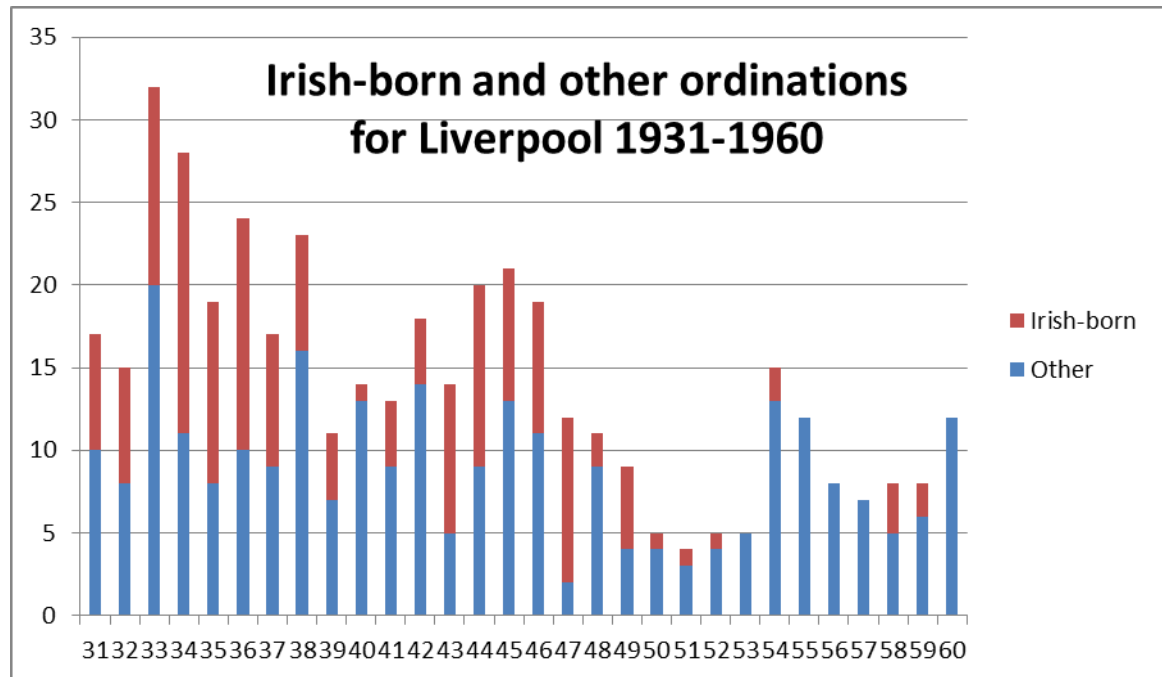
<sup>81</sup> Mullan, Brian, 'A Priestly Life' (2004), p.36.

<sup>82</sup> Personal communication, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p.3.

<sup>84</sup> At their ordination, Catholic priests make a permanent commitment to a specific diocese or religious order: incardination is the formal process required for a priest to join a diocese after having been ordained for a different diocese or a religious order.

**Figure 1.6: Irish-born and other ordinations for Liverpool 1931-1960**



The chart shows that the steady flow of Irish-born priests moving straight from school in Ireland to seminary, being ordained in their mid-twenties and choosing to serve in Liverpool, which had risen to a peak of 17 in 1934, stopped in 1951 (two years before Downey's death in 1953). Additionally, the sources indicate that of the very few Irish-born priests ordained for Liverpool after 1951 (one in 1952, two in 1954, three in 1958, two in 1959 and one each in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1968) hardly any of them fit that pattern: some had moved to Liverpool with their families while they still at school; a few had served with a religious order or another diocese before joining Liverpool; others were 'late vocations' who had studied or worked in England. In other words, they all seem to have had roots in Liverpool prior to becoming priests, unlike their predecessors who seem mainly to have received their vocation in Ireland and then chosen Liverpool as the mission field in which it would be lived out.

Doyle's reference to Liverpool having a surplus of priests and lending newly ordained ones to other dioceses is confirmed and filled out by the same sources, which show that the period of 'surplus' was quite short-lived: between 1944 and 1949, a total of 19 Irish-born priests, newly ordained for Liverpool, were sent on loan to other dioceses in England, Wales and Scotland for periods ranging from a few months to five years, but usually for the

first two years of their priesthood: two out of the ten ordained in 1944, two out of six in 1945, four out of seven in 1946, all ten in 1947, and one of the six in 1949.

World War II was clearly another major factor in this complex picture. Downey's *Ad Clerum*<sup>85</sup> in February 1944 had published a papal appeal for more military chaplains and commented that he would welcome offers of service from priests who felt called to this work.<sup>86</sup> The various sources in the relevant section of the Archdiocesan Archives mention a total of fifty priests as having served as temporary chaplains in the Army, Navy and RAF during World War II. Most of them were due for release from this service between 1944 and 1947, precisely the period in which the newly ordained Irish priests were being sent on loan to other dioceses. Some, at the request of the senior military chaplains, extended their service for a period after the war ended and a few took up permanent positions but the majority returned to the diocese, thereby contributing to the surplus Doyle mentions.

The generosity of Liverpool's contribution to the provision of chaplains during this period is impressive, but Downey's post-war correspondence with some individual chaplains and with the Principal RC Chaplains of the Army and the Air Force reveals a sharp change within a few years in the Archbishop's assessment of the adequacy of the supply of priests in the Archdiocese for its pastoral needs. Up to the beginning of 1949 he agrees readily to all requests for priests to extend their chaplaincy service or take up permanent commissions, and in 1946 he makes this response to a chaplain serving in Austria who is volunteering to offer himself for temporary service in an Austrian diocese:

I must say straight away how much I admire the apostolic motives which have prompted you to do this. Furthermore, as there is at present no shortage of priests in this Archdiocese, I feel I can give you permission to offer yourself temporarily to some Austrian Bishop.<sup>87</sup>

In May 1949, for the first time, he refuses a request for one of the priests to take up a Short Service Commission in the RAF instead of being released (despite his Vicar General having advised that 'our numbers would allow us to send a young man to the RAF if it pleases your Grace to do so').<sup>88</sup> During the next three years he increasingly resists and usually rejects such requests, citing difficulty in filling vacancies within the Archdiocese.

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<sup>85</sup> The *Ad Clerum* ('to the clergy') is the bishop's regular confidential letter to the clergy of the diocese.

<sup>86</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III A/3.

<sup>87</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III B/47.

<sup>88</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III B/62.

On 13th September 1952, he replies in these terms to a request, this time from the Principal RC Chaplain to the RAF, for the loan of a priest for three years:

Whilst I sympathize with you in your own responsibilities to the Service, I cannot possibly let you have a priest at the present time – last week I lost three priests by death within about 48 hours – another is dying at present, and I am hard put to it to fulfil my diocesan commitments.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, in February 1953, four months before his death, Downey grudgingly agrees to a twelve month extension for one of the priests serving in the Army ‘in view of the grave emergency you are facing in the matter of chaplains’ but adds ‘I do wish you to understand that I am definitely short of priests and can ill spare the services of *[name of priest]*’.<sup>90</sup>

A different section of the Archdiocesan Archives reveals that, while a large number of Liverpool priests had volunteered for service as chaplains in the Army, Navy and Air Force, further priests had been recruited from Ireland to take their places in the parishes. Some at least of these appear to have been on loan from Irish dioceses rather than incardinated into the Archdiocese. A letter to Downey from the Irish High Commissioner in London, dated 2 October 1944, referring to complaints from several English bishops over delays in granting visas for Irish priests coming to serve in English dioceses, confirmed that visas had been granted for the eleven such priests Downey had mentioned and assured him of assistance should any similar delays occur in the future. The Commissioner writes that he has again approached the Home Office on this matter and ‘they have now instructed the United Kingdom Permit Office in Dublin to resume the grant of visas, subject to the conditions which I set out overleaf, to priests coming to this country to take up spiritual appointments, whether or not they are to replace priests who had become Army Chaplains.’<sup>91</sup> One of the conditions referred to in the letter is that the priests would be coming for a period of not less than one year, but it is not clear whether the letter might refer to priests signing on permanently for the diocese as well as those coming on loan.

A story circulates among the older priests in Liverpool that at some point in 1946 all those Irish priests who were on loan to the Archdiocese but not incardinated were summoned by the then Vicar General, Monsignor Alban Atkins, and told to go home immediately. As yet

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<sup>89</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III B/64.

<sup>90</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III B/52.

<sup>91</sup> *Archive of Archdiocese of Liverpool*, S1 III B/43.



I have found no direct documentary evidence of this action and the Catholic Directory<sup>92</sup> shows that the number of priests from dioceses outside England and Wales who were working in the Archdiocese of Liverpool dropped dramatically from 35 in 1936 to nine in 1937 and two in 1938, rising to seven in 1945, then falling slightly again to four in 1946, then three in 1947, and remaining at two for several years from 1948. There does not appear to be room in these figures for a mass dismissal in 1946, though there is a question as to what happened in 1936.

The phenomenon of ‘grey-haired curates’ referred to above (p.48) may also have played a part in dissuading Irish seminarians from applying to Liverpool. It has also been suggested that the increasing ease of transatlantic travel after World War II may have made the United States a more popular destination for Irish clergy wishing to serve outside their own country.

Whatever the balance between these factors, it is clear that despite the return of so many priests from temporary service at the end of the war, the surplus of priests was indeed short-lived, and may have contained the seeds of its own destruction, as word quickly spread that Liverpool did not need any more Irish priests.

## **The Worlock years**

Derek Worlock became Archbishop of Liverpool in 1976, succeeding George Andrew Beck, who had been in ill health for some years. From 1944 onwards, as secretary to three Archbishops of Westminster, Worlock had been at the centre of the institutional life of the Catholic Church in England. When Pope John XXIII announced that he would convene a Second Vatican Council Worlock’s role was to support the current Archbishop of Westminster, the ailing Cardinal Godfrey, who was allied to the conservative forces seeking to limit the Council’s scope, through the Preparatory Commission and the first session of the Council. This made for a difficult relationship between Worlock and John Carmel Heenan, then Archbishop of Liverpool, who was seen as a moderniser with a particular enthusiasm for ecumenism. When Heenan succeeded Godfrey in 1963, he soon appointed another secretary but Worlock retained his role as director of the English and Welsh bishops’ secretariat for the Council and was eventually appointed as a *peritus*, or expert, on the apostolate of the laity. Worlock later described the Council as one of the

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<sup>92</sup> *The Catholic Directory, Ecclesiastical Register, and Almanac; The Catholic Directory.*

greatest formative influences in his life and as ‘the longest in-service training course yet devised by the Church’.<sup>93</sup> Clifford Longley’s comments on Worlock’s Vatican II diaries make clear the dramatic conversion that took place after Godfrey’s death in his attitude towards renewal and especially towards Christian Unity:

And then, quite remarkably, the tone of Worlock’s diary begins to change too. It is as if his loyalty to Godfrey had held him back from entering fully into the rhythm of Vatican II. Even at the end of the first session, he was still calling Cardinal Montini of Milan, the future Pope Paul VI, ‘an extreme leftist gentry’. There is little doubt that is what his chief thought. But within a few months, he had become a Montini enthusiast; even more surprisingly, and perhaps more tentatively, a few months further on a Heenan enthusiast too. Freed by the death of his master, he had begun to mature ... a year later, his administrative and manipulative skills were fully deployed for the cause of Church Unity, the cause Heenan had made his own, the very cause Worlock had been so disdainful of. Indeed, in the end, Worlock proved the more wholehearted convert. Heenan pulled back, while Worlock pressed on. They passed, so to speak, on the stairs. There was never a meeting of minds between them.<sup>94</sup>

During the final session of the Council, Worlock was made Bishop of Portsmouth and quickly began setting up the structures he saw as necessary for implementing the vision of the Council. Whilst in Liverpool he often repeated the response he had given when asked, at his first meeting with the Portsmouth priests, about his priorities as the Council was ending:

‘We’re going to do the lot’ I said, sounding more confident than I felt. ‘If it comes to legislation to implement the Council, we will follow each decree. I will not choose. You will not choose. In a time of change the greatest test of orthodoxy is to follow Peter.’<sup>95</sup>

Clifford Longley’s description of the result of Worlock’s attempts to implement the vision of the Council in Portsmouth was: ‘It was the very model of a post-Vatican II diocese, a state-of-the-art affair. Worlock was very proud of it.’<sup>96</sup> This positive judgement is followed, two pages later, by the less glowing assessment that ‘the verdict on his Portsmouth decade must be that he achieved most of what he wanted but learned less than he might have done’.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Sheppard, D. and Worlock, D., *Better Together* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), p.11.

<sup>94</sup> Longley, Clifford, *The Worlock Archive* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 2000), pp.138-9.

<sup>95</sup> Sheppard, *Better Together*, p.16.

<sup>96</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, p.272.

<sup>97</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, p.274.

Worlock brought with him to Liverpool this same determination to implement the whole of Vatican II and he remained committed to promoting the lay apostolate, but two particular issues were prioritised from the beginning:

Worlock sometimes stated that he reached Liverpool with specific instructions from Pope Paul VI – his ‘double mandate’, he called it – to take care of the people’s social and material needs and ensure that Liverpool did not become ‘another Belfast’.<sup>98</sup>

His working partnership and personal friendship with David Sheppard, who had been appointed to the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool in 1975, became key to both these aims, and the pragmatic approach they shared in pioneering work for Christian Unity and social justice is well documented, not least through the books they co-wrote.<sup>99</sup>

In statistical terms, Liverpool had already passed its peak and the transition into decline was well under way before Worlock arrived in Liverpool, but decline was certainly not the mood of Worlock’s early years (during which I was a seminarian, a deacon on placement in the diocese and then a young priest). The election of Pope John Paul II in 1978, the National Pastoral Congress held in Liverpool in 1980 (which Worlock had orchestrated) and the Papal Visit in 1982 (in which he was closely involved) all contributed to a heady atmosphere of change and renewal. There was a sense both within the Archdiocese and across the country that Liverpool was leading the way and this was clear both to those who welcomed the renewal and to those who resisted it.

From his arrival in Liverpool, Worlock had promoted a series of initiatives aimed at increasing participation in the life of the Church, quickly disbanding his predecessor’s Pastoral Council in an attempt to address the underlying issues which, according to Doyle, had marred its otherwise worthwhile efforts: authentic representation and effective communications.<sup>100</sup>

Worlock clearly wished to introduce parish councils but, recognising the unpopularity of that idea with many priests, he started by recommending a ‘Twelve Apostles scheme’ in which he encouraged each priest to gather a team of twelve key laypeople, clearly reminiscent of his own ‘Team’ (a group of committed laymen whom he had gathered,

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<sup>98</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, p.278.

<sup>99</sup> Sheppard, *Better Together*; Sheppard, D. and Worlock, D., *With Hope in Our Hearts* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995).

<sup>100</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.375.

trained, and worked with before and during the Council<sup>101</sup>) and of the kind of lay formation he had encouraged through the Young Christian Workers movement in his earlier years. In the early 1980s he instigated the formation of deanery pastoral councils (closely supported by a restructured form of deanery visitations with clear roles for the Archbishop, the auxiliary bishops who did most of the visitating, the deanery pastoral council, the deanery clergy, and the Archdiocesan commissions and agencies) and eventually, in 1985, decided the time was right to re-introduce an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, modelled on the structures he had introduced in Portsmouth and on the processes used in the National Pastoral Congress. If there was a weakness in this approach, it was a tendency to move on to the next stage before the preceding one had been completed. Some parishes and deaneries never had set up effective pastoral councils, so the clear and open flow of views and information which Worlock envisaged was hampered by the fact that some of the 'delegates' were simply individuals who had been asked to come along, bringing with them only their own views and having no forum in which to give an account of what was discussed or decided. The structure looked better on paper than it was in reality. However, having led the Secretariat of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council from its inception in 1985 until I moved to Ushaw shortly before its final meeting in 1997 (under the present Archbishop, Patrick Kelly), I would say that despite this weakness it was a serious and largely successful attempt to encourage lay participation, to communicate the vision and content of Vatican II and some major post-conciliar documents and to engage laypeople, clergy, Catholic organisations and Archdiocesan departments and agencies in genuine dialogue about the most effective ways to carry out the Church's mission within the Archdiocese. The frequency, format and content of the Council's meetings varied in relation to the topic being considered and the evaluation of previous sessions by the elected Steering Committee, but it met once in most years, generally with wide circulation of a preparatory discussion document (around 30,000 copies were usually distributed through parishes, organisations and, sometimes, schools) before a two-day meeting for over 250 delegates and a full report in the Archdiocesan newspaper. The themes of the meetings reveal some of the priorities of the Archdiocesan administration under Derek Worlock:<sup>102</sup> *Sharing in Christ's Life and Mission* (1985); *Gospel-Inspired Laypeople* (1986); *Taking Stock: Our Life in Christ* (1987); *Together in Mission and Ministry* and *Holiness in Mission*

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<sup>101</sup> Frequently mentioned in the Vatican diaries (see Longley, *passim*, but especially pp.148-9)

<sup>102</sup> Archdiocesan Pastoral Council papers in my possession

*and Ministry* (1988); *Growing in Mission and Ministry* (1989); *Proclaiming the Kingdom* (1990); *That the World May Believe* (1991); *Our Catholic Schools* (1993); *In Communion with Christ* (1994); *Priests and People Working Together* (1995); and *A New Covenant with the Poor* (1996). Delegates at every session included Anglican and Free Church representatives and local Catholic MPs and Council Leaders were always invited. Alongside the predictable topics of Christian Formation, Young People, Family Life and Ecumenism, meetings frequently addressed issues such as Working and Non-working Life, Integration of People with Disabilities and Social, Neighbourhood and Political Involvement. Each meeting included a progress report on what had happened in response to the recommendations of the previous one, with increasing clarity as to what could be done centrally and what needed working out at local level. The Archbishop memorably said to the delegates at the end of the 1986 meeting: 'I charge you here and now to be co-responsible with me to implement this programme of action'.<sup>103</sup>

Alongside these structures for consultation, there was major investment in providing formation for laypeople involved in liturgical and catechetical roles, in ministry with families and people with specific needs and in the Church's engagement with the world, not least through an active Justice and Peace Commission. The fact that the Archbishop always had a clear view as to how any task should be approached could lead to tensions. For instance, the fact that he and Bishop Sheppard gave only reluctant support to what was then called Broad Based Organising (better known today as Citizens Together), because they feared that its confrontational tactics could clash with their preferred approach of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, is, I believe, the main reason that its success in similarly deprived areas of London, Bristol and other cities has not been replicated in Liverpool.<sup>104</sup>

Another Vatican II initiative which Worlock undertook with determination and enthusiasm was the restoration of the permanent diaconate. One of his first acts on arriving in Liverpool in 1976 was to appoint a Director for the Permanent Diaconate, Monsignor Austin Hunt, who still holds that post in 2012. The first ordinations took place in 1979 and over 100 permanent deacons were ordained before Worlock's death in 1996, by far the largest number in any English diocese at that time.

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<sup>103</sup> Archdiocesan Pastoral Council papers in my possession

<sup>104</sup> I was the secretary to a joint working party set up by Worlock and Sheppard to consider the appropriateness of the Broad Based Organising approach.

Worlock's relationship with the priests of the Archdiocese did not begin well. It was widely assumed that he was disappointed at being appointed to Liverpool rather than Westminster and his diaries confirm that he found the transition to the North very difficult. The antipathy between Southerners and Northerners was felt on both sides.<sup>105</sup> The speed with which he produced his Pastoral Plan provoked accusations of imposing solutions without due regard to the experience and views of those 'on the ground' and its proposals for rationalising the parishes in the depleted North End of the inner city met with particularly fierce opposition. A few priests never overcame the initial antipathy, remained sceptical about his commitment to structures or became bitter over clashes with him, but the majority came to respect his prodigious energy, efficiency and dedication to the good of the Church and many experienced his compassion when they went to him in any real difficulty. Longley's judgement is insightful here:

Catholic bishops play a surprisingly important role in the emotional lives of their priests even when they do not see each other very often – an aspect of the psychology of celibacy, perhaps – and some clergy develop an almost neurotic preoccupation with 'what the bishop thinks of me'. Worlock was not the type to defuse such feelings; on the contrary he could exacerbate them by his own insensitivity which at times, in the opinion of some, had a hint of paranoia. (He was preoccupied with what other people thought of him.) In psychological terms an Archdiocese like Liverpool was an immensely complex task of man-management. Given his disadvantages, personal and circumstantial, it is hard to see what more he could have done. It was not long before Liverpool absorbed him, and he it.<sup>106</sup>

The sudden death in 1988 of his trusted auxiliary bishop, Anthony Hitchen, was, I believe, a kind of watershed in Worlock's episcopate in Liverpool. Hitchen had been one of two new auxiliary bishops appointed after Worlock's arrival and, amongst his many other talents, he was for Worlock what Worlock himself had been for Griffin and Godfrey in Westminster: the hatchet man, the one who would do the difficult and unpopular jobs. His death was a setback to the Archdiocese and a great personal loss to Worlock. Hitchen had been chairing the Shared Responsibility Committee<sup>107</sup> which was considering some radical responses to the continuing decline in church practice and in the number of priests. Its work had always been hampered by Worlock's reluctance to close parishes and with Hitchen's death, the steam went out of that project and it became increasingly clear that the decline

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<sup>105</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, pp.208-16.

<sup>106</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, p.275.

<sup>107</sup> I was secretary to this Committee.

was continuing despite the string of initiatives Worlock had introduced. In 1992 Worlock became seriously ill with cancer and the following year, presiding at the funeral of Kevin O'Connor (the other new auxiliary bishop who had been ordained with Hitchen) he appeared sad and defeated. He struggled on heroically (some would say desperately) through several episodes of surgery and treatment. There were still major events and there were grace-filled occasions when his physical frailty enabled him to own other weaknesses and to seek reconciliation with individuals who had been at odds with him, but for those closely involved with the life of the Archdiocese, the last few years of his episcopate increasingly had a feeling of drift and decline.

### **The Kelly years**

On Worlock's death in 1996, he was succeeded by his neighbour, Patrick Kelly, Bishop of Salford, a man of quite different character and experience. Some twenty years younger than Worlock, he had been a student at the English College in Rome during the Second Vatican Council, where he developed a lifelong passion for theology, especially as taught and practised by Bernard Lonergan. After ordination, he served for a brief period as curate at Lancaster Cathedral and then spent 18 years in the seminary at Oscott, first as professor of dogma and later as rector. His arrival in Liverpool was awaited with some trepidation on several counts. During his time in Salford he had pioneered a radical re-ordering of the sacraments of initiation, based on faithfulness to the historical and liturgical tradition, which contrasted sharply with the existing practice in Liverpool.<sup>108</sup> He had also adopted a policy of routinely accepting parish priests' resignations when tendered at the mandatory age of 75, whereas Worlock's response to such resignations had usually been to ask 'Do you feel able to carry on?' and there were, by 1996, around 30 parish priests still in post who were well beyond the statutory age. Salford was also one of the few remaining dioceses which had not restored the permanent diaconate while Liverpool had more permanent deacons than any other diocese in the country. Disarmingly cheerful where Worlock had been serious and intense, the new Archbishop swiftly made a round of the deaneries, meeting priests and religious, and assuring them that he knew Liverpool was not

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<sup>108</sup> The Salford reversal of the practice of the twentieth century, placing the three Catholic sacraments of initiation in their traditional order, baptism, confirmation and eucharist, with confirmation immediately before first communion, would be even more controversial in Liverpool, where confirmation was usually celebrated later than in Salford, often at the age of 14 or 16.

Salford and he was not going to impose the policies of his previous diocese. Impatient with structures and sceptical of strategies, he encouraged local responses to local needs, always insisting that there is no shortage of priests in England and Wales, and offering comparisons, for instance, with dioceses in Latin America.

A report by the Queen's Foundation in 1999<sup>109</sup> praised many aspects of the life of the Archdiocese, including the resilience and Catholic identity of its people, the faithfulness and commitment of its priests and its strong financial planning, but was critical of a lack of strategic pastoral planning. While the summary acknowledged that the Archbishop was considered to be personable, approachable, a man of spirituality and a good theologian, and that the space he gave for pastoral creativity at local level was appreciated, it also criticised the absence of a coherent pastoral strategy and the lack of any process of shared reflection, consultation, evaluation and decision-making through which such a vision and strategy could be elaborated.

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, which had been discontinued in the new Archbishop's second year, was eventually replaced by a Council for Evangelisation, whose deliberations led in time to the formation of the pastoral approach named *Leaving Safe Harbours*, drawn up with the help of an external consultant and launched in 2006.<sup>110</sup> The deaneries were adjusted and renamed 'pastoral areas'. Three of these areas were designated pilot areas and invited to respond to the particular challenges (or missions, as the Archbishop preferred to call them) each one had. The plan envisaged a three-stage process, with central support to be provided initially to the three pilot areas and then to five more areas moving into the first phase each year, so that all 24 areas would have gone through the process within a few years, each arriving at the point where a team of three or four priests would be looking after the equivalent of eight or ten parishes, supported by a full time administrator and two full-time pastoral workers. By 2010 the promised central support was not yet fully in place and only two pastoral areas had formally presented their development plans, but different models were being talked about and experimented with in different areas. The strategic plan outlined in the *Leaving Safe Harbours* documents had not been followed through but a slower, more organic process was gradually taking place. By 2012, a further four pastoral

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<sup>109</sup> Confidential report supplied to me as a participant in the Queen's Foundation study.

<sup>110</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3.



areas had presented formal plans for reorganisation. Where local consultation has proposed the closure of parishes, the Archbishop has not hesitated to support this action. At least two problems identified in the Queen's Foundation Report still persist: many priests and people still have 'a parochial mentality which reacts to immediate needs in its own area rather than analysing the overall diocesan reality' and 'much of the thinking and pastoral development in the diocese is priest-driven rather than community centred'.<sup>111</sup>

In 2008 Archbishop Kelly announced that he was reviewing the permanent diaconate<sup>112</sup> and in 2009 he began the process of restoring the order of the sacraments of initiation and introducing a process of family catechesis. As he approaches the point in 2013 at which he must offer his resignation, he still appears to have energy for new initiatives, but, apart from the shortlived 1% rise in Mass attendance between 2007 and 2008 (see p.47), the decline of the last fifty years seems to continue unabated.

The chart below, Figure 1.7 shows the number, age and status of the diocesan priests (excluding the bishops) of the Liverpool Archdiocese in January 2010.<sup>113</sup>

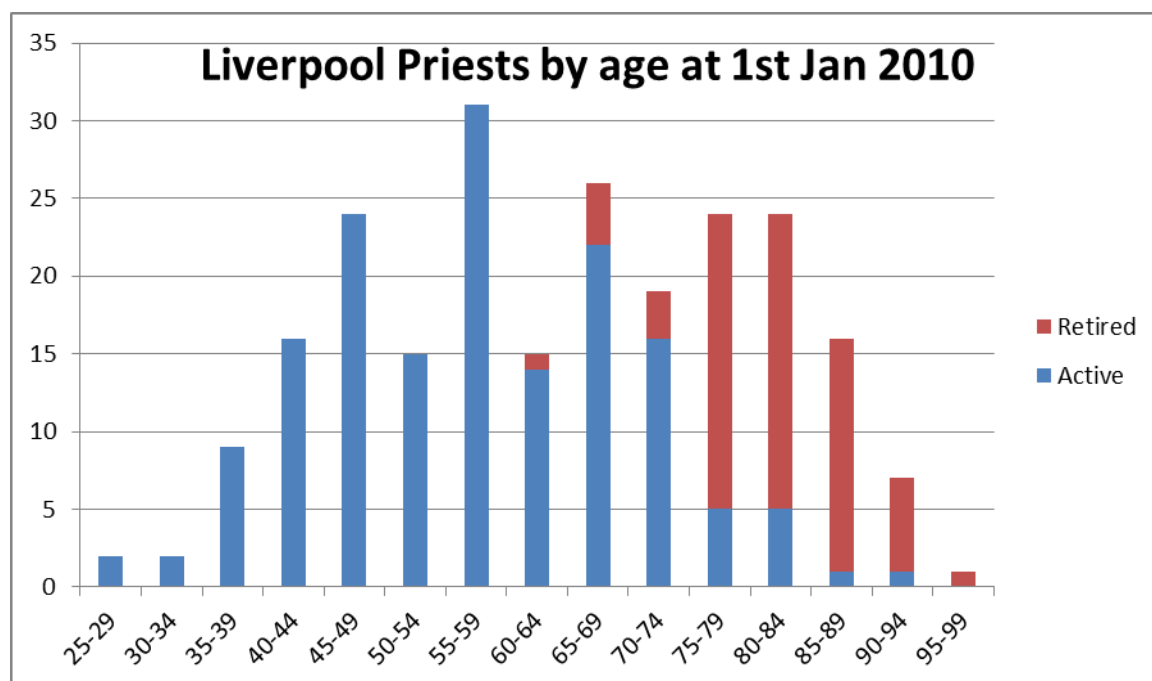
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<sup>111</sup> Confidential report supplied to me as a participant in the Queen's Foundation study.

<sup>112</sup> A report of an address on the permanent diaconate in 2008 by Archbishop Kelly appears as Appendix 4.

<sup>113</sup> The data for this chart was kindly supplied by Mrs Maureen Cooney, secretary to the George Andrew Healthcare Scheme.

**Figure 1.7: Liverpool Archdiocese priests by age at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010**



A total of 163 priests were described as active in 2010. This included approximately 30 who were serving outside the Archdiocese (in the forces, seminaries, missions or other postings), in full-time specialised ministries within the Archdiocese or on leave for study, health or other reasons. Of the remaining 133, at least another 12 combined parish ministry with very significant other responsibilities and many more would have some responsibility other than the parishes they serve. Between them in 2010 they served 168 parishes and another 21 were in the care of religious priests, though by 2012 at least four parishes would be handed back by the religious to the care of the Archdiocese and a number of other parishes would be merged. The chart shows the age distribution of the priests, with only 13 under 40: the average age of the active priests was 66.9. With only one priestly ordination having taken place in 2009, none in 2010 or 2011, five due in 2012 and only five expected in the following five years, the pace of change will inevitably accelerate, with fewer and older priests coming under increasing pressure to deliver the services expected by the people.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has set out some key themes in the history of the Archdiocese of Liverpool which still influence the ways in which the current cohort of priests regard themselves and their ministry. In particular, it has highlighted the dramatic growth in all the vital signs of the Archdiocese during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Conversely, it has detailed the even more dramatic decline from the mid-1960s onwards, focusing on the reducing number and increasing age of the priests. Even in the unlikely event of this trend being reversed immediately, and the annual ordinations returning to the levels common in the decades of expansion, the number of priests available to serve in the parishes of the Archdiocese would inevitably continue to fall for many years to come. The strategies which have begun to address the changing ratio between the number of priests and the number of parishes will mitigate some of the effects of this trend, but it is clear that the patterns of ministry to which priests and people became accustomed during the years of growth will not be sustainable in the foreseeable future.

This is the reality facing the group of priests from which the sample for this research project was drawn and it is the context in which it was carried out, listening to the experience and concerns of the priests involved and analysing their self-understandings. The remaining chapters of this thesis will set out the design of the project, the process through which it developed, the findings it produced, the avenues for further research it has uncovered and the recommendations it makes for enabling the priests of the Archdiocese to minister more effectively in this challenging situation.

## 2. The evolution and methodology of this project

Practical theology has been described as the theology of practices. Kathleen Cahalan offers this description of the discipline:

Practical Theologians attend to the immediate realities of the Christian life as it is being lived in particular social and historical contexts and examine the normative claims of how to live more faithfully in the near and distant future. Practical theologians study what is and what is coming to be in order to articulate a theological understanding of how the Christian community, individually and as an ecclesial body, lives and can live more faithfully. Practical theologians pay close attention to the particular, local, contextual, existential, actual and specific dimensions of lived Christian faith.<sup>114</sup>

Cahalan also laments the fact that, until recently, ‘Catholics have given considerable attention to a theology of the minister, but scant attention to a theology of ministry’ and argues that the practices of ministry, far from being merely functional, are ‘embodied forms of expression and ways of knowing, communal and social forms of engagement that have a history and bear the tradition ... intentional actions engaged to shape disciples and communities for faith and witness ... As practice, they are integral to the formation of identity’.<sup>115</sup>

The word ‘evolution’ in the title of this chapter is chosen advisedly as the project changed and developed in various ways during the six years taken to complete it. The idea for a study in this area had been growing for some time before it was formulated as a research proposal in 2006. The impetus for this study arose from the fact that significant change has taken place and is taking place in the practice of ordained ministry in the Archdiocese in which I serve as a priest, and in many other dioceses. The study aimed to pay close attention to that practice, using tools from the human sciences and the Church’s tradition to seek a theological understanding which will enable more faithful living.

The introduction has described my involvement over many years, working with a variety of groups, institutions and dioceses, in engaging with the implications for ministry of the fact that, across the UK, most indicators of institutional vitality in the Roman Catholic

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<sup>114</sup> Cahalan, K. A., ‘Pastoral or Practical Theology? Limits and Possibilities’, in *Keeping Faith in Practice: Aspects of Catholic Pastoral Theology*, ed. J. Sweeney, Simmonds, G. and Lonsdale, D. (London: SCM, 2010), p.107.

<sup>115</sup> Cahalan, ‘Pastoral or Practical Theology?’, pp.108-10.

community (such as the numbers of people attending Mass regularly and of priests) have declined since the mid-1960s and this process has become more rapid since the 1990s. Dioceses have tried a variety of strategies for maintaining the provision of pastoral ministry, usually involving some priests taking on responsibility for more than one parish, often in collaboration with other priests and lay workers and sometimes with deacons. The exception to the trend has been that, since the restoration of the permanent diaconate, the number of permanent deacons has risen from zero to a significant number in most dioceses. The model of a parish priest, with or without assistant priests, ministering to one parish is fast disappearing and a variety of other models is emerging.

Chapter 1 of this thesis has described how, in the Archdiocese of Liverpool, these trends have been sharper than in any other UK diocese, with a massive decline in most statistics (Mass attendance, for instance, fell from 267,251 in 1963 to 62,491 in 2008<sup>116</sup>) and the ordination of over 100 permanent deacons. The current process for revising pastoral structures in Liverpool, entitled *Leaving Safe Harbours*,<sup>117</sup> recommends the grouping of parishes into ‘pastoral areas’ served by small teams of priests, deacons and lay workers but, as was reported in Chapter 1, the implementation of that vision is proceeding less rapidly than was envisaged.

For these reasons, and because, as explained in the introduction, two colleagues were beginning studies on lay ministry in Liverpool and on the permanent diaconate in England, Wales and Scotland (in which Liverpool would be strongly represented), it seemed opportune to embark on a study of the self-understandings of the priests who are at the centre of these major changes. I was concerned about my own experience, and that of the priests in our diocese, of ‘managing decline’: the prospect of fewer, older priests looking after increasing numbers of parishes with decreasing numbers of people attending Mass, taking an active part in the life of the Church or even appearing to share its beliefs and values. I was curious about what motivates priests in this situation and what de-motivates them. This chapter will set out the evolution and methodology of the project and will locate it in relation to the relevant literature.

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<sup>116</sup> *The Catholic Directory; The Catholic Directory of England and Wales.*

<sup>117</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3

## Initial research plan

Once the research proposal was accepted, a research plan was drawn up, combining elements of Charmaz's<sup>118</sup> development of the grounded theory method pioneered by Glaser and Strauss<sup>119</sup> with what is described by Creswell and Plano Clark as an 'exploratory design' of mixed methods research.<sup>120</sup> The plan would involve gathering data, allowing theories to emerge, and then seeking additional data to confirm or disprove those theories. The initial research plan for the study included a number of elements designed to contribute to this approach:

- a review of relevant literature;
- individual 'semi-structured interviews'<sup>121</sup> with diocesan priests and bishops (and a small number of religious priests were soon added);
- a case study<sup>122</sup> of one pastoral area which was well advanced towards implementing the *Leaving Safe Harbours* strategy;
- two focus groups<sup>123</sup> of priests with experience of serving multiple parishes;
- interaction with annual clergy inservice groups; and
- a survey of all the priests (religious and secular) serving in the Archdiocese.

The planned survey was to have included the instruments for assessing levels of stress and satisfaction in ministry used in Dr Brendan Geary's survey of permanent deacons,<sup>124</sup> i.e.

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<sup>118</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

<sup>119</sup> Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L., *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, 1967).

<sup>120</sup> Creswell, *Mixed Methods Research*, pp.75-79.

<sup>121</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p.26. Charmaz uses this term to describe interviews with a few open-ended questions, falling in-between the usual categories of 'structured' or 'unstructured' interviews described, for instance by Corbin in Corbin, J. and Strauss, A., *Basics of Qualitative Research 3e* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), pp.199-200.

<sup>122</sup> Described as being useful for exploring contextual conditions relevant to the phenomenon under study by Yin, R. K., *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003).

<sup>123</sup> Morgan's account of the use of focus groups in qualitative research argues that both their strengths and weaknesses 'flow directly from their two defining features: the reliance on the researcher's focus and the group's interaction' and identifies a number of advantages which proved useful at different stages in this study: these will be reported when the focus groups are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Morgan, D., *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Second ed. (Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage, 1997), p.13 and ff.

Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin and Lewis' revised version of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM)<sup>125</sup> and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS), which was devised by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle,<sup>126</sup> as well as a specific questionnaire using categories designed to probe issues emerging from the early stages of the research.

All the participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet and signed a Consent Form approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Durham's Department of Theology and Religion.<sup>127</sup>

The diary exercise (see p.76) and personality inventory (see p.182) were not included in the initial research plan but were added later.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of the elements of the plan.

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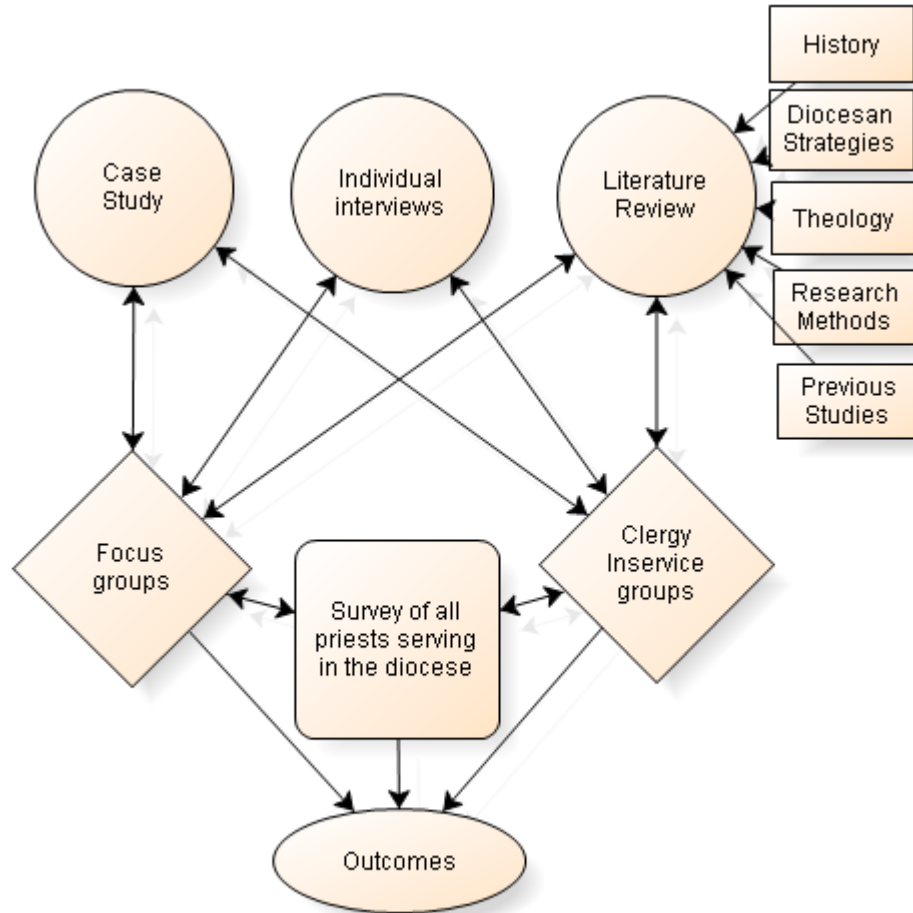
<sup>124</sup> Geary, B., 'An Investigation into Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry and Satisfaction in Ministry in a Group of Roman Catholic Permanent Deacons' (Dissertation, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England, 2007).

<sup>125</sup> Francis, L. J., Kaldor, P., Shevlin, M., and Lewis, C. A., 'Assessing Emotional Exhaustion among Australian Clergy: Internal Reliability and Construct Validity of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM)', *Review of Religious Research* 45 (2004).

<sup>126</sup> Francis, L. J., Kaldor, P., Robbins, M. and Castle, K., 'Happy but Exhausted? Work-Related Psychological Health among Clergy', *Pastoral Sciences* 24, no. 2 (2005).

<sup>127</sup> See Appendix 5.

**Figure 2.1: Initial research plan**



### **Elements of the research plan**

The elements of the research plan were designed to complement each other, providing a robust basis for any conclusions drawn by gathering data in a variety of ways and, with the exception of the planned survey, were intended to run concurrently. The following sections will describe each of the elements and the ways in which the plan evolved and mutated, but one major change should be noted immediately. In the initial plan, the interviews and the focus groups were intended to find out how a sample of the priests of the Archdiocese think and speak about their ministry, in order to define categories and themes for a questionnaire to be sent to all the priests. In fact, because of changes in my circumstances which will be explained below, and because such a large amount of rich data had already been collected through these qualitative methods, the research plan was revised to concentrate on analysis



of this data, deferring the planned questionnaire to a postdoctoral phase. A much smaller survey was later added to test the specific theories emerging from the qualitative data.

The relationship of the methodology chosen to the academic literature in the field of qualitative research will be outlined later in this chapter. Chapter 3 will provide the detailed analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews, focus groups and case study, while the survey data will be reported in Chapter 4. Here the process itself will be described.

### **The interviews**

Between July and November 2007, I interviewed 26 diocesan priests (selected to provide a range of years since ordination), four religious priests serving in parishes in the Archdiocese (selected to reflect approximately the distribution of the different congregations and a range of years since ordination) and the four bishops resident in the Archdiocese at that time.

Following the grounded theory approach of allowing theories to arise from the data, the interviews were conducted as ‘semi-structured interviews’ (see p.67) with four topics of conversation (of which the participants had advance notice):

- the words, images or models you use to describe your priestly ministry;
- the activities you prioritise in your daily and weekly routine;
- your hopes and concerns about the challenges facing priests today; and
- your views on recent developments in the life of the Church.

These questions had been discussed with colleagues and supervisors and a test interview had been conducted with one priest. In all the interviews, I mentioned the principal findings of the Hoge-Wenger study of priests in the USA<sup>128</sup> (which will be discussed at length later in this chapter, see p.99) and invited comment. Discussion of the fourth topic included (if they had not already arisen in earlier parts of the conversation) issues such as:

- calls for the relaxation of compulsory celibacy for priests;
- calls for the ordination of women;

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<sup>128</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

- the ecumenical movement;
- liturgical reform following Vatican II and the recent extension of permission to use the 1962 Latin rite;<sup>129</sup>
- the promulgation of and reaction to *Humanae Vitae*;<sup>130</sup>
- the decline in religious observance in the West;
- the increased lay involvement in ministry, both voluntary and paid;
- the rise of new ecclesial movements;<sup>131</sup> and
- the restoration of the permanent diaconate.

Not all of these topics were covered in all interviews, depending on the length of each individual's responses.

The bishops were asked to respond to the first two topics at two levels: in relation to their own ministry and in relation to what they would expect of priests in parish ministry.

The religious priests were invited to reflect on any distinctive characteristics of their priestly ministry as members of a religious congregation and to comment on the view that religious clergy serving in parishes may have some advantages over their diocesan colleagues. Here I invited comment on seven possible factors:

- the investment congregations have made in clarifying their charisms;<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> In July 2007 Pope Benedict XVI wrote to all bishops declaring that the Latin Missal of 1962, replaced by the vernacular translations following the Second Vatican Council but never formally abrogated, was to be available as an 'extraordinary form' of the liturgy. This extension of the permission to use the 'old' Latin rite was intended to appease those traditionalists who had never accepted the liturgical changes of the Council: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20070707\\_lettera-vescovi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070707_lettera-vescovi_en.html)

<sup>130</sup> Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical letter, *On Human Life*, which became controversial because it reaffirmed the Catholic Church's traditional prohibition of artificial contraception when a change in that teaching had been widely anticipated: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

<sup>131</sup> Many new ecclesial movements have flourished in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, though some began before the Council. They are usually founded by charismatic individuals and demand radical commitment from their members. Some of the best known are the Neo-Catechumenate, Communion and Liberation and, in the UK, Youth 2000. In the terms of this study, many of these movements would tend more towards the second, world-judging view of Catholicity than to the first, world-affirming view.

- different structures of support and accountability;
- closer relationships with superiors (and, often, involvement in the processes of their appointment);
- collaborative processes for decision making;
- frequent changes of responsibility;
- community life; and
- Linville's theory (explained in more detail on p.171) that people with a multi-faceted self-understanding may be less affected by stressful events in one area of their lives.<sup>133</sup>

After the recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional audio typist, I checked each one against the sound recording, editing it for accuracy, and loaded it into the data analysis programme NVivo7.<sup>134</sup>

Following the grounded theory method, each interview was then initially coded on the basis of its content: each paragraph was considered and allocated as many codes as there were themes in it, paying particular attention to words expressing actions or feelings. These initial codes (usually between 150 and 250 for each interview) were then sorted and refined under a smaller number of headings (in the process Charmaz describes as 'focused coding'<sup>135</sup>) applicable to the whole body of interviews. The structure of the focused coding was developed and altered as each interview was added and was influenced by three sets of factors: my own experience and assumptions; categories from previous empirical research (especially the Hoge-Wenger analysis of the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood prevalent among US Catholic priests, Linville's theory of self-complexity, and earlier studies of religious and secular priests); and the interview questions which shaped the interviewees' responses. In the analysis and discussion of this qualitative data in Chapter 3,

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<sup>132</sup> Religious orders and congregations use this term to denote what is specific about their spirituality and mission, usually based on the teachings or example of the founder.

<sup>133</sup> Linville, P. W. , 'Self-Complexity and Affective Extremity: Don't Put All of Your Eggs in One Cognitive Basket', *Social Cognition* 3, no. 1 (1985); Linville, P. W. , 'Self-Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer against Stress-Related Illness and Depression', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 4 (1987). I am grateful to Brendan Geary for alerting me to this theoretical support for what had previously been an intuitive conviction.

<sup>134</sup> Later upgraded to NVivo 8.

<sup>135</sup> Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp.57-60.

priority is given to the interviewees' comments, which are used to test the acknowledged prior assumptions and tentative analyses inevitable in participant research.

### **The focus groups**

In order to prepare for the interviews and then to provide a sounding board for processing the ideas that would emerge from them, I invited some priests who already had experience of serving more than one parish to join a focus group. Since a number of those invited were keen to participate but were unable to attend on the first date planned, a second group was formed. Each group included one religious priest and six or seven diocesan priests. Both groups met in May and October 2007 and then again for a third and fourth session in November 2008 and November 2009. The discussions were recorded, transcribed and loaded into NVivo for coding and analysis in the same way as for the interviews. The first meeting of each focus group was used to prepare for the interviews. After discussion of the ground rules, including confidentiality, the participants were asked to describe their experience of ministering in multiple parishes, their feelings about that experience and their favourite model or description of priesthood and they were invited to suggest issues for consideration in the research and specific questions to be asked in the individual interviews with priests. In the second meeting of each group, participants were invited to respond to a report of the initial findings from the interviews and the diary exercise, commenting from their own experience and offering their interpretations of the data. The third meeting, in preparation for the planned survey, focused on the participants' descriptions of their personal identities, their attitudes towards the cultic and servant leader models of priesthood and the two views of Catholicity and their experiences in relation to the factors which had been suggested as making parish life less stressful for religious priests than for diocesan ones. The fourth and final meeting of each focus group took place soon after the survey. The participants were invited to discuss their experience of completing the survey and to respond to a report of the initial analysis of the data from the survey, offering their own perspectives on the interpretation of the data. This use of the focus groups for different purposes at different stages of the project is in line with Morgan's account of the strengths and appropriate uses of focus groups, including the following comments:

... in multimethod studies, focus groups typically add to the data gathered through other qualitative methods ... group discussions provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences ... issues of depth can sometimes favour focus groups ... Following individual

interviews with focus groups allows the researcher to explore issues that came up only during the analysis of the interviews. For example, if there appear to be differences of perspective across different categories of informants, then focus groups can help confirm this ... At the later stages of a survey, when the data is in and the analysis begins, focus groups can again be of value through a follow-up data collection that pursues “exploratory” aspects of analysis. This is especially important when the results are puzzling to the researchers. Too often, the tendency is to throw every possible variable into the analysis and then retreat to armchair speculation about what might have created the results. Asking the participants is a better strategy. Did they understand and respond to the questions in the way the researchers intended? Did they consider factors that the researchers had failed to ask them about?<sup>136</sup>

### **The clergy inservice groups**

The Liverpool Archdiocese currently divides its priests into four groups (deliberately arranged to provide a random mix of age, experience and opinion) for the purpose of arranging retreats and inservice courses on a four-year cycle. Each year one group is invited to a retreat and another group to a four-day residential inservice course. I made presentations about the project at the clergy inservice gatherings in October 2006 and October 2007 and attended a four-day training course for pastoral area leaders in December 2007. On each of these occasions I was able to inform those present about the project and to share some of the early findings and I had a number of informal conversations about it, but the opportunities to receive structured feedback were limited, so this element of the research plan proved less useful than I had hoped.

### **The case study**

The case study was included in the research plan in order to provide a longitudinal element to the research, tracking the views of a group of priests over a period of time. There were two principal reasons for choosing the Leigh Deanery (or Pastoral Area) as the case study for this project.

The first reason was that I was very familiar with the situation there. My family connections with the area were outlined in the introduction. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Pastoral Formation Department, which I led at that time, provided a number of courses in that area and in 1994 facilitated a series of meetings in preparation for the clustering of three of the parishes (though the clustering did not in fact take place at that time as a priest returning from overseas work was appointed to the area and the plans were put on hold). I

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<sup>136</sup> Morgan, *Focus Groups*, pp.3,11,23,27.

had a series of residences in three of the presbyteries there during the ten years I spent at Ushaw and had arranged to remain there for a sabbatical period in 2007-2008, when most of the data for this project was to be collected. During those years, although I was not appointed to any pastoral responsibility there, I celebrated liturgies in all the churches of the Deanery, attended a number of meetings of the clergy team and of the Deanery Forum (a body formed in 2002 with representatives of all the parishes alongside the deacons and priests), and led a day of reflection in 2001 (attended by about 70 people from all 9 parishes) about the history, present situation and possible future developments of the Church in the area.

The second reason was that, because of the progress already made there towards collaboration between parishes, Leigh had been named, in 2006, as one of the three pilot areas for the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process (see Appendices 2 and 3). Following the departure of a religious order and one of the local priests, a team of four priests had been appointed (two who had served there for a number of years and two who were more recently appointed to the area, though one of these had served in one of the Leigh parishes in a previous appointment). Therefore this pastoral area presented an ideal opportunity to study the formation and development of a model of priestly ministry which might well be replicated in other areas of the diocese and to see whether lessons could be learned which might assist other areas moving forward with the *Leaving Safe Harbours* strategy.

In order to seize the opportunity of the fresh start in Leigh, I first interviewed the four priests together in September 2006, before the research project had formally begun, and followed up that group interview with individual interviews within a few days. The group interview was then repeated in September 2007, November 2008 and December 2009. Because of further developments in the area, including a change of personnel amongst the priests in 2010,<sup>137</sup> I facilitated a day for the new team in July 2010 and conducted a fifth group interview in December 2011. The four deacons serving in the pastoral area at that time participated in the group interviews in 2006 and 2007. As with the interviews and focus group sessions, all the case study sessions (with the exception of the facilitation exercise in 2010, which was for the benefit of the team rather than the research) were recorded, transcribed, loaded into the NVivo programme and coded.

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<sup>137</sup> One of the original four members of the team left the active ministry and was replaced by a much younger priest.

### **The diary exercise**

This was an addition to the initial research plan. During the interviews which took place in the summer of 2007, the priests responded to the question about the activities they prioritised in a variety of ways and it was difficult to make comparisons between their responses, so, following the grounded theory method of seeking additional data to clarify the enquiry, I sent to each of the priests involved in the research project at that point (the interviewees and those involved in the case study and focus groups) blank diary sheets for the first two weeks in September 2007, with the invitation to fill in and return one or both. Some priests returned a sheet for one week only, others for both weeks. 35 completed sheets were received almost immediately, and 12 more were received later (including 7 which had been filled in for weeks in late September or early October), making a total of 47 completed returns. As the diaries were submitted anonymously, it was not possible to correlate them with the data from the interviews described in Chapter 3 or the survey reported in Chapter 4.

### **Early stages of the research**

These early stages of the research initially had two aims. The first was to discover the appropriate language, questions and categories to be used in the survey which was to have formed a substantive element of the research and the second was to begin forming theories consistent with the data. The grounded theory approach aims to begin with few preconceptions and to construct theories as the evidence is gathered and analysed. At this early stage, two related pairs of theories were emerging, though they would later be reformulated as the five theories discussed in Chapter 3 (see p.104).

The first pair concerned models of priesthood:

- a) that the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood prevalent in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA<sup>138</sup> is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual's view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes; and
- b) that the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it

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<sup>138</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*.<sup>139</sup>

The second pair concerned the different experiences of religious and diocesan priests:

- c) that the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity) which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests; and
- d) that further reflection on complex conceptions of identity, which include relationships and roles, may lead beyond an unhelpful polarity between ontology and function in the understanding of ordained ministry.

A presentation setting out the initial research plan and these emerging theories was made in January 2008 at the Ushaw Bicentennial Colloquium in 2008 *Formation for the Future - Discovering Mutually Receptive Gifts*. Progress reports on the project were given as short presentations at the annual conferences of BIAPT<sup>140</sup> in July 2008 and July 2010 and as a presentation to the Liverpool Hope University Theology Seminar in March 2009.

### **Changes to the initial research plan**

A number of factors caused the initial research plan to be modified as the project unfolded. Having formally begun the project in October 2006 whilst still a member of staff at Ushaw College, I returned to the Archdiocese of Liverpool in July 2007 for a sabbatical period, before taking up a part-time appointment in April 2008 which included a long preparation for taking over responsibility in September 2010 for a large and busy parish previously served by one of the religious congregations.<sup>141</sup> During 2008 and 2009 I helped to facilitate the Archbishop's review of the permanent diaconate and from January 2009 to October 2011 I chaired a diocesan working party preparing for the major change in sacramental catechesis mentioned in Chapter 1 (see p.62). These unforeseen diocesan responsibilities

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<sup>139</sup> The Second Vatican Council's 1965 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

<sup>140</sup> The British and Irish Association for Practical Theology.

<sup>141</sup> See the Personal Background section of the introduction, p14.



and a seven-month period of illness during 2008-2009 delayed the preparation for the planned survey. Meanwhile, the data gathered from the interviews, diaries, focus groups, and case study proved so rich and extensive that, in consultation with my supervisors, I decided to postpone the planned postal survey of all the diocesan clergy into the postdoctoral phase of the research and to concentrate for the present thesis on the analysis of the data already collected. Further research into the issue of the relevance of personality to the understanding of ministry, however, led to the search for correlations between models of priesthood, theological world views or views of Catholicity and personality types. The interviews and other sources had provided some evidence of the models of priesthood and the theological world views held by the individual participants, but there remained a need for some data on the personality types of the participants. In order to meet this need, and to provide some quantified evidence of the models of priesthood and theological positions adopted by the participants, I decided to ask them to complete a personality inventory (the NEO-FFI personality inventory<sup>142</sup>) and a short questionnaire summarising their stances in relation to the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood set out on p.83 and in relation to the two views of Catholicity described on p.87. This survey was sent out in September 2009.<sup>143</sup>

The reasons for the decision to choose the NEO-FFI rather than any of the other personality inventories available will be set out in Chapter 4 (see p.182) where the design, application and results of this instrument and of the questionnaire specific to this research project will also be reported.

## **Literature review**

In the early stages of the research I surveyed the key texts in each of the subject areas which I anticipated as being relevant to the study:

- demographic trends and social history of the Catholic community;
- recent diocesan strategies in England, France, Holland and North America;

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<sup>142</sup> Costa, *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*.

<sup>143</sup> When the case study group met for the fifth and final group interview in 2011, principally because there had been further developments in that area, including a change of personnel amongst the priests in 2010, the new member was interviewed individually as well as participating in the final group discussion and, for the sake of completeness, he also filled in the personality inventory and the survey on models of priesthood and theological positions and his responses were added to the survey data analysed in Chapter 4.

- theological context and trends in the theology of ordained ministry;
- methodology for qualitative research in practical theology; and
- previous studies of priests' perceptions of their ministry.

As the project developed and the focus on the priests' self-understandings became clearer, further reading and research was necessary, especially in the area of identity studies and personality theory.

### **Demographic trends and social history of the Catholic community**

The timely publication in 2005 of Peter Doyle's monumental and detailed history of the Liverpool diocese from 1850 to 2000<sup>144</sup> has provided a rich background for research into the social and cultural history of this local church. Having been a priest of the diocese, a teacher of history in the diocesan seminary and a lecturer in history in secular universities, Doyle had full access to the Archdiocesan Archives for this project. Structured thematically, this scholarly study sheds light on the recusant antecedents of the modern Archdiocese, its rapid growth through its first 100 years and its decline since the 1960s by exploring a range of dynamic and often tense relationships between: clergy and laity; bishops and priests; secular clergy and religious orders; local, national and international hierarchies; indigenous English and immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere; Catholics and Protestants; and religious, civic and social leaders. I interviewed the author in October 2007 to explore the implications of some aspects of the history for priestly ministry today, especially the breakdown of the traditionally close relationship between priests and parishioners, built up through a range of measures, amongst which Doyle maintains that visiting homes and maintaining parish schools were key factors. Despite its title, the study effectively finishes around 1980, with just a few themes brought up to date to 2000. As my own ministerial involvement in the Archdiocese began in the 1970s, I was able to fill this gap with personal memories and a wealth of published and unpublished materials already in my possession relating to diocesan policies and strategies. In relation to the economic, social and religious history of the Liverpool region prior to 1850, the principal sources were Eamonn Duffy,<sup>145</sup> Michael Mullet,<sup>146</sup> John Bossy,<sup>147</sup> Christopher Haigh,<sup>148</sup> John

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<sup>144</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*.

<sup>145</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*.

Belchem<sup>149</sup> and a fascinating collection, discovered by chance, of extracts from the Customs Letter-Books of the Port of Liverpool<sup>150</sup>. For the broader background, the key resources were the sterling work done by sociologist Michael Hornsby-Smith in writing and collecting studies (including some specific to Liverpool) over several decades, especially *Catholics in England 1950-2000*,<sup>151</sup> and the Authority and Governance Project established in 1996 at the Queen's Ecumenical Foundation for Theological Education in Birmingham, especially the three volumes published in 2001.<sup>152</sup> Statistics about the Catholic Church, now collected by the Catholic Education Service, have been published in the Catholic Directory at least since 1789 and the website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference provides a record of press statements and other materials since 1995, whilst a former Director of the Catholic Media Office, Tom Horwood, has usefully gathered key statistics in one chapter of his critical appraisal of the current state of the Catholic Church in this country<sup>153</sup> and Anthony Spencer's Pastoral Research Centre has produced numerous summaries of relevant statistics.<sup>154</sup> The recent upsurge in immigration from Catholic countries is examined in a Von Hügel Institute report which highlights the different expectations immigrants have of the local church and its priests.<sup>155</sup> I also did a considerable amount of original research in the Archdiocesan Archives in relation to the number and proportion of Irish-born priests in Liverpool and into the number of Liverpool priests serving as chaplains in the armed forces during the Second World War. Gerald Arbuckle's *Grieving for Change*<sup>156</sup> underlines the need to recognise and respond to the feelings of sadness and loss occasioned by change and the tendency of Christian communities to deny the experience of decline, suppressing the grief and attempting to carry on as if nothing is

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<sup>146</sup> Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829*.

<sup>147</sup> Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*.

<sup>148</sup> Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries*.

<sup>149</sup> Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*.

<sup>150</sup> Jarvis, ed., *Customs Letter-Books 1711-1813*

<sup>151</sup> Hornsby-Smith, ed., *Catholics in England 1950-2000*.

<sup>152</sup> Bebb, A. and Roper, A., ed., *A Painful Process* (Chelmsford: Matthew James, 2001).

Timms, Noel ed., *Diocesan Dispositions and Parish Voices in the Roman Catholic Church* (Chelmsford: Matthew James, 2001).

Timms, Noel, *You Aren't One of the Boys: Authority in the Catholic Priesthood* (Chelmsford: Matthew James, 2001).

<sup>153</sup> Horwood, Tom, *The Future of the Catholic Church in Britain* (London: Laicos 2006).

<sup>154</sup> Spencer, ed., *Digest of Statistics*.

<sup>155</sup> Davis, Francis et al, *The Ground of Justice: The Report of a Pastoral Research Enquiry into the Needs of Migrants in London's Catholic Community*, (Von Hügel Institute, 2007).

<sup>156</sup> Arbuckle, G. A., *Grieving for Change: A Spirituality for Refounding Gospel Communities* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991).

happening. For the philosophical background, Michael Paul Gallagher's *Clashing Symbols* provides helpful parameters, especially in his use of Mary Douglas's 'group-grid' analysis of four phases in the life of cultures which he applies to the recent history of the Catholic Church.<sup>157</sup> Perhaps the most thought-provoking consideration of the present cultural context of the Church's mission in the UK is *On the Way to Life*,<sup>158</sup> a report for the Bishops' Conference by James Hanvey and Anthony Carroll of the Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life, which provides a careful study of the effects on Catholic life of modernism and postmodernism, and calls for a rediscovery of the Catholic sacramental imagination.

### **Recent diocesan strategies in England, France, Holland and North America**

In addition to a collection of published and unpublished papers concerning pastoral initiatives in the Archdiocese of Liverpool between 1978 and 2007, I have papers from my involvement in facilitating processes of renewal and formation (usually with clergy) in seven other English dioceses, which form an important, if diverse and incomplete, archive of primary material. A number of dioceses in England and Wales have published, on paper and/or electronically, plans, strategies and resources for responding to the changed situation. Some have concentrated on structural issues whilst others have focused more on evangelisation and lay formation. A recent study of diocesan strategic planning by Andrew Headon lists the published material available and compares strategic planning in three dioceses in England and Wales.<sup>159</sup> The immediate backdrop to the current situation in Liverpool is the *Leaving Safe Harbours*<sup>160</sup> process begun in 2006 and launched in September 2007 with a DVD presentation in which Archbishop Kelly explains the theological foundation and practical implications of the present plan. On the international scene, Jan Kerkhof's 1995 *Europe Without Priests?* provides studies by a number of authors on a range of attempts to maintain and revitalise the Church in the face of declining numbers of clergy. Of particular significance is the chapter by Kerkhofs and Zulhener listing 10 options tried or suggested in various countries and summarising an assessment by

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<sup>157</sup> Gallagher, M. P., *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997).

<sup>158</sup> Hanvey, J. and Carroll, A., *On the Way to Life: Contemporary Culture and Theological Development as a Framework for Catholic Education, Catechesis and Formation* (London: Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life, 2005).

<sup>159</sup> Headon, A. M. J., 'The Identification of Key Elements of a Diocesan Strategic Plan and Planning Process' (University of Liverpool, 2007).

<sup>160</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3.

Sesboué of the effects of introducing lay ‘animateurs’ in French dioceses.<sup>161</sup> The documentary evidence about the situation in France was supplemented by memories and notes of the contribution made to a 2001 clergy inservice course in Liverpool by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Lille, which had seen an even sharper decline than Liverpool was then experiencing and had responded with a major pastoral reorganisation. During 2008 I also had the opportunity, with a colleague, to make a five-day study visit to two dioceses in Holland, where we formally interviewed five priests, two deacons, three lay pastoral workers, a bishop’s secretary and four lay volunteers, gaining an impressionistic snapshot of the tensions and issues being faced in both dioceses through the eyes of those interviewed and the other church personnel we met informally. I have also learned a good deal about some of the approaches being adopted in the United States when visiting parishes and academic communities there for a total of 17 weeks on four occasions between 1986 and 2008. The American Church has produced a number of documents relevant to this question, notably the National Federation of Priests’ Councils report *Priestless Parishes: Priests’ Perspective*<sup>162</sup> and US Conference of Catholic Bishops statements *The Study of the Impact of Fewer Priests on the Pastoral Ministry*,<sup>163</sup> and *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: the State of the Questions*.<sup>164</sup> Diocesan websites in all these areas are a fertile source of information about current initiatives. One of the major differences from the UK situation is neatly summed up in the title of the 1993 report *Full Pews and Empty Altars*:<sup>165</sup> the American Catholic population continues to rise (largely due to Hispanic immigration) whilst the number of priests falls, whereas priests in the UK face decline in their congregations as well as in the presbyterate.

### **Theological context and trends in the theology of ordained ministry**

This section will concentrate on the two theological issues, models of priesthood and broader theological stances or views of Catholicity, which are at the heart of this project

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<sup>161</sup> Kerkhofs, Jan, ed., *Europe without Priests?* (London: SCM, 1995).

<sup>162</sup> NFPC, National Federation of Priests’ Councils, *Priestless Parishes: Priests’ Perspective*, (Chicago: National Federation of Priests’ Councils, 1991).

<sup>163</sup> USCCB, *The Study of the Impact of Fewer Priests on the Pastoral Ministry*, (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000).

<sup>164</sup> USCCB, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions*, (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1999).

<sup>165</sup> Schoenherr, R. A. and Young, L. A., *Full Pews and Empty Altars: Demographies of the Priest Shortage in the US Dioceses* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

and will form the basis of the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data in Chapters 3 and 4.

### *Two models of priesthood*

Although there is a wide range of theological writing about models of ministry, two models, the cultic model and the servant leader model, dominate the extensive literature about research amongst priests which has taken place mainly in the United States. Much of the research has been led by the late Dean Hoge and the following extract from a review by Jack Shea of his 2004 study summarises these models:

Church historians describe the "cultic model" as one that has existed in the church since the Council of Trent (1545-1563). It is called "cultic" because it attaches primary importance to the priest's role as leader of worship and dispenser of the sacraments. This cultic model supports the distinctive lifestyle of a priest living a celibate life, residing in a house in cultivated detachment from the people and attired in a distinctive uniform. On the other hand, the "servant-leader model" seems to date from the late 1950s and was probably related to the concern for the world's social problems as described in the early social encyclicals of Pope John XXIII, entitled, *Christianity and Social Progress (Mater et Magistra)* and *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)*. This model played down the priest's separateness and special status and found the priest closer to members of the Christian community as they struggled to live a Christian life in a secular world. The priest served as a spiritual guide and chaplain to the laity and shared with them his knowledge of the rich body of social teaching, dating from Pope Leo XIII in 1891, and applying Christian principles to the problems of modern life. Although there is a danger in oversimplifying the effects of these two models of priestly lifestyle, it is clear that the fundamental difference between them lies in a basic attitude to the world.<sup>166</sup>

Shea explains that there is support for both models in the 'almost cultivated ambiguity' of Vatican II's statements on ordained ministry, summed up in these two parts of one paragraph in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*:<sup>167</sup>

By their vocation and ordination, priests of the New Testament are indeed set apart in a certain sense within the midst of God's people ... but they cannot be of service to people if they remain strangers to the life and condition of people.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

<sup>167</sup> *Presbyterorum Ordinis* is the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests*: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651207\\_presbyterorum-ordinis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html), accessed 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

<sup>168</sup> *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 3 (translation unidentified), cited in Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

The principal findings of Hoge and his associate Jacqueline Wenger are threefold: priests ordained before the Second Vatican Council tended towards the cultic model; those ordained in the two decades after the Council were more likely to embrace the servant leader model; and those ordained from the mid-1980s onwards tended to adopt a view of priesthood which they sometimes described as a synthesis of the two previous models, but which the researchers characterised as being much more like the cultic model. Though noting the danger of stereo-typing and the fact that priests embracing these two models share common cause in their love for God’s people, their desire to serve God’s people and their love of the Church, Hoge and Wenger nevertheless list five issues on which the two groups tend to differ, summarised in the table below.<sup>169</sup>

**Figure 2.2: Cultic and servant leader models of priesthood in Hoge and Wenger**

CULTIC MODEL	AREAS OF DIFFERENCE	SERVANT LEADER MODEL
“man set apart”	<i>Ontological Status of the Priest</i>	pastoral leader
values strict hierarchy	<i>Attitude Toward the Church Magisterium</i>	values flexible structure
follows established rules	<i>Liturgy and Devotions</i>	allows creativity
defends “orthodoxy”	<i>Theological Perspective</i>	allows for theological differences
essential to the priesthood	<i>Attitude Toward Celibacy</i>	optional for the priesthood

The authors comment:

The language the older and younger priests use to describe themselves and each other helps us to understand each position. Older priests referred to themselves as servants, servant leaders, instruments, facilitators, enablers, pastoral leaders, and liberals. Younger priests called the older priests liberals, leftist fringe, secularized, anti-establishment, a “lost generation”, and priests with a social work model. Younger priests described themselves as traditional, conservative, establishment, “unapologetically Catholic,” and “ecclesialogically sound.”

<sup>169</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.114.

Older priests referred to the young men as inflexible, divisive, liturgically conservative, institutional, hierarchical, and believers in a cultic priesthood.<sup>170</sup>

Hoge and Wenger also note that this conservative trend in the younger priests is not reflected in their parish congregations, but that American laypeople are tending gradually in the opposite direction:

... the young priest and the young laity are heading in different directions on many issues. This should be a red flag: we are likely to see increasing priest-versus-laity differences in the coming years.<sup>171</sup>

The polarisation between the two models of priesthood, whilst genuine, may be overstated in the Hoge-Wenger study for two reasons. One is that not all pre-Vatican II priests can be defined by the cultic model: many priests of that era, for instance, were heavily involved in social action, large numbers of them embraced the teaching of the Council more or less rapidly, and this was, after all, the generation of priests from which emerged the bishops and *periti* (experts) who became the Second Vatican Council. The second is that, as the graphs given in the Hoge-Wenger study indicate, on the key questions concerning ontological change,<sup>172</sup> there was never a majority in any age group in any of the four surveys from 1970 to 2001 denying that ordination brings about an ontological change, the highest figure questioning that doctrine being just below 50% amongst priests aged 25-35 in the 1970 survey.<sup>173</sup>

Reduction of recent theological thinking about ordained ministry to these two models, servant leader and cultic, is, of course, an oversimplification, as can be seen from Dulles' *The Priestly Office*,<sup>174</sup> often cited as a brief but helpful summary of the key themes in the theology of ordained ministry. Sketching the history in broad brush strokes, Dulles sees Vatican II as overturning the Catholic Church's traditional emphasis on the cultic model, which had been solidified by the Council of Trent in reaction to its rejection by the Protestant reformers, in favour of a more balanced view which puts clearly the primacy of the common priesthood, by which all the baptised share in the prophetic, royal and priestly office of Christ, but defends equally clearly the distinct capacity of the ordained to act in

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<sup>170</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.113-14.

<sup>171</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.118.

<sup>172</sup> The doctrine that ordination, like baptism, brings about an essential change in the person, thus distinguishing them from the baptised who have not been ordained.

<sup>173</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.54-55.

<sup>174</sup> Dulles, Avery, *The Priestly Office: A Theological Reflection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).



the person of Christ. Specifically Dulles defends the need for ordination as a prerequisite for celebrating the Eucharist against what he calls the deviant views of Schillebeeckx,<sup>175</sup> Kung<sup>176</sup> and Boff<sup>177</sup>, which he describes as tending towards the Lutheran position that a community could celebrate the Eucharist in the absence of an ordained minister. He acknowledges that, despite official disapproval of these views, they have remained influential amongst Catholics.

Within the range of what he regards as orthodox Catholic theology, he describes three schools, each taking as its starting point one of the three aspects of Christ's priesthood: word (the prophetic office), pastoral governance (the kingly office) and worship (the priestly office). He lists Rahner, Balthasar, Ratzinger (in his early work) and Paul VI as beginning from the word, and Kasper, Galot and Balthasar (again) as beginning from pastoral governance. In his introduction he mentions Semmelroth and Lecuyer as starting from worship but quotes only Solokowski and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the chapter devoted to that aspect, whilst John Paul II is quoted in relation to all three. Dulles argues for a resolution of the debate about the nature of the priestly character conferred at ordination by maintaining that it is both ontological (a consecration affecting the priest in his being, though 'it obviously does not mean that the ordained priest undergoes an essential change, thereby ceasing to be a partaker in our common humanity'<sup>178</sup>) and functional (imparting the capacity to perform certain acts). He goes on to comment that ordination 'imparts a new relationship not only to Christ the head, but also to other members of the body of Christ'.<sup>179</sup>

In describing Balthasar's double approach to ordained priesthood, starting from the proclamation of the word but complementing that with an emphasis on the pastoral image of shepherd, Dulles comments that 'in either case a certain "over-againstness" must be recognised'.<sup>180</sup> This lends support to Shea's argument that the two commonly held models

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<sup>175</sup> Schillebeeckx, E., and Metz, J-B. , ed., *The Right of the Community to a Priest* (Edinburgh New York: T. & T. Clark ; Seabury Press, 1980); Schillebeeckx, Edward, *Ministry : A Case for Change* (London: SCM, 1981); Schillebeeckx, Edward, *The Church with a Human Face : A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (London: SCM, 1985).

<sup>176</sup> Kung, Hans, *Why Priests?* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972).

<sup>177</sup> Boff, L., *Ecclesiology: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1986).

<sup>178</sup> Dulles, *The Priestly Office*, p.11.

<sup>179</sup> Dulles, *The Priestly Office*, p.12.

<sup>180</sup> Dulles, *The Priestly Office*, p.21.

of priesthood are related to the divergent and complementary world views of Balthasar and Rahner.

### *Two views of Catholicity*

Shea's review of the Hoge-Wenger study explains his conviction that these two models of priesthood have their roots in two different views of the world which he and others associate, in recent Catholic thought, with Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. In a similar vein, Robert Schreiter provides a sensitive and balanced view of the two interpretations of Catholicity that have shaped the Church's self-understanding. Avoiding labels, Schreiter calls them simply the 'first' and 'second' understandings, tracing the first from Ignatius of Antioch's interpretation of 'Catholic' as 'to be found throughout the world' (that is, 'defined principally by its extension throughout the world') to the eloquent beginning of *Gaudium et Spes*: a Church focused not so much on itself as on the world it was sent to redeem. He attributes the second approach to Cyril of Jerusalem's use of 'Catholic' to indicate the fullness of faith and describes its modern neo-Augustinian form as sharing Bonaventure's 'darker vision of history', seeing the world 'not as expanding as a graced reality, but a world in crisis' and drawing theological strength from some of the images in *Lumen Gentium* (the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*).<sup>181</sup> The complex relationship between these two giants of Catholic theology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar, and their approaches has been explored by numerous authors, including Rowan Williams,<sup>182</sup> Paul Murray,<sup>183</sup> Fergus Kerr<sup>184</sup> and Karen Kilby.<sup>185</sup> Aware of the complexities of their theologies and the danger of oversimplification, Shea nevertheless quotes John Allen's journalistic summary:

Expressing the difference between Rahner and von Balthasar is not easy, but one way to do so is in terms of attitudes towards 'the world.' Rahner stressed the presence of grace at the deepest level of every human being, the so-called 'supernatural existential.' Von Balthasar saw an 'analogy of being' between God

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<sup>181</sup> Schreiter, R. J., 'Pastoral Theology as Contextual: Forms of Catholic Pastoral Theology Today', in *Keeping Faith in Practice: Aspects of Catholic Pastoral Theology*, ed. J. Sweeney, Simmonds, G. and Lonsdale, D. (London: SCM, 2010), pp.5-7.

<sup>182</sup> Williams, Rowan, 'Balthasar and Rahner', in *The Analogy of Beauty*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986).

<sup>183</sup> Murray, P. D., 'Roman Catholic Theology after Vatican II', in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Murray, P. D., 'The Lasting Significance of Karl Rahner for Contemporary Catholic Theology', *Louvain Studies* 29 (2004).

<sup>184</sup> Kerr, Fergus *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

<sup>185</sup> Kilby, Karen, 'Balthasar and Karl Rahner', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs Von Balthasar*, ed. Edward T. Oakes and David Moss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

and humanity, which placed more distance between the two and thus left room, he felt, for greater realism about sin. Rahner was a basic optimist about culture, so much so that von Balthasar once accused him of negating the necessity of the crucifixion. Rahnerians tend to take *Gaudium et Spes* as their charter, while Balthasarians often see that text, and especially subsequent interpretations of it, as dangerously naïve.<sup>186</sup>

Shea comments that von Balthasar has been described as the flag-bearer for those who believe that the development of the Church after the Second Vatican Council has conceded too much to the spirit of modernity.<sup>187</sup>

For the purposes of the survey described in Chapter 4, these two views of Catholicity were summarised in four pairs of statements, as detailed in Figure 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.3: Two views of Catholicity**

<b>Two views of Catholicity</b>	
<i>First view (more world-affirming, associated with Rahner)</i>	<i>Second view (more world-judging, associated with Balthasar)</i>
1. Grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church's task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace	2. The world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation
3. God's saving work is served by all people of good will	4. Explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work
5. The opening lines of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs	6. <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> is overly optimistic about human nature and culture
7. In order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem	8. In order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world

Of interest here is Hoge's study of priests ordained between five and nine years in 1990 and a further cohort of those ordained between five and nine years in 2005, which reveals a decline in Rahner's influence alongside the decline of the servant leader model and a rise in the influence of John Paul II accompanying the resurgence of the cultic model:

<sup>186</sup> Allen, J. J., 'Word from Rome', *National Catholic Reporter*, 28 November 2003. Cited in Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

<sup>187</sup> Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

The writers who have had the most influence on the priests shifted from 1990 to 2005. In 1990 the top five were Karl Rahner, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, Raymond Brown, and Edward Schillebeeckx. In 2005 they were Pope John Paul II, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, Karl Rahner, and Ron Rolheiser. In 2005 Pope John Paul II was far ahead of all others.<sup>188</sup>

In his commentary on this finding, James Bacik observes that the authors listed as influential in 1990 were all interested in ‘posing new questions and reformulating traditional Christian teaching in response to the concerns and challenges of the contemporary world’ in contrast with Pope John Paul II’s vast array of theological writings ‘characterized more by clear conclusions than probing questions and diverse opinions’.<sup>189</sup> Hoge’s study makes no mention of Balthasar at this point, but in view of the ascendancy of John Paul II’s influence, we should note the echo of Kilby’s description of Balthasar as ‘one who, surveying a vast panorama and seeing everything in its proper place, reports the view, correcting our misconceptions as he goes’ and her judgement that Balthasar’s theology has recently been more favoured by the hierarchy than Rahner’s.<sup>190</sup> Bearing in mind Kilby’s comment that Rahner, unlike Balthasar, shied away from claims of consistency,<sup>191</sup> this study will investigate further whether the claims of connections between Rahner and the servant leader model and between Balthasar and the cultic model are justified. The primary sources for Rahner and Balthasar’s views on priesthood will be those cited by Dulles: *The Point of Departure in Theology for Determining the Nature of the Priestly Office*<sup>192</sup> and *The Priest of the New Covenant*,<sup>193</sup> but since neither wrote extensively on priesthood it may well be that the popular perception of their theological stances is more significant than their specific writings on priesthood.

Debate on the theology of priesthood, especially in the United States, has been re-ignited in recent years by opposing approaches to the shortage of priests and to the scandal of child sex abuse and its treatment by Church authorities. Against the backdrop Dulles paints, it is possible to locate contemporary proponents of different positions, notably the traditional or

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<sup>188</sup> Hoge, D. R., *Experiences of Priests Ordained Five to Nine Years* (Washington DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 2006), p.4.

<sup>189</sup> Hoge, *Five to Nine Years*, p.122.

<sup>190</sup> Kilby, 'Balthasar and Karl Rahner', footnote 3, p.266.

<sup>191</sup> Kilby, 'Balthasar and Karl Rahner', p.259.

<sup>192</sup> Rahner, Karl, 'The Point of Departure in Theology for Determining the Nature of the Priestly Office', in *Theological Investigations 12* (New York: Seabury, 1974).

<sup>193</sup> Balthasar, Hans Urs von, 'The Priest of the New Covenant', in *Explorations in Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

neoconservative reclaiming of the cultic model by authors like Michael Rose<sup>194</sup> in reaction to the more liberal views associated with the servant leader model which emerged after Vatican II, most clearly described by Robert Schwartz<sup>195</sup> and popularised by Donald Cozzens.<sup>196</sup> Theological discussion around ontological change has centred on the question of whether the priest is 'set apart' from the laity and the most promising efforts at resolving it take up the notion of 'relational ontology', for instance in the Collegeville Ministry Seminar published as *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*,<sup>197</sup> though Cahalan's complaint (cited above)<sup>198</sup> that even this relational ontology still focuses on the minister rather than on ministry must be taken seriously. A comment by Murray goes some way to addressing this concern: 'ordained ministry is not a function that is picked up and put down but the fundamental orientation into which the ordained are called to grow and out of which to act ever more fully'.<sup>199</sup> A further area studied is the extensive recent writing on the spirituality of ordained priesthood, including rich contributions by Philpot,<sup>200</sup> Philibert<sup>201</sup> and Aschenbrenner.<sup>202</sup> Since around 10% of the parishes of the Liverpool Archdiocese are in the care of religious orders, the particular experiences and spirituality of priests in apostolic religious orders<sup>203</sup> have been considered in this project in the light of Rausch's chapter on priesthood in apostolic religious communities,<sup>204</sup> Paul Hennessy's collection of essays<sup>205</sup> and a number of papers by Stephen Bevens.<sup>206</sup> In this connection, Linville's theory that people with a multi-faceted self-understanding may be less affected by stressful events in

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<sup>194</sup> Rose, M. S., *Goodbye! Good Men: How Catholic Seminaries Turned Away Two Generations of Vocations from the Priesthood* (Cincinnati: Aquinas Publishing, 2002).

<sup>195</sup> Schwartz, R. M., *Servant Leaders of the People of God: An Ecclesial Spirituality for American Priests* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

<sup>196</sup> Cozzens, D. B., *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000).

<sup>197</sup> Wood, S. K., ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003).

<sup>198</sup> Cahalan, 'Pastoral or Practical Theology?', pp.26-27.

<sup>199</sup> Murray, P. D., 'The Need for an Integrated Theology of Ministry within Contemporary Catholicism: A Global North Perspective', *Concilium*, no. 2010/1 (2010), p.51.

<sup>200</sup> Philpot, Tony, *Priesthood in Reality* (Bury St Edmunds: Kevin Mayhew, 1998).

<sup>201</sup> Philibert, P. J., ed., *Stewards of God's Mysteries: Priestly Spirituality in a Changing Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004).

<sup>202</sup> Aschenbrenner, G. A., *Quickening the Fire in Our Midst* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002).

<sup>203</sup> The term 'apostolic' distinguishes the religious orders which engage in pastoral work from those devoted to a contemplative lifestyle.

<sup>204</sup> Rausch, T. P., *Priesthood Today: An Appraisal* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), pp.82-104.

<sup>205</sup> Hennessy, P. K., *A Concert of Charisms: Ordained Ministry in Religious Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).

<sup>206</sup> Bevens, Stephen, 'Learning to "Flee from Bishops": Formation for the Charism of Priesthood within Religious Life' (2005); Bevens, Stephen, 'Images of the Priesthood in Today's Church' (2006).

one area of their lives<sup>207</sup> lends support to my intuition that religious clergy serving in parishes may have some advantages over their diocesan colleagues, alongside other possible factors: the investment congregations have made in clarifying their charisms;<sup>208</sup> different structures of support and accountability; closer relationships with superiors (and, often, involvement in the processes of their appointment); more frequent changes of responsibility; community life; and traditions of collaboration. Responses to Linville's work on complex sense of identity (see p.171) summarised by Roberts,<sup>209</sup> Bukobza<sup>210</sup> and Diehl and Hay<sup>211</sup> have added depth to this part of the analysis. The decision to include a personality inventory in the survey involved a great deal of research, especially into the debate between the Eysenck three-factor model<sup>212</sup> and the five-factor model devised by Costa and McCrae.<sup>213</sup> This debate is reported in Chapter 4 (see p.186). The further study of identity theory was based on two Open University texts<sup>214</sup> and work by Anthony Reddie.<sup>215</sup>

### **Methodology for qualitative research in practical theology**

Creswell and Plano Clark helpfully observe:

Several ways exist for learning about mixed methods research. Designing and conducting a study is one way. Others are reading good mixed methods studies, finding methodological literature in which authors discuss the procedures in this form of research, and locating literature syntheses of many mixed methods studies in particular fields.<sup>216</sup>

At the outset of this project, I knew very little about mixed methods research, but of necessity I learned a good deal in the process of designing and conducting this study and searching the relevant literature. Participating in the 2006 and 2007 Summer Schools arranged for students on the Doctor of Ministry programme run by the Department for

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<sup>207</sup> Linville, 'Self-Complexity and Affective Extremity'; Linville, 'Self-Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer'.

<sup>208</sup> Religious orders use this term to denote what is specific in their spirituality and mission, often derived from the teaching or example of their founders.

<sup>209</sup> Roberts, B. W., 'Contextualizing Personality Psychology', *Journal of Personality* 75, no. 6 (2007).

<sup>210</sup> Bukobza, Gabriel, 'The Epistemological Basis of Selfhood', *New Ideas in Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>211</sup> Diehl, M. and Hay, E. L., 'Contextualized Self-Representations in Adulthood', *Journal of Personality* 75, no. 6 (2007).

<sup>212</sup> Eysenck, H. J. and Eysenck, S. B. G., *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Scales* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991).

<sup>213</sup> Costa, *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*.

<sup>214</sup> du Gay, P., Evans, J. and Redman, P., ed., *Identity: A Reader* (London: Sage Publications, 2000); Woodward, Kath, ed., *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, Second Edition ed. (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>215</sup> Reddie, A. G., *Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2003).

<sup>216</sup> Creswell, *Mixed Methods Research*, p.170.

Theology and Religion and the Cranmer/Wesley/Ushaw partnership strengthened my grounding in the principles of practical and empirical theology, building on foundations gained through my involvement in the MA in Theology and Ministry. The Summer Schools included practical presentations on specific research methods, such as interviewing techniques. The opportunity for conversation with all three authors of *Theological Reflection: Methods* (and its companion volume)<sup>217</sup> at the 2006 conference of the British and Irish Association of Practical Theologians was also significant. Whilst I have been influenced by Ballard and Pritchard's classic work *Practical Theology in Action*,<sup>218</sup> and by John Elford's *The Pastoral Nature of Theology*,<sup>219</sup> one of the most helpful texts in this area of study has been John Swinton and Harriet Mowat's *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*<sup>220</sup> with its insistence that practical theology can and should use the tools of qualitative research without adopting that discipline's inherent scepticism about the possibility of accessing objective truth and its helpful worked examples of putting that conviction into practice. I agree with these authors in asserting that human experience is the starting point for practical theology but would not share their reservations about asserting that human experience can be a source of revelation. Apart from the advice of supervisors, colleagues and the presenters at the events mentioned above, practical guidance for developing the initial methodology of the research has been derived mainly from *Social Research Methods*,<sup>221</sup> by Alan Bryman, *You and Your Action Research Project*<sup>222</sup> by Jean McNiff et al., *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*<sup>223</sup> by David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, and from lectures by and conversation with Peter McGrail about his use of grounded theory in his research into first communion practice, published as *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity*.<sup>224</sup> A paper by Deborah Bhatti<sup>225</sup> at the Heythrop Conference on Theology for Church and Society, together with

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<sup>217</sup> Graham, E., Walton, H. and Ward F., *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM, 2006); Graham, E., Walton, H. and Ward F., *Theological Reflection: Sources* (London: SCM, 2007).

<sup>218</sup> Ballard, P. H. and Pritchard, J., *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996).

<sup>219</sup> Elford, R. J., *The Pastoral Nature of Theology: An Upholding Presence* (London: Cassell, 1999).

<sup>220</sup> Swinton, J. and Mowat, H., *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006).

<sup>221</sup> Bryman, Alan, *Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>222</sup> McNiff, J., Lomax, P. and Whitehead, J., *You and Your Action Research Project*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2003).

<sup>223</sup> Coghlan, D. and Brannick T., *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (London: SAGE, 2001).

<sup>224</sup> McGrail, Peter, *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>225</sup> Bhatti, Deborah, 'Researching Theological Contexts - a Grounded Theory Approach' (2007).

conversations with her and with Helen Cameron (co-author of *Studying Local Churches*<sup>226</sup>) further clarified that the methodology for this study should combine (as does that for Heythrop's Action Research Church and Society study) a constructivist approach to grounded theory similar to that developed by Kathy Charmaz<sup>227</sup> with elements of action research. It was only much later that I came across the description of the type of mixed methods research described by Creswell and Plano Clarke as 'exploratory design'<sup>228</sup> and realised that it fitted, better than any of the other labels I had encountered, the approach I had in fact taken. My understanding of grounded theory methods was also enhanced in the middle stages of the project by reading Glaser, Strauss and Corbin.<sup>229</sup> I reviewed a number of theses using some of the methodological tools which became elements of this research project. Particularly helpful amongst these was Mark Latcovich's dissertation on *The Effects of the Ministerial Environment on Roman Catholic Permanent Deacons and their Spouses*, not least for its process of questionnaire development and the neatly expressed insight that focus groups 'permit an investigator to learn the phraseology that participants use to describe their own experiences.'<sup>230</sup> The selection of the software programme NVivo7 for qualitative analysis of texts was influenced by consultation with colleagues, by review of product websites and by reading 'NUD\*IST in Action'<sup>231</sup> by Katie Buston, from Glasgow University's Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, and 'Data Alive! The Thinking behind NVivo'<sup>232</sup> by Lyn Richards, Research Professor of Qualitative Methodology at the University of Western Sydney. After purchasing the software, I attended a two-day training programme run by QSR International, the providers of the software, which highlighted, amongst its other attributes, the suitability of NVivo7 for grounded theory research and I later attended similar training for the upgrade to NVivo8.

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<sup>226</sup> Cameron, Helen et al., *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 2005).

<sup>227</sup> 'Constructivist grounded theory celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical worlds, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Constructivism assumes the relativism of social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understandings of subjects' meanings.' Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

<sup>228</sup> Creswell, *Mixed Methods Research*, pp.75-79.

<sup>229</sup> Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research 3e*; Glaser, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.

<sup>230</sup> Latcovich, M. A., 'The Effects of the Ministerial Environment on Roman Catholic Permanent Deacons and Their Spouses' (Dissertation, Cape Western Reserve University, 1996), p.63.

<sup>231</sup> Buston, Katie, 'NUD\*IST in Action: Its Use and Its Usefulness in a Study of Chronic Illness in Young People', *Sociological Research Online*, 3 (1997), <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/3/6.html>. accessed 14 September 2006

<sup>232</sup> Richards, Lyn, 'Data Alive! The Thinking Behind NVivo', *Qualitative Health Research* 9, no. 3 (1999).



### **Previous studies of priests' perceptions of their ministry.**

Two major recent studies have great relevance to the present project.<sup>233</sup> The first is Louden and Francis' *The Naked Parish Priest*,<sup>234</sup> not least for its summary of the history of clergy surveys in the USA up to 2000, though one small report not mentioned there has particular relevance to this study: the National Federation of Priests' Councils 1991 report *Priestless Parishes: Priests' Perspective*. This report describes three effects of the lack of a resident pastor and/or a regular Sunday celebration of the Eucharist: 'a change in the relationship of priest to his people and his ministry; a change in the experience of the celebration of Eucharist by the parishioners; and a shift in the people's perception of the identity of the priest'<sup>235</sup> and it provides reflections on both short-term and long-term solutions to the shortage of priests.

*The Naked Parish Priest* also gives the main findings of the only previous substantial and relevant UK survey to include Catholic priests, by Ranson, Bryman and Hinings in 1977<sup>236</sup> and it reports Bryman's failed effort to involve a Catholic diocese in his 1985 attempt to replicate the study.<sup>237</sup> Two other studies not mentioned are Noel Timms' report based on 65 interviews with seminarians, recently ordained priests, parochial and non-parochial serving priests, serving bishops and priests 'no longer officiating'<sup>238</sup> and Desmond Ryan's study *The Catholic Parish*, the title of which does not make immediately apparent the fact that it was principally produced by interviewing parish clergy in the Archdiocese of Birmingham and so is highly relevant to the study of priests' perceptions: his 'spiral-vortex' model of the typical parish and the priest's place in it (see p.108) has been ruefully recognised by many of the clergy groups with whom I have shared it as accurately reflecting commonly held assumptions.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> A much smaller survey of Maltese candidates for Catholic priesthood and religious life also provided a useful source of comparisons in relation to the data on personality traits: Galea, Paul *Priestly Vocations in Malta. A Psychosocial Analysis* (2004 [cited 20th January 2012]); available from [www.priestlyvocations.com/uploads/3/5/9/6/.../06\\_articolo\\_galea.doc](http://www.priestlyvocations.com/uploads/3/5/9/6/.../06_articolo_galea.doc).

<sup>234</sup> Louden, S. H. and Francis, L. J., *The Naked Parish Priest: What Priests Really Think They're Doing* (London: Continuum, 2003).

<sup>235</sup> NFPC, *Priestless Parishes*, p.5.

<sup>236</sup> Ranson, S., Bryman, A. and Hinings, B., *Clergy, Ministers and Priests, International Library of Sociology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

<sup>237</sup> Louden, *The Naked Parish Priest*, pp.7-8.

<sup>238</sup> Timms, *You Aren't One of the Boys*.

<sup>239</sup> Ryan, Desmond *The Catholic Parish: Institutional Discipline, Tribal Identity and Religious Development in the English Church* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1996), p.187.

One of the authors of *The Naked Priest*, Stephen Loudon, is a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool who has spent most of his ministry as a chaplain in the British Army and who gained his doctorate for the part of the study concerned with the relationship between personality, stress and burnout in Catholic parish clergy. Loudon's co-author and doctoral supervisor, Leslie Francis, is widely known for his research in empirical theology in the tradition of Hans van der Ven which 'employs the techniques of the social sciences to address key issues raised by the agenda of practical theology'.<sup>240</sup>

The book reports on the responses to 133 direct questions on 22 topics given in 1,482 questionnaires returned (out of 3,581 posted) by secular and religious priests engaged in parochial ministry in England and Wales during 1996. Whilst the design of the survey focused on quantitative data, 'plenty of opportunity was also provided for the priests to expand on their answers in a qualitative manner if they so wished'.<sup>241</sup> In each of the corresponding 22 chapters, Stephen Loudon explains why the topic was regarded as significant, drawing on 'his personal experience of the Catholic priesthood in England and Wales, the international research literature, and the important clues which accrue from the religious press and the national religious landscape' and then draws on the comments made by respondents in the space provided in the questionnaire and in correspondence, bringing 'these data into dialogue' with the main themes raised in his first section.<sup>242</sup> The quantitative data are presented and interpreted in each chapter by Leslie Francis in four steps, with reference to tables which are collected at the end of the book. The results of other elements of the study not covered in the book have been published in a series of articles between 1999 and 2003.

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales reacted to the publication of *The Naked Priest* in 2003 with a polemical press release, stating that the research was now out of date, that it was unofficial and not welcomed by most of the priesthood (citing, from the book, one of the most negative reactions received) and that the number of questionnaires returned amounted to only 26% of priests in England and Wales. The statement described the questions as confused and confusing (especially in relation to celibacy and chastity) and quoted the chairman of the National Conference of Priests as sharing the bishops' view that

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<sup>240</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, p.vii.

<sup>241</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, p.11.

<sup>242</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*. pp. 20-21

the findings of the book must be treated with great caution and could not be seen as a true reflection of the current beliefs of priests in England and Wales.<sup>243</sup>

By contrast, an American review in the *National Catholic Reporter* treated the study positively and criticised the reluctance of the Bishops' Conference to accept its findings, commenting that 'the core views of priests, shorn of any professional distance, are offered with honesty and conviction'.<sup>244</sup> Brendan Callaghan's review in *Theology*<sup>245</sup> was more balanced, arguing that 'faith and church life have nothing to fear from the truth' and that lack of absolute unanimity among priests on key doctrinal issues (and the greater variation on some moral issues where 'the wider Catholic community has not come to share the certainty expressed by formal teaching') suggested further theological reflection. He acknowledged the concerns raised by the Bishops' Conference about the formulation of some of the questions, but felt that the statement's judgment was too sweeping. He concluded that this is a book to read and to be encouraged by: 'the overall picture is of a group of (too) hard-working and deeply committed men, with strong faith and some open questions'.<sup>246</sup>

As the most recent and largest major survey of Roman Catholic priests in the UK, this book has obvious relevance for my own research project. The methodology is fully explained, the bibliography is impressively extensive and there are useful indices both of names and of subjects.

The study contains a wealth of information about the responses priests made to the questions and the data helpfully differentiate between the responses of diocesan priests and those belonging to religious orders, and between three different age-groups. The last four chapters of the book present a broadly positive picture, in line with the consensus of research in the USA, that Catholic priests tend to feel overworked but personally satisfied and content with their ministry. Some of the other chapters are in line with Hoge and

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<sup>243</sup> CBCEW, *Statement on the Book, 'The Naked Parish Priest'* (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2003 [cited 23 October 2007]); available from <http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/cn/03/030407.htm>.

<sup>244</sup> Holst, W. A., 'Perspectives on the Priesthood Today - Priest; The Naked Parish Priest - Book Review', *National Catholic Reporter*, Nov 7, 2003 (2003), [http://natcath.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2003d/110703/1107031.htm](http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2003d/110703/1107031.htm).

<sup>245</sup> Callaghan, Brendan, 'The Naked Parish Priest: What Priests Really Think They're Doing', *Theology* 107, no. 836 (2004), pp.149-50.

<sup>246</sup> Callaghan, 'The Naked Parish Priest', p.150.

Wenger's later finding that priests in the middle age-group tend towards more liberal views on a range of issues than both the older and the younger priests.<sup>247</sup>

Three aspects of the study could detract from its usefulness and authority. Firstly, both the introduction to the book and the sections setting out Loudén's view on each topic adopt a tone which could be described as querulous and partisan. The account of the decision not to seek approval for the study from the hierarchy and its possible repercussions seems confrontational from the start and contains assumptions and innuendos apparently attempting to create the impression of a conspiracy against the project, e.g. 'If an organisation behaves as if it is hiding something, it ought to come as no surprise when even benevolent outsiders express suspicion not only that the organisation appears to be hiding something, but that such secrecy is concealment of something disreputable.'<sup>248</sup>

Secondly, the design of the book, beginning each chapter with Loudén's own understanding of the topic, which he then illustrates from comments made by participants before Francis presents the quantitative data, leaves it open to the suspicion of seeking evidence to support preconceived positions. These introductions themselves contain an uncomfortable mixture of broad generalisations and specific personal opinions.

Thirdly, the choice of the specific questions to ascertain priests' views on each topic seems at times arbitrary or even idiosyncratic. Topic 1, for instance, on the effectiveness of seminary formation for 'public ministry' includes 'changes in the Church' and 'interfaith dialogue' alongside 'conducting the liturgy', 'public speaking', and 'preaching'. Topic 15 on Catholic institutions has only four questions: on the appointment of bishops, Opus Dei, Catholic schools and the Catholic press: one wonders why Opus Dei should be thus singled out. The title of Topic 10, 'Fallen Priests', seems at best anachronistic and at worst offensive. The most disappointing chapter, however, is that on Topic 5, 'Theology and Priesthood', where priests are asked whether they have a clear theology of priesthood but not what it is: the only other questions in that topic are about valuing daily Mass, valuing daily office and finding time to pray all the daily office. The introduction to this chapter gives a brief and partial summary of the development of the theology of the priesthood. There is no attempt to ascertain what theologies of priesthood are being espoused by the

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<sup>247</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

<sup>248</sup> Loudén, *The Naked Parish Priest*, p.12.

participants though Loudon refers to 'a high theology of priesthood' and 'a very different theology of priesthood' in introducing comments sent in by priests<sup>249</sup> and the inference appears to be that these are self-evident and can be distinguished by attitudes to daily Mass and office.

With these limitations, the study provides some rich insights into the experiences and views of Roman Catholic priests in this country in 1996 but leaves some areas of uncertainty. Whilst it shows some similarity with Hoge and Wenger's later findings, in other respects it supports my impression that the English clergy are less polarised than their American counterparts (for instance, the very small numbers wishing for a return to the pre-Vatican II Church or thinking that Vatican II was a disaster for the Church<sup>250</sup>). Despite some references to the younger clergy being more conservative, it falls well short of the American study's suggestion that a new kind of priest emerged in the mid 1980s and the specific finding that the younger priests are less likely to value daily Mass and office<sup>251</sup> appears to contradict the generally accepted view that more recently ordained priests are returning to the cultic model. As this book's data on the theologies of priesthood are so inconclusive, it leaves the field open for a study focussing on that specific topic amongst the presbyterate of one English diocese. It offers one intriguing and pertinent clue to the possibility of dialogue or confluence between the cultic and servant leader models (though the latter is not mentioned in the text and neither is listed in the subject index) in the following comment attributed to Liverpool sociologist Joan Brothers (which is in fact a paraphrase of her citation of earlier work by a colleague, Dr. J. B. Mays<sup>252</sup>):

In Liverpool in particular the great strength of those in the priesthood before the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), it was said, had lain in their amazing ability to share the life of their parishioners while, at the same time, maintaining a spiritual aloofness that added a compelling force to their leadership (Brothers, 1963<sup>253</sup>).<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, pp.54-55.

<sup>250</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, pp.121-29, 210.

<sup>251</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, pp.56, 201.

<sup>252</sup> Mays, J. B., *Growing up in the City: A Study of Juvenile Delinquency in an Urban Neighbourhood* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1956).

<sup>253</sup> Brothers, Joan, 'Social Change and the Role of the Priest', *Social Compass* 10 (1963).

<sup>254</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*. p. 24

In addition to providing helpful background, the Loudon and Francis study provided data on the personality traits which will be compared and contrasted in Chapter 4 with the results of the survey in this present project.

The second recent study of direct relevance to the present project is the American study already referred to several times, namely *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century*. The late Dean Hoge, Professor of Sociology at Catholic University of America, was a prolific and widely recognised researcher in the sociology of religion, both within and beyond the Catholic Church, and was assisted in this study by Jacqueline Wenger, a graduate student at Catholic University of America and a licensed clinical social worker.

Summarising four surveys of American priests across four decades, this study provides a comprehensive picture of changes in attitudes amongst the Roman Catholic clergy in that country since the Second Vatican Council. Because many of the same questions were repeated in each successive survey and the same age-ranges were used, the authors can track the significant shifts. The results of the first survey in 1970, commissioned by the American bishops, carried out by the National Opinion Research Centre and led by Andrew Greeley and Richard Schoenherr, were published as one of a series of three books on the Catholic priesthood in the United States.<sup>255</sup> Hoge led the research team for the 1985 and 1993 surveys, which were published by the National Federation of Priests' Councils, and the same body received funding to sponsor and oversee the 2001 survey.<sup>256</sup> With a team comprising four interviewers, one transcriber, seven focus group conveners, four research assistants and a management committee of fourteen, Hoge and Wenger undertook a survey of priests in a random sample of 44 dioceses and 24 religious communities from the larger list surveyed in 1970, carried out 27 personal interviews with priests and convened seven focus groups. They made comparisons with the results of a *Los Angeles Times* survey of priests which received 1,854 completed questionnaires in the summer of 2002. Finally, the

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<sup>255</sup> Greeley, A. M., *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1972).

<sup>256</sup> After this thesis was substantially completed, the results were published of a fifth survey in the series, undertaken in 2009. A brief review of this publication indicates that it confirms the findings of the Hoge-Wenger study about priestly identity, provides further evidence that the younger priests are embracing the cultic model of priesthood and affirms that they record higher levels of satisfaction in ministry than their older counterparts: Gautier, M. L., Perl, P. M., Fichter, S. J., *Same Call, Different Men* (Chicago: Liturgical Press, 2012).

National Federation of Priests' Councils invited six key Catholic leaders to contribute their views of the research in commentaries appearing at the back of the book.

The principal findings of the book are summed up in the title of Jack Shea's review in the Catholic New Times already quoted above: 'the cultic model of priesthood is back and laity and priests are heading in opposite directions'.<sup>257</sup> The first part refers to the study's assertion that two major shifts took place in priests' understanding of their ministry. Firstly, the pre-Vatican II understanding of the priest as a cultic figure (a man set apart, principally concerned with providing the sacraments and teaching the faith) gave way in the wake of Vatican II to the servant leader model (a man among the baptised, servant and leader within the community of believers, collaborating with the lay faithful in their common mission). Secondly, in the mid-1980s, there arose the 'new priests', less fixated on Vatican II, fascinated with older liturgical forms and symbols, seeing priesthood as a unique and sacred position in the Church, separate from (though in principle not better than) the laity, concerned with being solidly Catholic, which, for these 'new priests', means following papal authority faithfully and unquestioningly in matters of doctrine, morality and liturgy. Since the pre-Vatican II priests have now mainly retired, the principal protagonists are the 'new priests', whom Hoge and Wenger identify as espousing the cultic model, and the servant leader priests. The second part of Shea's headline refers to the study's statement, based on other studies such as Davidson, et al., 1997<sup>258</sup> and D'Antonio et al., 2001<sup>259</sup> (in which Hoge was also involved) that the conservative shift amongst younger clergy is not matched by a similar shift amongst the younger American laity.<sup>260</sup> This claim would be disputed by neoconservative authors such as Michael Rose,<sup>261</sup> David Hartline<sup>262</sup> and Tim Drake<sup>263</sup> who argue that in dioceses where strict orthodoxy is maintained, conversions to the faith, vocations to the priesthood and other signs of vitality flourish amongst young

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<sup>257</sup> Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

<sup>258</sup> Davidson, J. D. et al., *The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic Americans* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997).

<sup>259</sup> D'Antonio, W. V. et al., *American Catholics: Gender, Generation and Commitment* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001).

<sup>260</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.118.

<sup>261</sup> Rose, *Goodbye! Good Men*.

<sup>262</sup> Hartline, D. J., *The Tide Is Turning Towards Catholicism* (Worthington, OH: Catholic Report, 2006).

<sup>263</sup> Drake, Tim, *Young and Catholic: The Face of Tomorrow's Church* (Manchester NH: Sophia Institute Press 2004).

Catholics. Tentative support for this latter view could be inferred from Yuengert's 2001 study of the relationship between ordination rates and the theological stances of bishops.<sup>264</sup>

The same review by Shea<sup>265</sup> neatly summarises one of the central theories of the present study: that these two models of priesthood are rooted in differing views of the world and God's action in it, represented in modern times by Karl Rahner and Hans Urs Von Balthasar but traceable back to Ignatius of Antioch and Cyril of Jerusalem.

Hoge's earlier report on newly ordained priests found that active diocesan priests were much more likely than 'resigned priests' to insist on the distinctive and separate character of the priesthood, with the proportion of religious priests taking that view lying in between.<sup>266</sup>

Hoge's report of his two studies, in 1990 and 2005, of the experiences of priests ordained between five and nine years (see p.88) confirms the basic thesis: the more recent survey found more of these priests preferring the cultic model.<sup>267</sup> According to a Catholic News Service review, the same study revealed that the current generation of recently ordained priests is older, culturally more diverse and less likely to have gained a degree after ordination than was the cohort of 15 years earlier.<sup>268</sup>

A separate study by Leveques and Siptroth<sup>269</sup> of 252 priests in Southern California supports the central premise, establishing that younger priests are more conservative, both politically and within the Church.

The six commentaries at the end of the book largely affirm, repeat and illustrate the conclusions of the research and offer reflections on its implications, mostly calling for dialogue between the two generations of priests about the issues that divide them as the most effective way of building on their fundamental unity. One commentator, Susan Wood, takes issue with the theological validity of the central choice forced by the questions about

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<sup>264</sup> Yuengert, Andrew, 'Do Bishops Matter? A Cross-Sectional Study of Ordinations to the U.S. Catholic Diocesan Priesthood', *Review of Religious Research* 42, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>265</sup> Shea, 'Models of Priesthood'.

<sup>266</sup> Hoge, D. R., *The First Five Years of the Priesthood: A Study of Newly Ordained Catholic Priests* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2002).

<sup>267</sup> Hoge, *Five to Nine Years*.

<sup>268</sup> Davies, C. A., *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>269</sup> Levesque, P. J. and Siptroth, S. M., 'The Correlation between Political and Ecclesial Ideologies of Catholic Priests: A Research Note', *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 4 (2005).



ontological change, arguing that a contemporary, relational understanding of ontology provides a synthesis of the two opposing positions and that 'polemics breeds bad theology' but she recognises that such a view will be 'long in coming for it entails first the constructive theological work and then the long process of filtering into the popular imagination'<sup>270</sup>. Paul Murray has suggested elsewhere a fruitful approach towards the theological work required to elucidate such a synthesis:

... the proposed way ahead is in viewing the appropriate distinctiveness of ordained ministry as consisting in its being the authenticated, visible, public witness to and sacramental performance of the ministry of Christ in the entire Spirit-filled, charism-endowed Church in such a fashion as defines the vocation and being of the ordained before God.<sup>271</sup>

Céline Béraud's review of the Hoge-Wenger study in *Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions*,<sup>272</sup> whilst concluding that the study's findings will come as no surprise to readers familiar with developments in the mind of the French clergy, notes that the American situation differs from that in France, especially in relation to concerns about homosexuality and child sex abuse. Hoge and Wenger seem somewhat embarrassed by the fact that their 2001 survey predates the furore over sexual abuse by priests, which they treat in an epilogue, though they devote a chapter to the topic of homosexual subcultures often linked, by critics of the Church, with sexual abuse. The study is cited in a 2006 bibliographic study by Keenan of recent publications concerning the scandal and the ensuing crisis in the Church<sup>273</sup> and it is this aspect of the work which has received most attention in the American press. In the UK, as in France, these concerns, whilst present, have a much lower profile.

## Conclusion

The categories and characteristics of the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood proposed by Hoge and Wenger provide the principal comparators for my research in relation to models of priesthood. As has been noted above, one of my theories is that the clergy of Liverpool are less polarized in this regard than their American counterparts, though the different models identified are still sufficiently significant to offer helpful

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<sup>270</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.173.

<sup>271</sup> Murray, 'Integrated Theology of Ministry', p.48.

<sup>272</sup> McGrail, *First Communion*.

<sup>273</sup> Davie, Grace, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

insights into their self-understandings. A second theory, relating to the Hoge-Wenger study and developing the line of thought taken by Wood,<sup>274</sup> is that the attitudes of priests in Liverpool to ontology, authority and theology are more complex than they appear to be among the priests in the American research. A third theory, arising from Shea's review of the Hoge-Wenger study, is that the models of priesthood adopted by individual priests may be related to the views those priests hold of the world and God's action in it, described in this study as differing views of Catholicity. These three theories, along with two others, about the possible influence of personality type on the individuals' choice of models of priesthood and views of Catholicity and about the different experiences of religious and diocesan priests in pastoral ministry, will be explored in the next two chapters. Chapter 3 will set out the theories finally articulated and will report the analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews, case study and focus groups. Chapter 4 will set out the quantitative data from the survey and the personality inventory sent to all participants in the study.

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<sup>274</sup> Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*.

### **3. Five theories emerging from the qualitative data: interviews, diaries, focus groups and case study.**

The original purpose of gathering this qualitative data was to find out how a sample of the priests of the Archdiocese of Liverpool think and speak about their ministry, in order to define categories and themes for a questionnaire to be sent to all the priests. As explained in Chapter 2, such a large amount of rich data was collected through these qualitative methods that the research plan was revised to concentrate on analysis of this data, deferring the questionnaire to a postdoctoral phase. A much smaller survey (see p.178) was then added to test the specific theories emerging from the qualitative data.

During the course of this research project five theories emerged:

- a) that the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood (see p.83) prevalent in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual's view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes;
- b) that the divisions between adherents of these models of priesthood on attitudes to ontology, the Church's magisterium and theology are more complex than they appear in the Hoge-Wenger analysis;<sup>275</sup>
- c) that the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*, described here as the first and second views of Catholicity and explained in Chapter 2 (see p.87);
- d) that the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals can be related to their personality types; and
- e) that the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity)

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<sup>275</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests.

This chapter will describe the evidence from the qualitative data collected in relation to the first and last theories, a) and e), and will introduce the other three theories b), c) and d): these will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4, which will report the data from the survey devised to test the first four theories.

### **Servant leader and cultic models of priesthood**

The first theory emerging from the qualitative data is that the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood reported in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual's view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes (see the description and table of these two models of priesthood, p.83).

Data related to this theory arose in all four topics of conversation suggested to the priests in the semi-structured interviews:

- the words, images or models you use to describe your priestly ministry;
- the activities you prioritise in your daily and weekly routine;
- your hopes and concerns about the challenges facing priests today; and
- your views on recent developments in the life of the Church.

The case study will also be reported in this section, as it relates closely to some of the hopes and concerns raised by the participants.

In the quotations from participants, some hesitations and repetitions have been removed for the sake of clarity, but others have been retained to reflect the speech patterns of the individuals and the degree of hesitancy, which often varied in relation to the subject matter. Omissions within quotations are indicated by a series of three dots.

## **Words, images or models used to describe priestly ministry**

The first finding in relation to the first topic of conversation was that some priests did not have a ready answer to the question of what words, images or models they would use to describe their ministry. Most of these, after some initial hesitation, offered some words, images or models, but a few did not:

I don't have a model of priesthood: I get up in the morning and I try and make it through to the end of the day. I really don't think about it any more than that. F10<sup>276</sup>

I don't have any models as such. Basically I just, as my role has evolved as a parish priest, I have just kind of got on with the job ... As I say I can't really give you a definite thing on roles or models, I've just got on with the job, you know. D04

I, I saw that first question and I thought I wouldn't be able to answer it, um, because I am not terribly sure either that I have done, I have described it to other people or, um, that I have um, even thought about it myself, I haven't even had an awful lot of time for reflection, I am not given to reflection. D05

I can't say I have any particular model of priesthood um I suppose the word Pastor sort of er, is still something that is, is close to it but um, being, being ordained ... when you just did what you were told by the parish priest and er to some extent I just bounce from one thing to another, what, whatever is needed. F06

When I read that I was a bit, sort of, em what do I? Because you take it, I've taken so much for granted over the years, you know, um, so I didn't really know how to answer that questions of words or models. D22

Those who were able to respond to this question offered a wide range of words, images and models, with a number of individuals offering several different options.

The most frequently used word in this context was 'service' (and its cognates), sometimes qualified as service of God, but more often indicating service of people in the sense of meeting their needs. Several participants related this to the example of Jesus and two specifically mentioned his washing of the disciples' feet as key to their understanding of priestly ministry. Other frequently mentioned terms were 'leader', 'presence', 'preacher', 'father', 'listening', 'welcome', 'enabling', 'empowering', 'knowing people' and 'loving people'. Two of the bishops defined priests as 'co-workers with the bishop' and, whilst

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<sup>276</sup> The letter beginning the code after each quotation identifies the type of participant: D for diocesan priest interviewee; R for religious priest interviewee; B for bishop interviewee; C for case study member; and F for focus group member.

none of the priests used that phrase, there were references to 'holding the bigger picture', 'creating a sense of being part of the diocese' and 'building communion'. Some of the more colourful images offered were: 'a bird that is pecked at all day'; 'the narrow end of the funnel'; 'a hamster in a wheel'; 'the man spinning plates at a circus'; 'living in a goldfish bowl'; 'Lone Ranger'; and 'Odd Job'. There were a number of references to 'sticking it out', 'soldiering on' and 'taking the flak'. More than one respondent used the image of a shop and one compared the difference between serving one parish and serving several to being promoted from shopkeeper to supermarket manager. One offered the image of the conductor of an orchestra, whilst another suggested that a more apt image would be the leader of a jazz band, allowing greater scope for improvisation and for more flexible leadership roles. There were a number of references to helping, healing and reconciling.

None of the respondents thought the polarisation between the two models of priesthood is as clear in this country as in the USA, though most recognised the broad pattern, either in themselves or in other priests. Some identified themselves very definitely with the servant leader model, one referring to himself as 'definitely a 70s model' (D25), and the majority tended more in that direction. A few supported some elements of the cultic model but only one identified completely with it, saying that, having been ordained before Vatican II 'that idea of priesthood to me is almost er fixed in stone and ... that has never changed really' (D09).

Most said they would fall somewhere in between or would value aspects of both models. A few said they would incline more towards the cultic and a larger number that they would incline more towards the servant leader. Some expressed the opinion that Liverpool had very few of the 'new priests', fewer than some other dioceses. A few questioned the validity of the American research or its relevance to the British situation. Chapter 4 will report and analyse in detail the responses made in the survey to questions specifically designed to ascertain the stance of the respondents in relation to these two models (see p.191).

A number of priests who had espoused the servant leader model reported that they may be tending to go back towards the cultic model. Several possible reasons for this were cited, the most frequent being that if a priest has responsibility for two or more parishes, simply

providing the essential liturgical services takes up more of his time and energy, leaving less available to spend in the more creative and outgoing activities.

I think we are in danger if we are not careful of, of just becoming cultic because I just, you know, and there is nothing wrong with being cultic but the fact that you run multiple settings and you're kind of more or less floating in and out of communities and saying Mass and baptising etc., then, you know, my role has, has, has been I suppose reduced to almost being somebody who, who, who is cultic I would say um, as a parish priest. F17

Other possible explanations are that the cultic model is more deeply embedded, or that it is a functional thing, or that it is a part of the role that is life-giving. In this context, Dermot Ryan's 'Spiral-Vortex Model of Parish'<sup>277</sup> may shed light: it places 'Mass and Sacraments' as the core activity in parishes, with other activities (including looking after institutions, building up groups, new initiatives and growth) as layers added when a parish is thriving and led by an active, able priest and then shed again when priest and parish are in decline. This might operate like Maslow's hierarchy of needs:<sup>278</sup> some things need to be in place before others can flourish, and Catholic parishes in this country expect that certain cultic activities will be provided even if nothing else is happening. This view seems to be both confirmed and regretted in the following comment:

I hate the idea that we are just sanctuary priests. Clearly and obviously, priesthood has got something to do with the cult and the sanctuary and the ritual and things like that and it's certainly got to do with, with um the Word and the sacrament and that, that will continue to put us at the centre um of whatever is going on. F03

Another way to explain this is that other concepts of priesthood (apart from the cultic model) are available and may come into play when there is energy. Priests may not opt for one or another but may hold several concepts which only become operational in certain circumstances.

### **Activities prioritised**

The majority of the priests indicated during the interviews that most of their time was spent on activities directly related to church, though not necessarily with people who regularly

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<sup>277</sup> Ryan, *The Catholic Parish*, p.187.

<sup>278</sup> Maslow, Abraham, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954). I am grateful to Dr Roger Walton, one of my supervisors, for this insight.

attend church: some in fact said that they spent more time with families who were ‘not practising’ than with ‘the regulars’, especially in relation to funerals and baptisms. This impression of an emphasis on church-related activities was confirmed by the diary exercise (see p.76) in which there were only six references to community activities not connected to church. A number of the priests agreed that they were less involved in social justice or community building activities than would have been the case 20 or 30 years ago, but there were some notable exceptions. The following quote is illustrative of the rationale of those few priests who, whilst carrying out their cultic functions, remain deeply involved with social justice and community building activities:

... service of and service to and service for the Eucharistic community, umm, building up, supporting, challenging er again the Eucharistic community, so I kind of tend to link it in my head to the actual Eucharist and what we do . So you can’t be a Eucharistic community unless you address those beyond the four walls of the church ... so then you become interested er, you look at the justice of the area ... It’s no use telling people to love one another if the conditions aren’t there, so addressing the conditions and er so it’s more of a social model as opposed to a ... It’s a Eucharistic model, sacramental model that moves into the, very easily moves into the context in which people are living and of course then that massively goes out to the world ... So consequently the actual effect of that would be I’d have probably less to do with the Eucharistic, the actual members of the Eucharist-going community, umm, in terms of building of the larger community ... it’s er hands on, it’s like families, it’s down to where people are really rather than ... and where people are and where people are capable of going, being, so it’s both and rather than either or really. D25

Although the diary exercise was useful in providing more detailed information about the activities prioritised by the priests, several notes of caution are required in interpreting the data from the diaries. The priests involved in the research project at that point were sent blank diary sheets for the first two weeks in September 2007, showing a line for each half-hour from 7.00am to 9.00pm (and some blank space above and below those times), with the invitation to fill in and return one or both. The only instruction given was ‘Please just jot down general headings for the activities in each hour or half-hour of the day (e.g. Mass, prayer, homily preparation, school, funeral, hospital, admin, sick visit, parish meeting) and leave blank any time you allow for rest and relaxation’. Some priests returned a sheet for one week only, others for both weeks. 35 completed sheets were received almost immediately, and 12 more were received later (including seven which had been filled in for weeks later in September or early October) making a total of 47 completed returns. Some priests provided a great deal of detail; a few simply listed formal appointments. Some



commented that the first two weeks in September were not typical, since they were at the beginning of the school year, when some parish activities (such as RCIA<sup>279</sup> or sacramental programmes) had not yet begun. The focus groups, on considering a summary of the results, agreed that they presented a broadly recognisable picture of the range of activities, but echoed the comment about the time of year and added that some activities which occur monthly or less frequently may not arise during one given week. The comment about the time of year is supported by the fact that, although the 12 diaries submitted later followed broadly the same pattern as those returned immediately, they did have a slightly higher incidence of RCIA and other catechetical activities.

A fascinating feature of the diary exercise was the wide variation both in the kinds of activities mentioned and in the amount of time given to them. The most readily quantifiable information was that the priests reported celebrating between 5 and 12 Masses in the week (median 9, mode 8/9, mean 8.57); between 0 and 4 funerals (median 0, mode 0, mean 0.89); between 0 and 5 sessions of hearing confessions (median 1, mode 0, mean 1.06); between 0 and 2 baptisms (median 0, mode 0, mean 0.53); and between 0 and 2 weddings (median 0, mode 0, mean 0.38).

The majority of priests commented that use of the sacrament of confession had declined - in fact one said 'Nobody comes to confession anymore – that's gone' but some serving in town centre churches reported considerable numbers still coming for confession. Despite the official restrictions on services of reconciliation with general absolution,<sup>280</sup> a number of priests reported that they were still providing these services and evaluated them positively, though, as will be seen in the discussion below about *Leaving Safe Harbours* this was also raised by more than one priest as a point of conflict in pastoral area discussions (see p.120):

We have a very good, meaningful service with general absolution ... but I have got to do something to enable people to start making that one-to-one contact again. D15

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<sup>279</sup> The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a programme of formation for adults seeking to join the Catholic community, which in most parishes begins sometime in the autumn and reaches its climax at Easter.

<sup>280</sup> The 1974 Rite of Penance included the option of communal celebrations of the sacrament of reconciliation with a general absolution rather than individual confession and absolution and such services were widely available for a number of years. Later pronouncements from Rome severely restricted the circumstances in which general absolution was permitted. Some priests favouring the servant leader model continue to celebrate general absolution for pastoral reasons whilst those embracing the cultic model tend to regard this as flouting the law.

The diaries reflected a variety of situations, approaches and priorities. The most striking variations were in the number of references to administration, ranging from 0 to 15 (one third of the diaries listed 'banking'); the number of references to prayer (from 0 to 16); and the number of visits to schools (from 0 to 10). Periods of preparation for liturgy and/or homilies ranged from 0 to 13: there was also a wide range of attitudes to preaching expressed in the interviews:

I really love to preach, it's a privilege to get up and proclaim the Word. D15

I think a daily little reflection is very important, which has to be as prayerful as possible and as instructive as possible ... So the scripture has to be alive that way, in a prayerful way ... That would be a priority for me, to integrate it into people's lives ... when you do try to pray the scripture and bring the scripture alive, you can see how ... they really light up. D16

I struggle with it ... we preach everyday here at the daily Masses and ... at the weekends and ... when I say, I struggle, I just, I suppose it's just a matter of not believing, you know believing in myself really and just trusting. D17

Most priests have got nothing to say. B02

Just under half the diaries referred to a day off: it should be noted that the instruction was to leave blank any time allowed for rest and relaxation, but in most of the diaries which did not list a day off, neither was there a day left blank. In some cases where a day off was named, other activities were also listed on that day. Just under a third of the diaries noted some form of exercise, though the same instruction may have caused under-reporting here. Under a sixth mentioned reading or study: those that did ranged from one to five periods of varying length, with one respondent indicating one day each week spent studying. Three respondents recorded attending a priests' support group during the week in question.

Some other activities which appeared relatively rarely in the diaries (i.e. fewer than six times in the sample of 47) were: parish council meeting; parish or pastoral area team meeting; adult formation; RCIA; youth group; and general or systematic visiting of homes. This last item is significant in the light of Doyle's view that the systematic visiting of homes was the key feature in building the close relationship between priests and parishioners which was characteristic of the Liverpool Archdiocese during its long period of growth. In support of this view Doyle reports that Richard Downey (Archbishop of Liverpool 1928-1953) frequently advised his priests that 'the visiting priest makes the

Mass-going people’ and decreed in synodal regulations that ‘it would be gravely sinful if priests with the care of souls neglected this obligation’.<sup>281</sup>

As the diaries were submitted anonymously, it was not possible to correlate them with the data from the interviews and the survey in order to examine in detail whether the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals affected the activities they engaged in.

### **Hopes and concerns about the challenges facing priests today**

Most of the priests seemed to find it easier to talk about their concerns than their hopes, and even those who expressed hopes often did so with some qualifications, but I will begin with the hopes. Those who spoke about hopes did so in two ways: some spoke of things that gave them hope and others spoke of things that they hoped for. In the first category, the most frequent response was ‘people’: people’s goodness, kindness and loyalty; their questioning, searching and openness to possibilities; their hunger for the solid nourishment of Church teaching; and their increasing involvement in ministry. Three mentioned young people as being especially encouraging: in one case the generosity of some young people; in another the few young people ‘who actually accept it all and are committed Catholics’; and in the third a particular Mass which was ‘full of young students ... listening ... attentive ... participating ... full of the joys of spring’ and from the same situation, ‘young people coming to be received into the faith ... from other countries ... people making really deep and thoughtful confessions’. A fourth praised the excellent work done by the diocesan youth ministry team, Animate.

Five gave supernatural reasons for being hopeful: truth and the Holy Spirit; gratitude for being called to priesthood; God’s providence; and Christ’s promise to be with his Church for ever. Five said they were hopeful because of priests, though for different reasons. Two were impressed by the quality of seminarians. One was inspired by ‘the number of good men who are soldiering on despite everything that the world and the papers and the Church throw at them’. A fourth said that priests are less polarised and slightly more confident: ‘you get a feeling about a greater kind of confidence about the gospel, that the world still needs to hear the gospel and all those positive things’. The fifth took a quite different view, saying that the lack of priests was a sign of hope because it is making people understand the

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<sup>281</sup> Doyle, *Mitres & Missions*, p.263.

vocation of all the baptised: ‘success really is everyone baptised really living out their priesthood’.

Things hoped for were mentioned only by a few. Two hoped for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, with one of these also hoping for an increase in Mass attendance, a decrease in laicisations, priests over 75 being allowed to continue in parish work if reasonably fit and an end to abuse of children by clergy. One hoped for an increase in lay involvement, another that the churches would come closer towards unity. Another hoped there would be some recruitment of priests from abroad but also that priests would be able to maintain a close local connection with the people they serve.

The relatively small number of comments about hopes makes it difficult to draw distinctions in this regard between those favouring the servant leader and cultic models, but it is notable that the majority of these hopeful comments came from the minority leaning towards the cultic model. This is in harmony with the observation of Hoge’s study of priests ordained five to nine years in 2005 that ‘priests adhering to the cultic model have stronger morale’,<sup>282</sup> though there were also a number of comments from priests across the spectrum saying that they enjoy their ministry.

The greatest concern by far was the increased workload facing all priests, and particularly those looking after more than one parish. This was frequently linked to comments that, whilst the number of priests and the number of people attending Mass regularly had declined, the demands and expectations, especially of those people who do not attend regularly, do not seem to have decreased, so that priests feel they are being ‘stretched’ and ‘spread more thinly’. There were frequent references to the large number of funerals some priests are called on to celebrate (see p.121) with priests expressing conflicting feelings, on the one hand feeling that the present system is not sustainable and that some development such as having laypeople lead funerals is necessary, whilst, on the other hand, finding this aspect of ministry fulfilling and effective:

It’s getting to the point where we’re just not going to be able to do all the funerals. D21

The big thing around here is funerals. They are an absolute, pardon the expression, killer ... if you’re planning stuff for the school or anything else ...

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<sup>282</sup> Hoge, *Five to Nine Years*, p.91.

it completely knackers your week up ... that's the thing I find most difficult to cope with because of the unpredictability. D04

... 80 or 90 a year can be seen as a pain in the neck, but I probably touch more people within a couple of years and you're known by everybody because they will come to someone's ... I don't see that as a waste of my time, I just wish I had more time to fit them in, and properly. D25

... funerals for me are great opportunities to speak to people, great opportunities for evangelisation ... it sort of keeps me going ... it can be frustrating at times when you have got three or four in one week but just having the chance to speak to people who don't usually come and participate is quite unique. F07

When it comes to funerals ... I write a special Eucharistic Prayer for each funeral incorporating something about the person's life into that ... I feel more and more that funerals are a very important part of pastoral ministry, life of a priest, because it's, and it's helping to, helping a family to, to celebrate the life of whoever it is ... one of the biggest privileges of a priest is to be able to be part of a family at a time like that and to enable them to, to bring out the particular image of God that each person is and to celebrate that before God, so I do put a lot of time into that. D10

I have laypeople who do funeral services ... I don't go to the Crematorium at all ... they always take cremation services and if I am away they take a funeral service and they are normally the laypeople, Eucharistic ministers who actually know the families well, much better than I do. F06

Other workload issues mentioned were the amount of administration (including too much mail, too many demands from the diocese and a lack of paid help), the added pressure on some priests from being on call for hospital emergencies and the perception that some parishes still have too many Masses. One example will suffice, from a priest serving in a two-parish, two-priest situation:

... the baptisms take place here, every Sunday and ... there is just one Mass celebrated there on a Sunday morning and there is three here and that sometimes can get um, because I also have a 4 o'clock Mass at *[name of hospital]* ... on a Saturday afternoon so that sometimes can be um, you know, when *[name of other priest]* is away and if you can't get anybody to help you finish up saying five Masses over that weekend really and that with baptisms, we have got ... a deacon, so there is that help but if, if you know, for whatever reason if he's away, you know it can er sometimes be yeh and, you know, if you have got a funeral, a couple of funerals coming up and you're seeing the family as well you are trying to, you know to, erm, fit them in as well. D17

Most commented that these pressures are compounded when a priest is asked to take on more than one parish, and several expressed concern that recently ordained priests are often

given responsibility for one or more parishes before they have gained sufficient experience as assistant priests. The concerns about workload can be summarised in the following comment:

... our priests ... will do everything they can to continue the former tasks even when they start to become over, overbearing, overpowering. B03

Closely linked to the concerns about workload were worries about changes in society and in religious practice. The issue of the decline in religious practice will be discussed below, in the section on views on recent developments, but several specific points are relevant here. Some noted that the dwindling pool of volunteers adds to the pressures on priests. Others reported feeling a personal sense of frustration, guilt or failure at the decline. Others again expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Church at diocesan or universal level. Similar anxieties were voiced about the changes in sexual morality and the ‘collapse’ of family life. Some priests mentioned specific difficulties with vandalism or burglaries, while others noted a lack of deference for priests and other authority figures and the erosion of the teaching authority of the Church. These latter concerns were more likely to be voiced by those who inclined to the cultic model of priesthood whilst those favouring the servant leader model were more likely to frame their concerns in terms of sadness at what people are missing or reflection on the Church’s failure to engage with contemporary culture. Some were concerned that ministering in an atmosphere of decline could be particularly frustrating for young priests who are still full of enthusiasm and zeal.

Others were concerned that their feelings of frustration could have a negative impact on their relationships with their people:

I think part of my tension ... is that sense of failure because ... part of the yardstick that we use in terms of measuring how well we are doing ... is how many are coming to Mass on a Sunday, is how many are availing themselves of the sacraments and since so many are outside of that ... you begin to wonder well, you know, what should I be doing? ... and then it creeps into how you actually deal with the people who are coming to Mass ... also the attitude you then have with the people who you’re only coming across on an occasional basis, you know the temptation is to say, you know, ‘Why aren’t you coming? Why isn’t it part of your life? Why isn’t it important to you?’ Instead of ... understanding that we have to be the sign of holiness amongst the people but we also have to be encouraging and constructive and positive rather than thinking ‘But you’ve got to get back into church, you’ve got to avail yourself of the sacraments’. F17

One priest spoke poignantly of his reaction to the frequently expressed concern about parents not connecting first communion with commitment to practice of the faith and related this to an insight received during a retreat:

... the whole event, um, the whole preparation is so frustrating that ... my fear is that what you will do is start putting hoops in and you will start making things more difficult ... the scribes and the Pharisees were so frustrated with the way people lived they became hardened of heart and Jesus was so disappointed with the way religion was going he loved even more. And my fear is my response could become a hardening of heart as opposed to a deepening of love, um, because ... it was just so soul destroying um, even within the preparation very few came ... but my bigger concern is how, how am I as an individual priest responding to that: am I doing it in love or am I doing it out of almost frustration or anger? D03

Given these levels of anxiety about excessive workloads and perceived signs of failure of the Church's mission, the next concerns are predictable: the age of priests and the small numbers coming forward to replace them; feeling exhausted; physical health issues (two mentioned deafness as limiting their ability to minister, especially to children, whilst others referred to falling energy levels and stress-related illnesses); experience and fear of burnout; and emotional and spiritual health issues (e.g. feelings of failure, guilt and frustration). Some mentioned a desire to retire, others expressed fear of retirement, in one case linked to concern that their church might be closed if they retired.

The next group of concerns relates to the priests' experience of the presbyterate and the administration of the diocese. Some mentioned that they found support from their fellow priests, in their pastoral area, in friendship groups or in specific support groups such as Jesus Caritas,<sup>283</sup> and there were positive references to the recently introduced diocesan programme of residential inservice and retreat events. Others made negative comments about their experience of the presbyterate. One priest had two contrasting experiences in two different deaneries:

It's a wonderful deanery and to actually like the other people that you are working with I think is the first thing, actually like and respect and as different as we all are we do. I think we have been very blessed with a very good Dean, he visits us individually ... not just when there is trouble or there's a problem he comes out and sees us you know. It might be only once every couple of months but we see each other at deanery meetings as well. If there is any problem or he

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<sup>283</sup> A movement based on the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld which includes a fraternity of priests: <http://www.jesuscarritas.net> (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012).

gets a whisper that something's happened he will ring and check you are alright and help you refer things to him, you know if you have got somebody who is causing trouble he'll say 'Ask them to ring me', so yeh I think we are very lucky, I really do. D14

... before I came here, just the complete opposite, just absolutely isolation and ultimately nearly destroyed me ... but that was just through ... a bunch of dysfunctional men who'd been in place too long and were frightened of change, new ideas, so they just put a barrier up around themselves and didn't let me in. D14

A number of the negative comments about some priests within the presbyterate were about some being 'too conservative', but the most frequent were about priests 'doing their own thing' or 'opting out'. In some of the interviews I invited comment on an article by Ronald Knott in which he argues that 'without the strong leadership of bishops, many diocesan priests have fallen into the habit of operating as if they are in "private practice"':<sup>284</sup> none of the respondents disagreed with that analysis, though one, inclining strongly to the servant leader model, took issue with the solution the article proposed, of developing 'intentional presbyterates', as being too clerical. A considerable number of the priests referred to loneliness or isolation, sometimes related to the pressure of work, and often linked to a sense of being neglected or unsupported by the diocesan authorities. This is particularly significant in the light of the finding of Hoge's study of the experiences of resigned priests that in all cases, whatever the specific crisis which precipitated resignation, a contributing factor to the decision to resign was that 'the man felt lonely and unappreciated. This is a necessary requirement in the process of deciding to resign; when it is absent, resignation from the priesthood is unlikely.'<sup>285</sup> A number of priests commented that, whilst the bishops were all kind and approachable in times of crisis, there was no system for mentoring of young priests or for appraisal or regular support of priests in general:

I am not blaming the Archbishop but I'm blaming the system that we have ... I think the Archbishop needs people to help him with his leadership, the Bishops do and, and maybe that comes from the grass roots but I do think it's important: we have Vicars General and all sorts of different people but nobody actually comes round and says 'How are you getting on, Father?' F16

A number of priests said they rarely or never felt lonely and one said:

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<sup>284</sup> Knott, Ronald, 'Intentional Presbyterates', *The Pastoral Review* 21, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>285</sup> Hoge, *The First Five Years*, p.64.



It's a great time to be a priest. I think that I would say that today ... do you feel isolated? I don't believe you can as a priest if you are really working with your people because it is the priesthood of all shared in different ways and their support of you and your support of them is the key and that should then link them and you into the next community which, ideally yes, that's the way, but if you are feeling very isolated something is really wrong I think. I mean wrong in the sense of needing help. D06

A considerable number of priests expressed concern about religious education and catechesis: a few were directly critical of the programmes which have been used in Catholic schools in recent years and one said the views of priests on this subject had been ignored by the diocesan authorities; several were anxious about a perceived lack of commitment and religious knowledge amongst the younger Catholic teachers and more were concerned at the lack of basic knowledge of the faith amongst children, young people and parents.

The interviews took place before the publication in 2009 of the Ryan report on the abuse of children in Irish Catholic institutions<sup>286</sup> and the Murphy report on child sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin<sup>287</sup> but child abuse and the responses to it were the subject of a number of concerns alongside regret and compassion for the victims: that the fact of the abuse of children by priests (and the way it had been reported in some media) had seriously damaged the Church's mission and the reputation of the priesthood; that some parishes were still not complying fully with child protection measures; that the measures themselves had adversely affected the life of the Church, deterring volunteers and making priests and others wary of interacting with children and young people; that priests felt vulnerable to false allegations and that some had suffered from allegations being badly handled by the authorities. One priest who had a role in the diocesan child protection process said this responsibility had adversely affected his relationship with some other priests.

A number of other concerns can be summarised in relation to the views expressed about the current diocesan strategy known as *Leaving Safe Harbours*.<sup>288</sup>

Most of the interviews were conducted about a year after the launch of the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process and the participants expressed a range of views about it, some being very

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<sup>286</sup> Ryan, S. et al, *Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (2009 [cited 28 August 2012]); available from <http://www.childabusecommission.com/rpt/>.

<sup>287</sup> Murphy, Y., Mangan, I., O'Neill, H., *Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin* (2009 [cited 28 August 2012]); available from [www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504).

<sup>288</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3.

positive about the initiative, some saying it involved too much centralisation, others that it was not sufficiently radical. The most commonly expressed view was that the vision behind *Leaving Safe Harbours* was sound but there were doubts as to whether it would be implemented and specifically as to whether sufficient financial resources would be committed to it. Opinion was divided as to whether parishes which could not be provided with a priest (or could not support one financially) should be maintained as parish communities with only occasional celebrations of the Eucharist or should be closed or merged to create larger units. Financial issues were frequently raised: the need to reduce costs by taking buildings out of use was widely recognised, though one or two voices complained that the whole process is predicated on accepting that continuing decline is inevitable, whereas they felt that buildings should be kept because they will be needed if and when decline is replaced by growth. Some called for the pooling of resources within pastoral areas, the full implementation of which would require the conversion of pastoral areas into single parishes, whilst others felt this would further compound the perceived decline in revenue by undermining traditional loyalty to parish communities. Some commented on the continuing inequalities in remuneration and living conditions for priests, maintaining that, despite the introduction of the ‘standard cash allowance’,<sup>289</sup> priests serving in wealthier areas are materially better off than those in poor areas and there were also negative comments about the extravagance of some presbytery refurbishments. In these contexts, some felt that the diocese was guilty of failing to address the issues. There were positive comments about the effectiveness of some local consultations about *Leaving Safe Harbours* and negative comments about a perceived lack of consultation of the clergy when the initiative was being drawn up. The strongest objections were from priests who valued highly the parish system, with its strong sense of parish identity and close relationship between parish priest and parishioners, which they saw as being characteristic of Liverpool’s history but threatened by the introduction of larger pastoral units and team ministries. Some feared that genuine communities would be destroyed. Some said that they or other priests did not like or could not cope with team ministry. In this connection, the issue of priests’ living arrangements was often raised: the common view was that those

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<sup>289</sup> The ‘standard cash allowance’ is a voluntary arrangement recommended by the Archdiocese whereby the traditional sources of a priest’s personal income (Mass intentions, stole fees, Christmas and Easter offerings) are all paid into the parish account, from which the priest draws a regular allowance (£9000p.a. in 2012). It was designed to equalise priests’ income but some priests still claim the right to retain all monies to which they are entitled in Canon Law.

priests who had experienced life as curates under the 'old regime' but had now got used to living alone would not usually wish to share accommodation, whilst a small number, mainly of younger priests, would like to live with other priests. It was frequently suggested that priests who were working closely together should have some element of communal living, at least gathering regularly for prayer, meals, and mutual support as well as work-related meetings, but that any shared accommodation should provide individuals with 'their own space'. Several participants lamented the lack of a sense of presbyterate and the demise of many social activities amongst priests, but, as noted above (see p.116), there were positive comments about the recently introduced pattern of residential gatherings for retreats and inservice as one attempt to address that issue. Both supporters and critics of *Leaving Safe Harbours* raised a number of issues which could threaten the success of the project. The geography and demography of some pastoral areas was said to make collaboration within them difficult or impossible. Some interviewees said that a large number of the clergy were not convinced by the vision and that even one priest in an area could block progress by refusing to co-operate. In some areas there were a number of priests (often close to or beyond retirement age) who were simply 'riding it out'. Some areas of the dioceses were described by one priest as 'dead'. The presence of religious orders in a pastoral area could hinder the kind of development envisaged, though one religious parish priest said that he and another religious priest had tried hard to start the process in their pastoral area but their secular colleagues had shown no interest in collaborating. One interviewee commented that leaving everything to local initiative would not solve the problem of pastoral areas which chose to do nothing. Others commented about the difficulty of agreeing any sort of pastoral policy across a pastoral area with priests of differing perspectives:

It was the first time we started to talk about pastoral issues: it became clear unless everybody was going to give part of their own ground we would never come to a consensus ... . You have to have a real faith in what's proposed or you won't implement it in your own place. D23

I suggested ... Why don't we do a couple of reconciliation services in each part of the pastoral area and we could all get together and go to each one? The people could see us then as a group rather than just individual parishes. And straight away two guys just said 'Well I do general absolution and I am not going to give up that' and I have been thinking about this for a while, it's something about dying and rising ... we have to be able to let go of some of our own stuff, you know, we have to die to some of the stuff ... if the vision is ever

going to work people are going to have to learn to give things up, you know, and I think not just for the sake of giving them up but for the sake of, of something better really. F07

There were sharp differences of opinion over the application of Canon 517<sup>290</sup> in the Leigh Pastoral Area (which was the subject of the case study described below, p.122). The priests currently serving in that pastoral area, along with a few others, saw it as a positive development but others expressed fears about it. Some said they and others would fear the loss of the security of the canonical position of parish priest. A few said they would have no such fears under the present Archbishop but would be concerned about how a future Archbishop might treat priests who had surrendered their rights as parish priests. Others argued that the 'Leigh arrangement' would work well when all the priests in a given area were of one mind but would be problematic if one or more did not share the same vision. This was linked to the issue of deployment of priests. Some commented that the pastoral areas which were moving forward had a high proportion of younger priests but there are not sufficient younger priests to replicate this situation in all pastoral areas. Some questioned the basis on which younger priests have been deployed, especially in relation to perceived inequalities of workload (e.g. the vastly differing number of funerals per priest)<sup>291</sup> and the need for stability in areas where developmental work is being undertaken. The issue of workload was raised frequently, with some concerned that *Leaving Safe Harbours* would simply result in priests being spread more thinly and having to work even harder, the fear being that 'guys will just go under'. Concern was also expressed that there was no apparent structure for monitoring priests' workloads or for providing supervision and support. A number of interviewees commented that the interview was the first time anyone had sat down for an hour and asked them what they were doing and how they felt about it. Some participants said that their Dean or Pastoral Area Leader had been supportive, but this was usually accompanied by comments about the limitations of that support or the perception that it was not replicated at the diocesan level. The question of chaplaincy to hospitals, prisons and other institutions was raised in two contexts. One interviewee was concerned as

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<sup>290</sup> Canon 517 §1: Where circumstances so require, the pastoral care of a parish, or of a number of parishes together, can be entrusted to several priests jointly, but with the stipulation that one of the priests is to be the moderator of the pastoral care to be exercised. This moderator is to direct the joint action and to be responsible for it to the Bishop.

<sup>291</sup> An ad hoc review by one of the Episcopal Vicars of the incomplete annual pastoral returns for 2008 revealed that seven priests were responsible for more than 90 funerals each that year (the highest number being 118) whilst eight other priests in parish ministry were responsible for fewer than nine funerals each (the lowest number being two).

to whether the option of specialist ministry would still be open to those priests who felt called to it. Others reported the refusal of some local parish priests to take any share in providing emergency cover for the chaplain's day off, holidays or other absences and cited this as an indication that the level of collaboration required for *Leaving Safe Harbours* to succeed may be lacking. Some interviewees raised the issue of the liturgical role of the presiding priest in team ministry situations. If priests frequently preside at Masses in different parishes, with different resources and different liturgical traditions, careful planning is required to avoid either presiders or congregations feeling that choices have been imposed upon them. This issue takes on particular significance when the priests involved embrace different models of priesthood. The same concern applies to visiting priests. Several interviewees expressed annoyance at visiting priests 'undermining' them by taking a more lax approach than they would themselves (e.g. allowing secular music at funerals), whilst others told stories of their parishioners being upset by visiting priests who insisted on celebrating in a more traditional style than their own. One priest reported that he had resorted to saying to a visiting colleague, 'Of course you can celebrate the requiem here as long as you respect *[name of parish]* - celebrate the requiem as I would celebrate it' (D12).

### **The case study**

As it relates closely to the concerns expressed by the priests in the interviews, the case study will be reported on here. The Leigh Pastoral Area was chosen for the case study, as explained Chapter 2 (see p.74), because it was an area with which I was very familiar and because, just as the research project was beginning, a team of four priests (two already serving in the area and two recently arrived) had been appointed to carry forward the development of that pastoral area as envisaged by the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process. In order to seize the opportunity of the fresh start in Leigh, I first interviewed the four priests together in September 2006, before the research project had formally begun, and followed up that group interview with individual interviews within a few days. The group interview was then repeated in September 2007, November 2008 and December 2009. Because of further developments in the area, including a change of personnel amongst the priests in 2010, I facilitated a day with the altered team in July 2010 and a fifth group interview was

held in December 2011, which will be reported separately at the end of this section.<sup>292</sup> The four deacons serving in the pastoral area at that time participated in the group interviews in 2006 and 2007.

In 2006 the Leigh Deanery consisted of nine parishes. The oldest traces its history back to penal times, seven were established between 1865 and 1904, the eighth was opened in 1954 and the ninth in 1964. One of the nineteenth-century churches had been closed in 2001, though the parish remained in existence. There is a confusion in the terminology used during the interviews, arising from the fact that the Leigh Deanery had decided in 2005 to work in two smaller areas, which they called ‘pastoral areas’, just a few months before the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process renamed all the deaneries as ‘pastoral areas’, so the Leigh Deanery officially became a pastoral area made up of two pastoral areas. One of these smaller pastoral areas consisted of four parishes in the town of Leigh, served by two priests. The other consisted of five parishes in the smaller towns and villages to the West of Leigh, also served by two priests. There was already a considerable degree of collaboration amongst the priests (including a rota which involved each priest celebrating the majority of Masses in the parishes to which he was assigned, but also celebrating a number of Masses each month in other churches) and during the course of the case study the priests, with the support of the Pastoral Area Forum, sought and received permission from the Archdiocese to implement the provision of Canon 517 §1:

Where circumstances so require, the pastoral care of a parish, or of a number of parishes together, can be entrusted to several priests jointly, but with the stipulation that one of the priests is to be the moderator of the pastoral care to be exercised. This moderator is to direct the joint action and to be responsible for it to the Bishop.<sup>293</sup>

As was noted above (p.121), this development was viewed with some concern by many of the clergy in the Archdiocese, who viewed it in terms of priests giving up their canonical status and power as parish priests. This negative perception of the change was rejected by the priests within the Leigh Pastoral Area, who insisted that they now had the canonical status of parish priest of all the parishes in the area and stressed the advantages of this way

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<sup>292</sup>As noted in Chapter 2, one of the original four members of the team left the active ministry and was replaced by a much younger priest. The new member was interviewed individually, as well as participating in the final group discussion and, for the sake of completeness, he also filled in the personality inventory and the survey on models of priesthood and theological positions.

<sup>293</sup> Canon Law Society, Great Britain and Ireland, *The Code of Canon Law* (London: Collins, 1983).

of working, viewing it as a positive development which made their ministry easier and more fulfilling.

The Deanery Forum had for some time envisaged the creation of the two pastoral areas as a step towards merging their constituent parishes, making two parishes instead of nine, building up loyalty to those two new parishes before considering closure of some of the buildings, including some of the churches. There was some resistance from the Archdiocese to this proposal but it was eventually agreed in 2011 and the new parishes were inaugurated on September 8<sup>th</sup> in that year. In one of the group interviews, the Pastoral Area Leader (also the moderator in terms of Canon 517) explained the rationale behind this plan and the frustration at the delay in its implementation:

I think it would be detrimental to close parishes because then what happens is an absorption and I think the better way around is to close all the parishes and create two new parishes, which is what our original kind of principle was and I think that we have held back from that for erm, two, two years and I think that's what's created a lot of our problems ... C01

The priests in the case study echoed some of the hopes and concerns of the other priests in the interviews and focus groups, but here I will concentrate on the views they expressed which relate to their particular situation. It was noted earlier that some participants commented that the priests appointed to the pastoral areas which were moving forward in the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process tended to be younger than average and this was true of the priests in Leigh. By January 2010, the average age of the active clergy in the diocese was 66.9, but the four priests serving in this pastoral area at that time were aged between 44 and 55, three ordained in the 1980s and the fourth in 1998. They were all also inclined significantly towards the servant leader model of priesthood and were committed to the principle of lay involvement in ministry and in decision making (though they all acknowledged difficulties in implementing that principle and one commented that tensions had arisen because some of them encouraged more lay initiative than others). At some point during the case study each of them expressed concerns about workload, energy levels and health issues<sup>294</sup> but all four frequently commented that working together as a team reduced significantly the stress they felt in relation to these issues:

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<sup>294</sup> The most recently ordained in the original team (also the oldest by a small margin) repeatedly voiced more serious concerns about these issues and about feeling unsupported by the diocese, expressed more doubts than the others about the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process and has since left the active ministry, being replaced by

I feel the support that I get from ... the other priests, is absolutely essential and I think if I'd have been isolated I think I would have gone under and I, I have got a lot of comfort from knowing that I can pick up the phone. I am not afraid of picking up the phone and asking for help ... I don't feel isolated and sometimes not feeling isolated means that you don't need pick up the phone, because you know you are supported so, it kind of works that way for me. C01

I feel that, since coming to this deanery I've had the best experience of priesthood that I've ever had in my life in the last eight years, being part of a supportive deanery clergy. And, er, because in my previous appointment when I, er, I felt isolated and now I feel like a member of a team. C02

... the difference I noticed was that not everything was on my shoulders anymore ... there was more of a sharing, not only in helping each other out, but in stimulating your mind, your thinking, your ways of working, and so you're not too narrow-minded, you know, it's easy to become when you're on your own and you don't see others. So there's an excitement for me about it ... but I also think it's going to be relieving as well in the sense of the way I was trained and had hoped things would be hasn't always been the way and this I see as more true to the vision I started off with. C03

... there is a lot of work to do really and I feel that we are the front line in many ways and, you know, there is other priests in the diocese I know who are working just as hard as we are, but we are working hard, but it does feel good to be supported and it's, it's also not so much being supported but just to be aware as well that we are working as a team and I'm often aware that, oh if I don't do this, I don't want to let the other guys down and there is that as well. I am not so sure if that is putting pressure on me exactly but ... it's a good feeling in a sense, because it is motivating me as well ... and to sort of just be aware that we are working as a team and it's not just me. C04

They spoke of feeling less isolated because of the structures they were developing, of the advantages of working to one another's strengths, but also of the tensions that could arise in having to surrender the power of being an individual parish priest:

... the strategies to prevent [*isolation*] are very clear, that there is a sense within me that I should work with others and collaborate and share work with others. There is the meetings, ensuring that we meet and that we discuss so that there is a sense of shared working together and em, the same with, you know, like the structures of the deanery forum or any of the committees. I think they are there to ensure that there is contact, that you don't feel isolated and that everything isn't your problem. And I think that is one of the reasons why, if a priest has an ability or he is able to do a task then he should be allowed to do that task throughout the deanery, because it may mean that there is continuity ... so it's

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one of the youngest priests in the diocese, thus bringing the average age of the priests in this area down even further.



not about power or control of your area in that sense, and so it is sharing your working, you know. C01

I was delighted at the complementarity, if that's the right word, how the different gifts kind of come together as common and weren't really duplicated. We are all quite similar in some ways and perhaps in attitude but we have got a lot of differences in our gifts and that was really good to hear, because that just shows how a team of four could really serve an area really well, you know if you really focus on those gifts and that was encouraging. C03

We do this because, although we don't know the full outcomes, it seems to be the best thing to do in this situation and therefore you make that sacrifice to do it for the good of all. C03

Concrete examples of individual priests taking responsibility for particular issues across the pastoral area included one priest looking after all the parish clubs, another leading RCIA,<sup>295</sup> a third taking the lead on spiritual formation and a fourth on liturgical formation.

The question of whether the increased workload facing all priests, and this way of working in particular, would result in a loss of contact with parishioners, was raised a number of times during the discussions. The first of the following quotations states the perceived problem, the second gives a positive response to it, and the third gives a more ambivalent response. All of these views were present in the discussion:

... my concern would be about how we can find, sometimes find ourselves on a carousel, going round from one church to another where we don't really have relationships, I mean for example I have to go and say Mass over at ... and I don't feel I know those people really, erm, and I feel more disconnected from them ... that would be a concern for me, that the quality of relationships between priests and people, between priests and parishes, is going to disintegrate gradually over time, as we get older and more tired and, er, fewer in number. Er, I feel that that's perhaps a concern that many parishioners have too about this link with their one priest, that that quality of relationship could suffer. C02

It was one of the big fears I know of other clergy in the diocese, 'Oh I'll lose touch with my people'. You don't, because for the bulk of the time you are with them ... you do get energised going into other places and, and you also learn to be more flexible with patterns, because things, every parish here works so differently, surprisingly so, erm, so I, yeh I think there has been an awful lot of good for us there but I think we are learning it, we, we are not there yet. C03

if there are 100 people ... you are really only going to know ten people really well but you can also through various other ways affect the lives of the other 99

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<sup>295</sup> The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

*[sic]* in different ways and so I don't worry about losing contact with people completely. You are always going to have contact with people but it's a smaller kind of contact, so it is more important that the contact is erm, it's the quality of the contact ... you can't see everybody so if somebody comes to see you then you are aware that, you know, the time that you are giving them is establishing a kind of relationship with them so I think you have to think very carefully ... about contact. C01

Whilst there was a considerable degree of consistency in the views of these four individuals over the period of the study, there were some interesting changes over that period. In the first session, in 2006, they all expressed varying degrees of excitement and commitment to the new project on which they were embarking. Although two had been involved for several years in previous stages of the development, it was seen by all of them as a new start. There was also an element of deference on the part of the two newcomers to the two who had greater experience in this setting. During the second group interview, in 2007, there were frequent references to feeling tired and exhausted: the support within the team was still acknowledged but there were more references to low energy levels and health issues. It was at this point that concerns were mentioned about the diocese being slow to accept and support the more radical changes being proposed from the local area. In the third group interview, in 2008, there were similar comments about workload, the concern about lack of support from the diocese was more strongly expressed and a number of issues surfaced in relation to the structures of consultation within the local area: one priest spoke of having withdrawn for a few months from the Pastoral Area Forum because of feeling hurt and misunderstood by some of its members. In what was intended to be the final group interview in 2009, another priest spoke of the Pastoral Area Forum being dominated by a few vocal members and not being effective in allowing dissent and discussion, and of the priests not meeting sufficiently often or with sufficient time and focus to allow important issues to be discussed. A further consequence of the efforts to work at a pastoral area level was the demise of some individual parish councils: although the plan was that these would be replaced by consultation at pastoral area level, one priest commented that there had been a reduction in the involvement of laypeople in decision making at the parish level.

On a more positive note, whilst the parochial attitudes of most people were a constant theme over the whole period, there were comments in the later sessions that there were

encouraging signs of collaboration across the pastoral area (for instance in the SVP,<sup>296</sup> the RCIA, bereavement groups and marriage preparation) and of some people crossing parish boundaries more frequently to attend Mass and social functions in other parishes of the pastoral area.

The extra group interview conducted in December 2011 was prompted, as noted above, by two major changes: the replacement, in the summer of 2010, of one of the four original priests by a much younger priest and the canonical change from nine parishes to two in September 2011. Whilst all four members of the new team spoke positively about the relationships between them and the support gained from the team approach to ministry, there were some significant differences between the views of the newest member of the team and those of the other three. The three members of the original team were relieved and happy that the long-awaited change from nine parishes to two had taken place and had been positively celebrated. As in previous sessions they all spoke of being weary, especially so at this time, after a very stressful year which, in addition to the structural change in the pastoral area, had also involved preparations for the new Archdiocesan approach to the sacraments of initiation and the introduction of the new translation of the Roman Missal. They were conscious of the need for further work to implement the changes but argued that this should be taken slowly. The new member, some 15-20 years younger than the other three, took a quite different view. He applauded the change that had taken place, but saw it as simply a canonical decision which had yet to be put into action and expressed frustration that more radical decisions about the closure of some churches were not being taken, especially as they concerned the churches with which he was most directly involved and he felt very keenly the urgency of the need to combine forces in order to preserve and build up fewer but more vibrant communities. He was not concerned about the level of his workload, which he said was lighter than in his previous appointment, and did not feel stressed by the introduction of the new translation, which he welcomed. The other members spoke of the positive contribution the newest member had made to the area and there was a frank and respectful discussion of differing views in relation to the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, which clearly relate to the tension between the servant leader model of priesthood which the three original members all held quite strongly and the cultic

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<sup>296</sup> The Society of St Vincent de Paul, an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing direct practical assistance to anyone in need (see <http://www.svp.org.uk/> accessed 28 August 2012).

model to which the newest member was more inclined. Three principles were expressed as being important for the way the team had sought to work: moving as fast as the slowest; concentrating on issues and not allowing them to become personal; and taking time, with outside facilitation if necessary, to address issues so that they did not fester.

The case study has provided insight into the benefits of priests working together to serve a given area and into the strengths and difficulties of one specific approach. In some other pastoral areas, new larger parishes have been created from a number of existing parishes but at the time of writing there is no sign that any other pastoral areas are taking up the option of Canon 517, where the parish priests resign their individual responsibilities and become a team serving several parishes jointly. Early in 2012, the newest member of the Leigh clergy team was moved again to a different appointment in the diocese and there followed a period of several months before a permanent replacement was appointed. Informal contacts with the remaining members of the team indicate that this latest change caused some consternation and some questioning of the extent to which the Archdiocesan authorities appreciate the need for stability in this developing situation.

### **Views on recent developments in the life of the Church**

The attitudes which the interviewed priests expressed in relation to some key developments in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council gave further indications of where they stood in relation to the distinction between servant leader and cultic models. The Hoge-Wenger study<sup>297</sup> asserted that those who supported the servant leader model would value flexibility in their attitude to the Church's magisterium, would allow creativity in matters of liturgy and devotion and would allow for theological differences, whereas those favouring the cultic model would value strict hierarchy, insist on following established rules for worship and defend 'orthodoxy'. During the interviews, I invited comment on a number of key developments which had taken place since the Second Vatican Council:

- calls for the relaxation of compulsory celibacy for priests;
- calls for the ordination of women;
- the ecumenical movement;

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<sup>297</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

- liturgical reform following Vatican II and the recent extension of permission to use the 1962 Latin rite;
- the promulgation of and reaction to *Humanae Vitae*;<sup>298</sup>
- the decline in religious observance in the West;
- the increased lay involvement in ministry, both voluntary and paid;
- the rise of new ecclesial movements; and
- the restoration of the permanent diaconate.

Not all of these topics were covered in every interview, depending on the length of the responses given. Comments made in response to some of them, particularly the first five, gave strong indications of whether a particular respondent was inclined to value strict hierarchy, insist on following established rules and defend ‘orthodoxy’ or to value flexibility, creativity and room for theological differences. As a result of some respondents expressing disagreement with these polarities as stated in the Hoge-Wenger study (see p.153), I devised supplementary questions for the survey to allow for more nuanced responses which will be described in Chapter 4 (see p.191).

### ***Calls for the relaxation of compulsory celibacy for priests***

This topic is particularly significant since it is identified by the Hoge-Wenger research as being one of the five issues which differentiate between the cultic and servant leader models of priesthood, so it serves as a useful point of comparison between the large sample in that American study and my small sample of Liverpool priests. The vast majority of those interviewed in the present study commented positively about celibacy and their own experience of it, but, in line with the overall finding that those espousing the cultic model are in the minority, only four argued that celibacy should remain compulsory for secular priesthood, though several stated that it is clearly essential to religious life. The positive aspects of celibacy mentioned included: the practical advantages of celibates being able to

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<sup>298</sup> Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical letter, *On Human Life*, which became controversial because it reaffirmed the Catholic Church’s traditional prohibition of artificial contraception when a change in that teaching had been widely anticipated: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

devote themselves completely to service, including unsocial hours and instant mobility, without having to consider wife and family (with some priests adding that, if they had been married, their marriages would not have survived); the sign value of commitment to love without sex in our sexualised world; the potential for deep relationships uncomplicated by sex; the example of Christ's celibacy; their own experience of finding fulfilment and happiness in celibate service; celibacy being seen as a sacrifice, a cross; and women being thought to feel safer and more comfortable with celibate priests. In addition to these positive factors, the arguments given for celibacy to remain compulsory for secular priesthood included: the fact that it is the current law of the Church; concerns that a two-tier priesthood would be an unhelpful development, leading to practical and financial difficulties; negative evaluations of the experience of married clergy in other denominations, including reference to high divorce rates; and scepticism as to whether a relaxation of the rule would lead to more vocations. The arguments most frequently advanced in favour of relaxing the rule were: that priesthood and celibacy are two separate vocations and individuals can be called to either one without being called to the other; that the admission of married former Anglican priests and their ready acceptance by the people has undermined the rule; that this is seen as unfair to those Catholic priests who have married (most priests and people believe they should be welcomed back into ministry if they wish that); that people have a right to the Eucharist and the need of communities currently without a priest is more important than the tradition of priestly celibacy (with some arguing that married clergy should only be allowed in countries where this need is great and one arguing that indigenous married clergy would always be preferable to imported celibate priests); and that most Catholics are thought to be in favour of the ordination of mature married men. There were also references to: the pool of married deacons, many of whom were thought capable of being good priests; the practice of the Orthodox churches; positive evaluations of the experience of married clergy in other denominations (including some who have left the Catholic community in order to minister in other churches); the different gifts which married men would bring to priesthood; the support that a wife could give to the ministry of a married priest; and the fact that permanent commitment is alien to many people in our culture. Only one respondent argued for change from his own experience of loneliness in priesthood.

### *Calls for the ordination of women*

This topic was often linked in the interview conversations to the previous issue, but there was less support for change in this matter, with some priests stating that this was ‘a different kettle of fish’ or ‘a step too far’. Of the 26 who expressed an opinion on this question, 10 were in favour of the ordination of women (all of whom were also in favour of the ordination of married men), 10 were broadly opposed to the ordination of women (including the four who were opposed to the ordination of married men) and 6 were ambivalent in their view. The most frequently cited reason against the ordination of women was tradition, with a number of priests saying they were not convinced by any of the other reasons given. The other reasons included: the fact that Christ did not ordain women, though he crossed other social boundaries of his time; the ‘*alter Christus*’ argument;<sup>299</sup> the clear and recently re-affirmed teaching that women cannot validly be ordained; fear that such a decision would split the Church (with references to the problems caused by the ordination of women in the Church of England) and would be unpopular with many women; the improbability of the Church taking this step in the foreseeable future; and fear of a female takeover, as has allegedly happened with altar servers. Some admitted that they simply would not feel comfortable with women priests, or acknowledged that opposition to the idea is rooted in a male culture. Others said they would be happy if a way round the apparently insurmountable obstacles to women’s ordination could be found. Some commented that insistence on equality in all things was not good for women or for society, since being equal does not mean being the same and women are naturally gifted for motherhood, with one saying that the present ‘political correctness’ in this regard might come to be seen, with hindsight, as ‘an appalling aberration’. Some acknowledged that women’s gifts and roles in the Church need to be better appreciated and three suggested that ordination of women to the diaconate would be a helpful step. Reasons given in favour of ordaining women priests included: the equality of the sexes; the ambiguity of the New Testament evidence; the fact that some women feel called to priesthood; the ‘shame’ of half the Church being barred from priesthood despite possessing wonderful gifts; positive experiences of working alongside female ministers in other denominations; references to the precedent of the underground Church in Czechoslovakia; and secular pressures,

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<sup>299</sup> The ‘*alter Christus*’ argument is that the priest must be male because he represents Christ, being literally ‘another Christ’.

including the fact that many people, especially the young, cannot see why women should be excluded from priesthood.

### ***The ecumenical movement***

With a few notable exceptions, the common picture emerging from the data was that the priests are less engaged in ecumenical activities than they would have been in the recent past. There were frequent references to the impression which had prevailed in the years following Vatican II, and especially during the period when Archbishop Derek Worlock and Bishop David Sheppard were setting an example of close partnership, that progress was being made towards the goal of visible unity. Though there were a few sceptical comments and one interviewee spoke of ‘false hopes’ having been raised, the majority spoke warmly of the history of regular meetings, close working relationships, shared social projects, joint events of worship and witness and personal friendships with ministers of other churches, especially during the 1980s. In most cases the current picture was quite different: relationships with ecumenical colleagues were usually described as friendly and, in a few instances, priests were still attending clergy fraternals, but the majority had given up that practice, with ecumenical co-operation, if it existed at all, having dwindled to one or two annual events such as walks of witness, Remembrance Day celebrations or carol services. A variety of reasons was offered for the decline in ecumenical activity: time constraints felt by the priests and by their ecumenical colleagues (especially when serving multiple parishes); statements from the Vatican which were perceived as negative, especially towards the Church of England; the Church of England’s decision to ordain women, divisions within that Church and its perceived ambivalence on some moral issues; personality clashes and disagreements over local issues; and tensions arising in chaplaincy settings. Some expressed considerable sadness and frustration at the lack of progress, describing the ecumenical movement as ‘stalled’, ‘stuck’ or ‘going backwards’ and voiced feelings of embarrassment or guilt at their own failure to be more involved in promoting unity. There were a small number of exceptions to this general picture in both directions. A few were not sorry that the pace had slowed, including one who described himself as ‘not keen on ecumenism’, saying that he didn’t ‘trust the parsons’. In the other direction, one said he was still sure that unity was coming and a few described themselves as still actively involved in ecumenical activity, including one with experience of serving a shared church and another closely involved with an ecumenical school who regarded its establishment as



the beginning of ‘a new era of ecumenical co-operation’. A number of interviewees referred to the success of some evangelical churches in attracting members, especially young people, in contrast to the Catholic experience of declining numbers. There were a number of references to the positive possibilities of unity with the Orthodox Churches and a smaller number of references to other faiths. One interviewee was a member of an interfaith group and closely involved with interfaith social justice projects. There were a few references to the Muslim community, some positive, but more fearful or pejorative.

***Liturgical reform following Vatican II and the recent extension of permission to use the 1962 Latin rite***

There was a remarkable degree of unanimity on both of these issues. All the participants regarded the liturgical reforms brought about by Vatican II as an overwhelmingly positive development: none of those who had lived through the changes wanted to go back to the former liturgy and those who had grown up with the current rite were comfortable with it. Some commented that the changes had been introduced too quickly and with inadequate preparation (the words ‘savage’ and ‘brutal’ were used), a number acknowledged that there had been losses as well as gains (usually with reference to the musical riches of the former liturgy and to a loss of reverence, sacredness, or mystique) and some referred to excesses and abuses, but all maintained that the advantages of understanding, participation, relevance and intimacy outweighed the losses and some observed that the present rite could and should be celebrated with reverence and with silences for prayer and reflection. One pointed out that much of the theological content of the reform has yet to be assimilated. Although most of the interviews were conducted in 2007, four years before the new translation of the Roman Missal was eventually introduced, three commented negatively about the quality of parts of the 1973 translation (one describing some prayers as having been ‘bowdlerised and de-supernaturalised’) and welcomed the proposed new translation, though two others criticised the drafts of the new translation for being non-inclusive and archaic. The consensus in relation to the recent widening of opportunities for celebration of the Extraordinary Rite (which most referred to as the Tridentine Rite<sup>300</sup>) was even more surprising: some acknowledged that Pope Benedict had been motivated by a desire to heal division and make a gesture towards communion with those who felt excluded by the

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<sup>300</sup> The Council of Trent, 1545-1563, defined Catholic doctrine and liturgy in opposition to the Reformation and led to the production in 1570 of the Tridentine Missal, which shaped Catholic liturgy until the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965

abolition of the earlier rite, but even those who held that view thought the new measures unnecessary and largely irrelevant, and several thought they could be unhelpful. A number of older priests said they had never been asked to say Mass in Latin; two who had been asked to celebrate in the Tridentine Rite described the experience negatively (one saying he felt ‘crushed’ by it); several priests, of varying ages, said they would be incapable of celebrating Mass in Latin. A number commented that opportunities already existed in the diocese and were not well attended, so it was likely that some would try the Extraordinary Rite but get bored by it. Others noted that, after more than 40 years, most of those still living who had grown up with the old rite had either accepted the new rite or left the Church. Many expressed concern that some Catholics who adhered to the Tridentine Rite did so in a spirit of rejection of the reforms of Vatican II (one used the phrase ‘schismatic in all but name’) and that to encourage the Extraordinary Rite could contribute to division within the Church. Two pointed out that the ‘traditional rite’ in England was the Sarum Rite,<sup>301</sup> which was suppressed when the Tridentine Rite was introduced. One suggested that both these rites should be celebrated occasionally, for nostalgic and educational reasons, but neither should be regarded as suitable for contemporary use: he used the analogy of the few steam trains preserved in operation. The tone of this discussion underlines the fact that the Hoge-Wenger description of the ‘new priests’ does not equate with support for the Tridentine Rite, but it also confirms the impression that the body of priests in this sample is less ‘conservative’ than the presbyterates of some other dioceses. A comment from one of the priests who leaned more towards the cultic model illustrates this:

my concern would be um, that if somebody was only attending Tridentine Rites week in, week out, um, bearing in mind *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*,<sup>302</sup> um, they are going to become a very different kind of Catholic from the rest of us really ... I wouldn’t want to see the development of a High Church and a Low Church which would inevitably be not just about different celebrations of the liturgy but different, totally different visions of the Church and the world and that, that’s something we need to watch for really: if that happened it would have been a big mistake. D18

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<sup>301</sup> The Sarum Rite, developed in Salisbury during the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, was widely used in England until the appearance in 1570 of the Tridentine Missal.

<sup>302</sup> This phrase, literally translated as ‘the law of prayer, the law of belief, the law of life’ expresses the conviction that there must be a unity between these three aspects of faith: worship, doctrine and action and the corresponding suspicion that those seeking a return to earlier liturgical practices would also reject recent developments in teaching and morality.

### *The promulgation of and reaction to Humanae Vitae*

This issue was included amongst the topics of conversation in order to discern the participants' attitudes to the Magisterium and their theological perspectives. The question was framed in terms of the effect that the publication of *Humanae Vitae* (and the reactions to it) may have had on the authority and credibility of Catholic Church teaching. There was broad support amongst the participating priests for the values taught in the encyclical (only one expressed outright disagreement) and several commented that Paul VI's predictions about the negative effects of widespread use of contraception had proved accurate. Some referred to the encyclical as prophetic in that sense, but the majority regarded it as lacking sensitivity to the difficult realities faced by married people. Some priests who had been in pastoral ministry before 1968 spoke of the encyclical coming as a shock, since the more permissive verdict of the Papal Commission had been widely trailed in the media,<sup>303</sup> and Archbishop Beck had previously issued a confidential document to the Liverpool clergy advising a pastorally sensitive approach. One participant commented that the encyclical had been mistranslated and misrepresented in the media, making it seem harsher than it was in its original form. Most thought that its teaching had been ignored by the majority of Catholics and that it had been the cause of the exit of many lay Catholics from the Church and of many good priests from the active ministry. Several expressed regret about this, describing the effects of the encyclical as 'tragic', and one described it as 'good doctrine but bad policy', saying it made too hard a demand on ordinary people and should not have been published. Two expressed the positive view that the encyclical marked the beginning of Catholics thinking for themselves and taking responsibility for their own moral decisions. Several of those who regretted the effects of the encyclical also felt that the Church has not done enough to present a credible alternative to the contemporary culture of sexual promiscuity and some thought the publication of *Humanae Vitae* had made it more difficult to do so: embarrassment about the issue of contraception had resulted in a reluctance to discuss sexual morality. Some commented that the proportion of couples living together before marriage and the falling birth rate had made the encyclical irrelevant, and that hardly anyone ever mentions the use of contraception in confession. A small number defended the encyclical completely and regretted the fact that the Church has not

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<sup>303</sup> For a recent, pro-*Humanae Vitae* summary, see Brugger, E. C., 'Father Ford, Paul VI and Birth Control', *Zenit*, (2011), <http://www.zenit.org/article-32545?l=english>. (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

taken a stronger stand against sexual immorality: as predicted by the Hoge-Wenger analysis they tended to be the small minority who favoured the cultic model of priesthood.

### *The decline in religious observance in the West*

A number of respondents pointed out that the decline is not uniform across the UK nor across the Archdiocese. In South East England, immigration from Catholic countries has brought an increase in Mass attendance in some areas (notably in the Westminster diocese), whereas the fall in population in the North West has exacerbated the decline in Mass attendance and the positive effect of immigration seems limited, except in specific geographical locations (e.g. the Cathedral parish and the Isle of Man).<sup>304</sup> Within the diocese, the fall has been much sharper in the more deprived areas (e.g. Liverpool's inner city and outer estates like Kirkby) than in the more affluent areas (e.g. Southport, Formby and some of the Lancashire towns). One participant in a more affluent area reported that 17 out of 25 first communicants in 2007 were regular Mass attenders whereas several said that for most of their parishioners the first communion would also be the last and a priest serving in one of the most deprived areas said Mass attendance had fallen to around 8%. Another commented that Mass attendance had held up better in the Lancashire towns than in the city of Liverpool. Four of the participants said they were not experiencing the broader decline in their particular situations and three of these said Mass attendance was rising in their settings. Two of these cases were linked to high levels of immigration from Catholic countries, whilst the third respondent attributed the rise in Mass attendance to maintaining a welcoming and active community:

If anything our numbers are up; four baptisms every Sunday; young families at Mass, but we've worked at including them ... For God's sake, put the lights on, get the place warm, put some music on, keep the notice board up to date, how much does that cost? D14

The same priest was not alone in attributing some of the decline to the failings of individual priests:

Some priests are just rude, and people won't put up with that. D14

People find a lot of coldness in our communities and that's got to be our fault.  
D15

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<sup>304</sup> See the detailed figures for population and Mass attendance given in Chapter 1 (pp.33ff).

Amongst the majority who were experiencing some degree of decline, several noted with concern that, although the Catholic Church had been known as the church of the poor, we seem to be losing contact most rapidly with the poorest people, becoming instead a church of the middle class. Some commented that the decline could be demoralising for priests and for people:

... it seems to me an awful situation to be in, to be in on your own, you know, and I think I feel there is an issue for all of us about living with decline and I, you know, there's a bit of me wonders how anybody could want to come into priesthood when there is this, I don't even know what the attraction is when you, if you go in with clear eyes you know that the thing is sort of caving in before your eyes. F05

The population since I have been here has moved down and down and down um, that's frustrating, it's frustrating ... I have two, two parishes and every day I go and say Mass for 4 or 5 people, which is totally disheartening for me as a younger priest: it's totally and utterly disheartening ... it's my least favourite thing to do during the week is to celebrate Mass in the parish. It's not that I am celebrating Mass, it's just that I have got 4 or 5 deaf, quite often, old people in front of me who don't even remember the responses. F07

One priest commented that 'people don't join a sinking ship' and we could end up 'like the church in France – pitiful' (F06) while another said that empty churches are a sign of failure and asked:

Where are we going wrong? What is it that they need that we are not giving them? Because surely if we were giving it to them our churches would be packed. D21

Some felt that the decline was reaching a point where it threatened the continued existence of some parishes:

... it's not enough to pay the bills and to sustain the property that we've got ... how do we as a community be that faith presence, that sign of holiness when in fact we can't survive ... You know we're actually not going to be there. F10

I feel like most priests I think that um, the Church is gradually winding down. We all know it's difficult to get people to er accept responsibilities um, and er there just aren't enough people to make things work. F04

Others took a more hopeful view, either relying on the Lord's promise to be with us always or expecting that the downturn will bottom out and there will be a resurgence. One related this to an image he had found in the writings of the Benedictine author Joan Chittister about a fire banked up with ash for the night:

I think that's a lovely image of Church as well. All you or I can do is make sure, make sure the coals, kind of keep the coals warm and in God's time and God's way those coals, they will be rekindled again, now that's the virtue of hope. D16

Another noted that the closure of a large old church and the relocation of Mass into a smaller building had a positive effect on morale:

Having to speak to people who are miles away from you and empty benches was a bit soul-destroying but now the church is closed and they meet in a school hall and it's lovely to be there because they are all around you. D19

Several commented that the vast majority of Catholics, although they do not attend Mass regularly, still have a very strong sense of Catholic identity and expect the church to be there for the occasions when they want it, especially baptisms, first communions and funerals. Some seemed resigned to this level of engagement with the majority of Catholics:

... the Church touches people when they need to be touched. Um, I think that's all the Church can do. D13

Others expressed frustration at the lack of outreach, some citing the success of evangelical churches which offer more engaging services and are attracting Catholic young people:

... we are just surviving, we, we are just sort of holding on and, and if we are like this then we are going to die and, and I don't want us to die because what we have and what we have got to give is so life-giving ... and what we are seeing is an awful lot of people ... going to the Pentecostalist Churches ... trucks and buses out and about picking up the kids and taking them to the kids club and they have got the organisation ... they have got everything under the sun ... but ... we are not evangelising, we are not communicating in, to my mind anyway, the urgency of the message ... There is no urgency about this deeply suffering world that I feel, these deeply suffering people who need so much healing in their life can get the healing of the gospel ... we are letting something precious slip through our fingers. D15

One significant feature is that those who leaned towards the cultic model of priesthood were more likely to blame the decline on a perceived failure in religious instruction, a watering down of the faith, and a lack of practising Catholic teachers, whereas those who leaned towards the servant leader model were more likely to attribute the decline to broader social and cultural trends (including the fact that many other organisations, such as political parties and trade unions, are experiencing declining membership). One taking up the former position linked it to a sense of a lack in his own formation and that of the Catholic community:

I never feel equipped really to answer some of the questions people are asking, you know, theologically ... maybe that goes back to seminary formation and maybe going back to some kind of apologetics that people need to be able to defend more what they believe, especially in the work place and we haven't equipped our parishioners to do that and maybe our priests enough in training, that we live in a very, you know, a society that is quite hostile to religion and um people need to be able to defend what they believe and give an account for, as St Paul says, what we believe and I think um that's a lack of formation for priests and people, that I think is a real challenge that needs addressing. C05

Only two mentioned child abuse scandals as having contributed to the decline, though, as was noted above, the interviews took place before the publication in 2009 of the reports into abuse of children within the Irish Catholic Church.<sup>305</sup>

One who definitely leaned towards the servant leader model also questioned the effectiveness of our engagement with contemporary culture:

I think there is something in the broader climate which is such that they, they can't even think of coming to church as something which would be attractive. I think sometimes when they come they do find it attractive and sometimes they don't but it's something in the broader climate and I think it's that broader climate that we are not touching and that, that we are part of that broader climate. I think that is the thing that, for my own faith to make sense, I need to be wrestling with this. D10

### ***The increased lay involvement in ministry, voluntary and paid***

The Hoge-Wenger study noted that priests who favoured the cultic model of priesthood valued strict hierarchy whilst those embracing the servant leader model valued flexible structures and that one of the consequences of this was that the 'new priests' were less positive about the greater level of responsibility given to laypeople to in the post-Vatican II era, and less comfortable working alongside professional laypeople in paid pastoral posts.<sup>306</sup> There are significant differences with the situation in Liverpool, with very few paid pastoral workers, and the priests in the present study expressed a range of views and described a variety of different experiences, but their comments broadly confirmed the premise that those favouring the servant leader model spoke more positively about the involvement of laypeople in ministry.

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<sup>305</sup> Murphy, *The Murphy Report*; Ryan, *The Ryan Report*.

<sup>306</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.130-131

One priest, ordained before Vatican II, spoke glowingly of the dramatic change that took place in his outlook through the experience of working with a committed group of laypeople in the aftermath of the Council:

In the days of my training ours was a very clerical Church: the laity were there to pay up and pray up and any Catholic action ... in which the laity might have been involved, they were seen as the long arm of the clergy. The decrees of the Council changed all that. By virtue of baptism and confirmation each member has a responsibility for the mission of the Church and is called upon to do the works of the Lord in the home, at work, at leisure, all sharing the priesthood of Jesus Christ ... I was given a whole new vision of Church: a Church of shared responsibility with a recognition of the role and the calling of each member, a Church of service, serving the Lord, serving the brother and sister in need, doing the Lord's work together, we are sustained and nourished by the holy Word and the sacraments. D19

There were other positive comments from priests who had experience of working with teams including paid lay workers, from different perspectives. One spoke mainly of the need for a large parish to be organised:

... it's organised so everybody can get on with things and get on with what they have got to do and nobody has to run in every five seconds and say 'Please can I do ... ?' and 'What can I do about this?' And if I were to drop dead today, God forbid, if I were, the place wouldn't grind to a halt, unless somebody came in and changed it. Hopefully good things will continue and people in different areas of ministry would all continue. D06

Another, ordained in the 1990s but clearly leaning more towards the servant leader model than the cultic, said that collaboration suited his personality and had been his only experience. His emphasis was more on valuing each member of the team and on recognising that they brought gifts and skills he didn't possess:

... very luckily, I have never had any other experience really ... and I do work better, I don't work very well alone ... it empowers me rather than, you know anything else ... I am not a power freak, you know controller, um, so working collaboratively suits me ... as parish priest ultimately you've got to, ... somebody has got to be in charge in that sense and I take that charge you know reticently I suppose but I do see myself as one of the team and I will question, you know, ... if I have asked stuff to be done, I make sure my stuff is done so I can report back to them and ask advice ... I suppose for some priests that would be quite difficult, for me it's not. But I don't know if that is because I am good, I think it's just because I have never had any other ... and it actually suits my personality I suppose. D14



One participant spoke positively of working with clergy and full-time workers in a pastoral area to consult with parishioners about necessary developments and another was enthusiastic about working with other professionals and volunteers in a hospital chaplaincy team. One parish priest spoke warmly of the personal support he received from his 'little parish team' and of making time to have meals with them regularly, while another spoke of the invaluable support of regular prayer with a small group of co-workers. Another was uncomfortable with the word 'governing' as one of the roles of the priest, saying 'I would prefer empowerment because it means helping other people to, not just share responsibility but accept their own responsibility within the church' (D10).

One of the religious priests engaged in parish ministry commented positively on the specific contribution of a professionally qualified religious sister to the outreach work of the parish team, and several priests, secular and religious, reported relying heavily on parish sisters.

Towards the other end of the spectrum, one of the older priests, who said he had never changed his pre-Vatican II view of priesthood, also said, 'I've never really come to terms with working with a group of other people: I have just been what we call a lone ranger' (D09), while one of the more recently ordained priests said he had never experienced collaboration with lay workers in his priestly ministry:

you know we do work with our lay ministers, but ... they don't overtake ... I think it's good too, but I don't think we should abuse it as priests, you can see abuse sometimes of er, er, you know, the kind of the ministry and it being used, you know, in addition, you know, they add, they are getting add ons, well, will you just do this, or do, and I think it's about kind of keeping in mind as well, um, you know, the good of the community and how that and how lay ministry impinges on that if it does ... don't let the tail start wagging the dog' (D07).

Many comments (more frequently but not exclusively from those tending towards the cultic model) expressed ambivalence about the value of the increased involvement of laypeople in ministry:

... the lay Eucharistic ministers do the job of attending to the sick so much more richly, fruitfully than we ever did trying to dash round 20 houses on a First Friday morning ... to that extent you know the priests again are edged out.  
B03

I am so sad there, there are not priests involved in school chaplaincy and we can't because we don't have the numbers. I, I am sure the lay chaplains are

doing very well and I am sure that good things are going on but nevertheless ...  
D15

... we need to be careful that we are not ... creating quasi kind of ministries and priests, priesthood that doesn't exist ... so, that is a concern for me. F17

In the middle of the spectrum, most of the participants were committed to the idea of encouraging lay ministry, though with a range of different motivations: 'we need help to get things done' (D12); 'laypeople are good but need organising' (D22); 'it's desirable anyway for their own baptismal calling' (D20); 'laypeople should be used because of all their talents' (D01). Many spoke of their frustration at being unable to recruit or retain volunteers, often citing the greying of the church-going population or the lack of confidence amongst parishioners in certain areas of the diocese. Two examples will suffice, both from priests who had taken on responsibility for neighbouring parishes:

... you have got to work with people, you have got to kind of encourage people to share the ministry of the Church, but ... what am I doing wrong? I can't seem to get anybody to do anything ... I am grateful, if I give somebody a job to do I leave them to it, I'll advise them ... but it's difficult getting older people. I mean since I left [*name of first parish*] and came here, literally everybody just disappeared, I have about two, three people I can get, I can call on now for help. It's just, it's like the parish has died because I have left, you know. Here's not so bad, [*name of second parish*]'s got quite a good few helpers but you are talking 70 plus. D04

Even though the priest who was here before me, and up in [*name of second parish*], like there was more than enough trained to be Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers ... and everything, and they have gone through all the courses that LACE<sup>307</sup> has put on, that the Archdiocese has put on, and a lot of money has been spent on them going on these courses and, and yet, I would say, in this area they are lacking in confidence in themselves and they need a little bit of a push but once you give them a little bit of a push, they are okay. At [*name of second parish*] they just don't have the time ... because every little group is looking for everybody's time and they need time for family and they need time to be at home. R01

The question of formation for lay ministry, referred to in the last quotation, was raised frequently. There were positive comments about diocesan courses which had been available in the past but there were also concerns about the difficulty of getting people to attend training events and about the lack of knowledge and understanding of the faith even amongst involved laypeople, including Catholic teachers.

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<sup>307</sup> The administrative and pastoral headquarters of the Archdiocese: Liverpool Archdiocesan Centre for Evangelisation.

A few voices gave different perspectives on the possibility of more lay involvement and the role of the priest in promoting or preventing it:

I think there are so many people of good er good grace around, in the sense that, you know, people are searching and looking for answers and I think, you know, there are so many people who are open to possibilities, er, you know, and you really only need to talk to some of the laypeople and they say 'Well, why don't they give us the opportunity to do more?' D23

I do think there is a goodness in people, to do things you know in the area. It's just how we do it I think and how we, we tap into that energy that people do have um, but I do think as priests we need to take more risk in, in letting laypeople take the lead a lot more. C04

... you have got to choose the right people, but you get the right people if you trust them. If you don't trust them, [they] won't do anything and priests are very reluctant to trust people ... they want to control, it's an awful, awful business. B01

... I have also been entrusted with a specific role which I do to the best of my ability. That doesn't mean it is my parish, I don't see it as that at all, but I have a specific role in it and I am there to engage and encourage people to work together, er, but to take a leadership role as well and I don't see that as working against collaborative ministry. What I would agree with them is that that leadership role can be misused and we need accountability on that and I am hoping that things like appraisal helps with that or, you know, even some kind of supervision of priests. And certainly having parish councils or forums or deanery forums makes you accountable, you know, I just want to try and get people to understand how the roles complement and work together rather than all the people working there and the priest coming in and out as a chaplain. C03

A final quotation in this section exemplifies a common assessment of the limited success there has been in involving laypeople in ministry:

... we haven't quite escaped from the mindset that says 'It's Father's job, and if I do it, it's only because he has asked me to or delegated me or allowed me.' B03

### ***The rise of new ecclesial movements***

This topic was included because the new ecclesial movements are generally associated with more conservative trends in the Church, so support for them was likely to indicate an inclination towards the cultic model. The term 'new ecclesial movements' is a broad one and some interviewees were unsure as to what it meant or wanted to differentiate between some specific movements they regarded positively (Youth 2000 was mentioned positively by two of those inclining towards the cultic model) and others they would regard more

negatively. Some took the term to include the charismatic renewal while others said that was not a specific movement. The topic did not arise in all the interviews, and only about half of the interviewees expressed any clear view about it. Two of these expressed strong support for new ecclesial movements, both saying the diocese should be more open to the new movements and one complaining that bishops ignore them. Both of these interviewees inclined towards the cultic model. A third who also inclined towards the cultic model said he didn't know much about the new movements but praised the work of some he had encountered. At the other end of the spectrum, some of those more inclined towards the servant leader model were quite critical of some of the new movements, describing them as fundamentalist, divisive and elitist. The following comment was echoed by a few others:

... they seem a bit going towards sort of fundamentalism and ... looking down on the sort of the ordinary people and ... in Gloucestershire and the Neocatechumenate caused sort of divisions in parishes there ... people, you know, sort of feeling that they weren't really part of the parish and the Bishop having great difficulty in trying to know how to deal with it. So those worried me and it always seemed to be a bit disheartening to me that they were getting such encouragement, you know, from the centre somehow. R03

The majority had a more or less ambivalent view of the new movements. On the positive side, they had been impressed by the commitment and evidence of real conversion shown by individual members of specific movements or at events they had attended, they recognised that many people find the spirituality of a particular movement helpful and they commented that some of these movements seem to be growing rapidly. On the negative side, they expressed fears of the movements taking people away from parish life and being somewhat judgmental of those who did not share their spirituality. Most seemed prepared to tolerate their presence without wanting to get involved. One commented, about individual priests joining one specific movement:

... while it wouldn't be my favourite ... form of devotion, I would rather that a priest had some spirituality than none, and if that's what turns him on, if that's what animates him, then go for it, and the parish, in a sense, puts up with it. B03

### ***The restoration of the permanent diaconate***

The backdrop to this topic is that the restoration of the permanent diaconate had been a major project of the previous Archbishop, Derek Worlock (see p.58). As noted there, one of his first acts on arriving in Liverpool in 1976 was to appoint a Director for the Permanent

Diaconate, Monsignor Austin Hunt, who still holds that post in 2012. The first ordinations took place in 1979 and over 100 permanent deacons were ordained before Worlock's death in 1996, by far the largest number in any English diocese at that time. By contrast, when Worlock's successor, Patrick Kelly, was bishop of the neighbouring diocese of Salford he ordained no permanent deacons (a policy also followed by his successor in Salford), citing as one of his reasons the fact that the diaconate is only open to men. On becoming Archbishop of Liverpool, however, he supported the existing diaconal programme, despite the issue of its restriction to men, ordaining new deacons and personally leading the annual retreat for the permanent deacons on several occasions. From time to time he raised questions about the nature of the permanent diaconate and in April 2008 (following his attendance at the Ushaw Colloquium on Ministry in January 2008 at which one day was devoted to consideration of the diaconate) he addressed the diaconal community, noting that the permanent diaconate was not mentioned in Benedict XVI's first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, stating that sources in Rome had indicated a review of the diaconate was under way, questioning the predominantly liturgical role exercised by most deacons, arguing for a more socially based role, linking the permanent diaconate closely to marriage and inviting deacons and others to engage in a conversation about these issues. The Archbishop did not issue a text of this address but a summary prepared by one of the deacons present was circulated with his knowledge.<sup>308</sup> I became involved in facilitating the conversations which followed. The Archbishop saw these more as raising awareness and inviting reflection than setting new policy. There was a two-year gap in recruitment of candidates for the diaconate but a new cohort entered the propaedeutic year in 2010. Most of the interviews in the present study took place in 2007, before the process begun by the Archbishop's address in April 2008, but there is a reference in one of the later case study sessions to the deacons feeling unsettled by the Archbishop's questioning of their role and some of the issues the Archbishop raised did feature in the views of some of the interviewees, though none were as radical as he was in saying, when interviewed:

... it's true across the countries and the churches wherever the focus becomes liturgical it dies: it only works where its focus is social. Now, therefore I, I think we have got to be very careful about presuming that regularly deacons baptise, do weddings, do funerals and so on. Of course the Church understanding is all those three can be done by laypeople ... (Archbishop Kelly, interviewed in 2007).

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<sup>308</sup> See Appendix 4.

The data on this topic from the interviews, the focus groups and the case study proved complex and a wide variety of views was expressed. These views do not easily divide according to the servant leader or cultic models of priesthood, but closer analysis indicated some positions which are consistent with the interviewees' stances in relation to those models.

The vast majority of the participants were broadly in favour of the restoration of the diaconate, most commonly because deacons were regarded as easing the pressure on priests by officiating at funerals, baptisms and weddings, though many expressed some ambivalence or some reservations either about the restoration itself or about the way it had been implemented in Liverpool. The few who gave unqualified support to the restoration of the diaconate gave differing reasons. The first of the following two comments, from an experienced priest who inclines towards the servant leader model, is more functional in tone, whilst the second, from a more recently ordained man who is more inclined towards the cultic model, sounds a more ontological note and appeals to scripture and tradition:

I could not run one parish, never mind two parishes, without two factors ... deacons: one was there when I arrived who is semi-retired, the other I appointed and er he is a, a tremendous strength. The other of course is my parish sister ... who er, er in many ways runs the parish and I couldn't do without her so those are two essential factors. F04

Yeh definitely I think it's been a really good thing um, you know we have got a couple of deacons here ... so I am really appreciative of the diaconate and um, you know what it brings to the Church and because of the great ministry that, that they do, um. Again we don't want, I know it's a ministry in itself and people think like 'Oh it's just like Father's little helper' that is often the phrase people use but um, I think it is about, you know, it's clear from the scriptures there was threefold ministry of you know Episcopoi, Presbyter and Diaconia so, you know, it's scriptural and that's a good thing. It's a return, that's what Vatican II was trying to achieve wasn't it you know, return to the roots really and um and so I think that's a good thing and you know, let's continue it and be, support it. D26

Only two priests expressed outright opposition to the restoration of the diaconate: both were strongly inclined towards the servant leader model. One simply stated, 'I have no deacons and I don't particularly want any: I have laypeople who do funeral services' (F06) while the other gave a more nuanced account:

I think opposed is the wrong word but I have not been er, a supporter, although I know some deacons whom I admire, terrific, I think they are doing wonderful work ... but to my mind the development of the diaconate, is a bit inconsistent with the er, trying to encourage the full and active participation of laypeople in the Church but ... women can't be deacons so you are immediately kind of developing something which is excluding women more at a time when you should be, women should be given a greater role in the Church, that's why I have never supported [*the diaconate*] ... D10

Concern that the development of the permanent diaconate could have a negative effect on the involvement of laypeople featured in some of the reservations expressed by those who were generally in favour of its restoration, though some were at pains to point out that it was not intended to have such an effect. Similar concerns were expressed about the diaconate being closed to women and, as noted above in the discussion about calls for the ordination of women to priesthood, three interviewees suggested that they would welcome the admission of women to the diaconate. Another common criticism was that some deacons appeared more interested in wearing liturgical vestments and performing in the sanctuary than in pastoral ministry. These concerns were commonly expressed by those who would incline towards the servant leader model of ministry. Conversely, concerns about deacons taking over priestly roles were more frequently expressed by those who would favour the cultic model of priesthood. The following comment from one such priest illustrates qualified support for the diaconate, but also implies a concern about the possibility of the priest being eclipsed:

I think it has been a bit of a mixed blessing really. I don't think it has done any harm, um, I think um, the quality of deacons varies. I have been in parishes where, you know, the deacon was really at the heart of the community and where I have gone to supply in a parish and the people coming out um, have been all over the deacon and the priest is stood there looking like cheese at fourpence, you know. D18

Another comment from a priest who would favour the cultic model shows support for the diaconate as an ancillary role to priesthood and also reveals a tendency to discriminate between practising and non-practising Catholics:

... Thursday is my day off and (*name of undertaker*) rang up, the more Anglican undertaker, and he said, 'We have got this funeral, it's a man, Father, he's been, been a non-practising, he's a non practising Catholic and the family says he has been a non-practising Catholic all his life so can I ask the deacon to do it? I know you don't do it on a Thursday', so I said, 'Yeh, go on'. So, you can hive off things like that to the deacons really ... D11

A number of participants spoke of a lack of clarity about the role of the diaconate. Most appeared to accept the current practice of deacons routinely conducting liturgical services to ease the workload of the priests, but a few commented that there is more to the diaconal vocation. The first of the comments below is one of only three references to deacons preaching:

deacons ... are a help to the priest really and ... it's vocation for them as well: it's that they are listening to the call and they are actually, you know, um bringing their gifts to fulfilment ... I don't want to say 'we have a deacon here and he does funerals, he does weddings and he, you know' ... it's got to be more than that, it's got to be deeper than that really, ... and also teaching as well ... he'll preach every, every third week or, so I, you know from my experience um, you know it's been, it's been good to have a deacon. D17

I feel I do need that liturgical support but also it's a companionship in helping to lead and facilitate in the parish. C03

My view on the reintroduction of the diaconate is, it was a great thing. I, my sadness is that not enough people are being allowed to discern that they have a vocation to the diaconate. Um, it's still very much a case of, well we talked earlier about people feeling as though they should help Father and the diaconate is almost clericalising those men of good standing who helped Father, so in fact ... the way it, I feel it was implemented in Liverpool to a large extent undermined lay involvement in the Church because we clericalised them. That doesn't mean I wouldn't want to see the diaconate supported and developed what I think we should be encouraging people to see that they have a calling to the diaconate not 'Would you be a deacon because that will help me out' um and there is still that feeling that um, some priests want help with marriages, funerals and baptisms so I need a deacon, um, I would rather not have a deacon and move to lay services unless there are deacons who wish to be deacons. D03

There were a few references to deacons being involved in catechetical work and two positive comments about a wider role for deacons in co-ordinating and encouraging lay involvement:

keeping in touch with the ministry to the sick and the housebound is important ... that's what he does, um, so he will organise visits to, by Eucharistic ministers but he will also organise my visits too for ... We have an annual, at least one celebration of anointing here every year ... it's a whole day out for people who don't get out ... but for those who can't get out at all, then his job is to book in visits to [*housebound parishioners*] and then he comes and we go together and so in the course of the next few weeks we will be doing everybody who wasn't at that Mass which will be a further 40-50, maybe 60, anointings at home and visits but that is also supplementary to his visits and also supplementary to the Eucharistic ministers' visits. D06



... in both places now, good helpers particularly up in (*name of parish*) ... the deacon ... he is really, him and his wife really I call them Mr and Mrs Deacon because they are just you know, you couldn't rely on better people, er, anything that needs to be done there, the, the, the various groups: confirmation, all the preparation programmes are done by a lot of good teams up there. D22

Two priests spoke of their parish deacons being part of small groups with whom the priests met regularly for prayer and support.

There was only one reference to a deacon being employed in a chaplaincy post and there were no references to the two deacons who are currently employed directly by the Archdiocese (the Safeguarding Coordinator and one of the Religious Education advisers).

A number of priests in parishes without a deacon referred to 'borrowing' a deacon for occasional services, but only in the case study of the Leigh Pastoral Area were there references to deacons working collaboratively across a pastoral area. The views expressed by the participants in the case study have been described in more detail above (see p.122). Here it is important to note that all the priests (including the one whose parishes do not currently have a deacon, despite his efforts to recruit one) spoke very positively about the ministry of the deacons in the area and the support the deacons gave them, with only two reservations, both related to the specific situation of that pastoral area:

I don't think we've really integrated our deacons into our team ... whether we want to or not, I don't know: we haven't discussed that but, they are part of our team, they are clergy too and if we don't somehow integrate them into our decision making processes um we could end up losing their support. C02

I think there is some work to be done there because I think the deacons are perhaps, perhaps slightly more parochial um than er, than we have been in the past. I mean they have worked but um I don't think they see themselves particularly involved in the pastoral areas ... they tend to work within their own parishes, erm in the main ... apart from in terms of funerals where they have transcended the boundaries. C01

The latter comment finds an echo in this speculative response from one interviewee asked whether the restoration of the diaconate had been a positive thing, which also reveals the attitude to the magisterium associated with the cultic model:

Er, I believe so, but ... I don't think it's sufficiently clear what its, what its essential rationale is er. Perhaps to say here um that I think there is a stronger linkage between a deacon and his parish than between the priest and his parish so that the deacon has to speak up for the um, the parishioners in introducing

them to a procession of priests who come to minister to them ... not just directly when there is a change of personnel but just because there is a rotation of personnel. So, yes, I, maybe the instinct, I suppose is based on a belief in the, in the authority of the Church to say 'This is, this is where we are going, we are going to have the diaconate'. So, you know if the Church er says this is something we can usefully use then, okay, I will go along with it but I will have to do my homework to think exactly how best to do that. B03

Several priests reported difficulty in recruiting candidates for the diaconate (sometimes with great regret and frustration, especially in relation to feeling overburdened with funerals and/or baptisms) and in some cases this was linked to criticism of the selection and formation processes, which were described by these critics as too strict, too academic and too focused on liturgical rubrics. There were some similarly negative comments about the Director of the Permanent Diaconate: it should be said that he was not among the participants in the study but has refuted such criticisms on numerous occasions. As was the case with lay ministry, some attributed the difficulty in recruiting candidates to shrinking and aging congregations and to the perception that people are busier now than in the past. One comment combines several of these views:

It's essential, essential ... I am on my own with three parishes, I mean I'd give my right hand for a deacon. Luckily enough, there's deacons to spare down there so we are alright but I am sad that I can't get a deacon for our own area ... every other parish of the 13, 10 have got deacons ... and you wonder why. It's not because you know you don't try and ask people. You see, a lot of them, the people you ask, I mean, are not necessarily retired people but they're all busier now they're retired than they were when they were working and I think the study puts them off. D04

There were a number of references to deacons not being accepted or valued by some priests and some laypeople. Two contrasting descriptions of the possible tension between priests and deacons come first from a priest in the case study (who inclined to the servant leader model) speaking at a session which included the deacons from that pastoral area and secondly from a priest favouring the cultic model:

... you either get a priest who is very supportive of the diaconate or you will get one who frustrates the diaconate um and I hope our deacons er feel us a hundred percent behind them and recognise you equally in ministry ... because that's an important ministry and I know it's taken a long time since the Council to restore it um, but it should be there, by right and ... it's really important that the four of us and the four of you, you know are equally respectful and nurturing in each others' ministries because we need them all. C03

I suppose one of the problems with a deacon, and that applies to anybody who you appoint, a parish priest appoints in a parish, is you inevitably chose somebody who fits your way of working and style and model and the person who goes in after you has to inherit them and um and that doesn't always work but er. That applies to lay workers as well, you know, if you go into a parish where there was a parish secretary, who you inherited from your predecessor, you know, you can't just get rid of people because you don't like them if they're competent, but they may have a totally different approach from yourself. D20

Two comments from religious priests (both of whom inclined towards the servant leader model) show quite different attitudes to the diaconate, perhaps due to differing experiences. The second echoes the theme of the need for the deacon to be valued but also shows the ambivalence (evident in a number of responses) of supporting the diaconate as a distinct ministry whilst implying that it would be better still if the married deacons could be ordained as priests:

*[ ... you don't have a deacon in the parish?]* No, no, again er always having had two or three priests here, it's never seemed a need and um, there isn't, there hasn't been anybody obvious to sort of invite to be a deacon so we haven't. We have a parish sister who, who is active in the parish and really um organises the bereavement support group and the baptism preparation group um, and, you know, is active in promoting those. R03

... the deacon here, with a year's theology you could ordain him more than happily. He's got a stable family, he is a dedicated, devout person and he's, he's a good pastoral leader etc um ... he's a good team member, he can do many things which are valuable in terms of the parish and the sacramental programmes or preaching or looking after baptisms and funerals and all that and I just, I just value him ... I mean the question of celibacy for the priesthood, how one was to relax that in order to provide better service for the people seems to me one of the ways of doing so would be to ordain those married deacons but I, as far as I can judge um, in terms of the pastoral care of the parish or the people the, the deacons perform a valuable service as long as they are themselves valued by the priests particularly, and enable the people to value them because it is a new development ... and if the priest doesn't value him then the people on the whole won't. R02

### **Complex views of ontology, magisterium and theology**

In speaking of the words, models and imaged they used to describe their ministry, some participants referred to priesthood as representing Christ, or speaking on behalf of Christ, or mediating between God and people, all of which might appear to indicate a leaning towards the cultic model, but a number of these participants insisted that they did not see themselves as 'set apart' from people. This sometimes led to further discussion of one of the polarities

posited by the Hoge-Wenger study's summary of the five key differences between the cultic model and the servant leader model (see p.83), which, under the heading 'Ontological status of the priest', asserted that those favouring the cultic model tended to see the priest as 'a man set apart', whereas those embracing the servant leader model would see the priest as a 'pastoral leader'.<sup>309</sup> A related assertion of the Hoge-Wenger study was that the supporters of the cultic model tended to view ordination as bringing about an ontological change in the person of the priest (thereby making him a 'man set apart' from laypeople) whereas adherents of the servant leader model tended to deny such change and to place greater stress on the unity of all the baptised, locating the priest more firmly as one of the People of God. As I observed in Chapter 2 (see p.85), this conclusion may be overstated, since the graphs presented by Hoge and Wenger show that, even in the 1970 survey, there was a majority of respondents in each age group supporting the notion of ontological change, with figures ranging from 51% of those aged 25-35 to 96% of those aged 66+.<sup>310</sup> Some of the priests I interviewed, and others I consulted, took issue with the apparent linking of the concepts of 'ontological change' and 'man set apart' and they raised similar concerns about two of the other five polarities proposed by the Hoge-Wenger study: the apparent exclusion from the servant leader model of regard for any kind of hierarchy and the association of theological 'orthodoxy' exclusively with the cultic model. To explore these nuances further, with the help of my principal supervisor, Professor Paul Murray, I devised supplementary questions for the survey, which are described, along with the responses given to them, in Chapter 4 (see pp.181,191).

## Two views of Catholicity

The third theory that emerged from the interviews was that the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*.<sup>311</sup> The two theological stances referred to in

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<sup>309</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.64.

<sup>310</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.54-55.

<sup>311</sup> The Second Vatican Council's 1965 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, known by the Latin version of its opening words: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.'

this study as the first and second views of Catholicity have been explained and discussed in Chapter 2 (see p.87). Because these two views were not clearly formulated before the interviews, the questions did not refer to them in any direct way, but they were later summarised for the purposes of the survey by four pairs of statements as shown in Figure 3.1 below.

**Figure 3.1: Two views of Catholicity**

<b>Two views of Catholicity</b>	
<i>First view (more world-affirming, associated with Rahner)</i>	<i>Second view (more world-judging, associated with Balthasar)</i>
1. Grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church's task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace	2. The world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation
3. God's saving work is served by all people of good will	4. Explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work
5. The opening lines of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs	6. <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> is overly optimistic about human nature and culture
7. In order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem	8. In order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world

The prevalence of these two views amongst the priests in the sample and the correlations between these views and the models of priesthood adopted were tested in the survey and the results of that analysis will be reported in detail in Chapter 4 (see p.191). Here it will suffice to note that, although my expectation was that the majority who favoured the servant leader model would tend to hold the first view of Catholicity, whilst the minority who favoured the cultic model would tend to hold the second, the survey subsequently revealed a more complex scenario. All the participants agreed with the first view of Catholicity to some extent and the majority also agreed with the second view to some extent, though the model of priesthood they adopted did appear to influence the strength

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[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

with which each view was held. A clear example of this is found in the following two quotations which, while they clearly express the two differing views, are taken from the same interview:

... river of faith underneath modern life that needs tapping into; a good, good world that needs tapping into and we shouldn't be so frightened of it. D02

We have to confront directly the powers of evil, to save people from the grip that darkness has got on our world. D02

This apparent contradiction was discussed at some length in one of the focus groups. One participant clearly stated his commitment to the first view, and explained how it governed his approach to parish life and specifically to the vexed question of parents failing to attend sacramental preparation programmes:

... *Gaudium et Spes*, which kind of would orientate me ... to understand what I think the church is for and what it is about and therefore what parish life is for, and it's to be amongst other people, other sciences, other people who are doing their thing for the common good and for the dignity of others, other agencies, other people, and latterly I think one of the biggest influences on me at the moment is sacramental programmes and um, perhaps discovering that as well as having things to offer people, to eventually go to those people who don't come to meetings, I do a kind of a last trawl as it were amongst people at sacramental programme time, to discover single parents and dysfunctional families and those who don't come to meetings and things and actually discover a fantastic heroism and love and humanity in some of those people and a fresh understanding of where God arrived at, where God is at and how he arrived at us, as well as us perhaps thinking we're bringing to others and I find that very exciting and one of the reasons why I am still doing what I do. F03

Another participant expressed the second view:

I think the powers of evil have um almost come more into the open, if you can say that. You know, the reports now that we are getting in the front of our local paper this week, and every week, it's something you know, of the cruelty of man to man and you know killing again in Liverpool. It seems to be much more in the headlines now, as though evil is almost taking over and almost, people feel helpless against it, and, and the good which is fighting it is struggling to succeed and yet people have got to stay that way and see that they have power to overcome or the bad apple takes over the whole barrel um, the good has got to be there somehow, even if it's a smaller, it's a smaller thing in terms I know the Church is now becoming, what's the word, well you know a family group rather than huge numbers, it's going to be smaller ... the good is there but it's perhaps smaller and the evil seems to be more obvious, taking over and dominant. F02

A third participant, whilst expressing clearly his personal commitment to the first view, acknowledged the ambiguity that he felt and that he observed in others, though his conclusion was that each priest probably operates most of the time from one perspective or the other:

I think it is crucial in terms of our understanding of what we do, our view of the world because I think if we are always going to be, you know, 'it's us against them' attitude then I think, you know, we are going to box ourselves into a corner that we will never get out of whereas if we, if we are actually saying, well look, you know, there are wonderful things happening and let's celebrate the things that are happening here, and that in a sense is naming the presence of God in, in all the things that are taking place and I think that's a different attitude and a different way of understanding what we do and how we do it ... I think the reality probably is that we all work on both levels but underlining it I think is one or the other: we predominantly work out of one model rather than the other and I think we can be aware of both but I think I'm sure we work out of either one or the other model. F08

One of the interviewees offered this explanation of why some priests might be more inclined towards being more sympathetic to the world and more questioning of the Church, while others, like himself, would be more inclined to what this study calls the second view of Catholicity:

I think there is also a difference between maybe those who went through a closed Catholic system in their upbringing in the ghetto Catholicism and the seminary from an early age and um, you know have always in a sense been within the Catholic institution and therefore maybe tend to kick against it rather in reaction and those who have been out in the world, you know, have been to secular university, had a secular job, come into the priesthood later on and who know that they are Catholics because they want to be Catholics and are thoroughly convinced of it and see it as the, you know the truth that the world needs, shall we say, and the truth to save souls and therefore are not inclined to water it down because we have seen all the mess that the world is in ... so I think, there is sort of an ideological or an emotional difference there really er and I think some people who've never perhaps been out in the world or that, you know, tended to be in the Catholic enclave from an early age, you know, think, think the grass is greener on the other side. Those who have been on the other side um, know why they want to be in the Church and don't want to try and change the Church into something different. D11

## **Personality traits**

The fourth theory to emerge was that the models of priesthood and views of Catholicity which individuals adopt may be related to differences in their personalities. During the interviews, case study and focus groups, a number of priests made comments about aspects

of their personalities and the way their personalities influence the approaches they take to priesthood, but there was no systematic probing of that issue. A few examples will illustrate the kind of comments some participants made:

... in myself I am a very gregarious person and I need, you know, my own company - I like it for a certain time but then I need to energise really. D07

I am fairly introvert I suppose by, by nature a shy person in many ways, so I suppose I am not going to be giving that kind of leadership which some people can be very up front, and, you know, but I think I still have, er, an inner strength hopefully um, that, that's there and you know from my own faith, but I'd say probably a quiet leadership maybe is the way to describe it and I think collaborative too ... hopefully I can and do work with other people and I would hope that they see that in me too that they can, er, work together with me, that I am not just um dictating things if you like, er from on high. D20

... there are people I must admit who I have, I have at times been avoiding the last few months because I just find that they are so negative all the time and they drag me down, you know, and it's not good to have that you, you, you need people around who say well go on keep going, but it's not easy getting up there and celebrating Mass sometimes and it does take a lot of energy, it takes a lot of strength sometimes because you're really, you know, unburdening yourself, you are sharing yourself with people and the last thing you need before you go out there is people who are, who can be really negative ... I do worry about energy levels and I worry about stress and things like that because it is stressful sometimes. C04

When I want to get on with something, I want to concentrate and I don't like being interrupted. I know all the things that women can multi-task when men can't, well I can't multi-task very well. I like to concentrate on something and get it done so, what I would find, find much more draining and exasperating is being expected to do, you know six things at once and being distracted from something important by lots of minor things, you know. I think you have either got to organise the system or else the system will walk all over you, or the lack of system will walk all over you ... I think you have got to say right ... I can't do everything, I am not Superman and these are the priorities, this is the way I am going to manage the parish. D11

Oh I think I am naturally optimistic er, so I've always been kind of fond of that prayer of Charles de Foucauld, you know the prayer of abandonment ... to pray I abandon myself into your hands, and not be prepared to exercise your will, you know to make decisions yourself, is giving God nothing, so I think that there's a double level to that, you feel, you have got to be getting involved and doing things and in the end it's not up to you, so up at that, it's at that second level where I am optimistic. D10

I am not a power freak, you know controller, um, so working collaboratively suits me and I certainly see myself as, I mean, I think as parish priest ultimately



you got to, I mean you've got to take the ... somebody has got to be in charge in that sense and I take that charge you know reticently I suppose but, but I do see myself as one of the team and I will question, you know, so if I have asked for stuff to be done, I make sure my stuff is done so I can report back to them and ask advice and you know, I suppose for some priests that would be quite difficult but for me it's not. But I don't know if that is because I am good, I mean, just because I have never had any other ... and it actually suits my personality I suppose ... I know what makes me tick really and I am really aware of that because I know if I'm, if something has really got me in a bad mood, then I know that I can take that and I have got to be really careful of that, I'll react in an inappropriate way, you know, um, to somebody or to a situation.  
D14

In order to provide a more rigorous assessment of whether particular personality traits would incline priests more towards one model of priesthood than the other, or more towards one view of Catholicity than the other, all the participants in the project were invited to complete the NEO FF Personality Inventory as well as questionnaires devised to ascertain their model of priesthood and view of Catholicity: the results of the Personality Inventory and the search for correlations between personality traits, models of priesthood and theological stances is reported in Chapter 4 (see pp.208ff.).

### **Religious and diocesan priests**

The fifth theory is that the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity) which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests.

In 2007 21 parishes in the Archdiocese of Liverpool (around 10% of the total number) were in the care of priests belonging to 12 religious congregations,<sup>312</sup> so the question naturally arises as to whether the experience and perceptions of these priests is significantly different from that of their diocesan colleagues. I list below seven factors which could make such a significant difference, although not all are equally true of all congregations, some may at times be more evident in the breach than in the observance and each requires more detailed investigation. Some of these factors were derived from my previous experience of talking to religious and secular priests whilst others emerged from the data collected in the

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<sup>312</sup> Between 2007 and 2012, four of these parishes have been handed back to the Archdiocese and one of the 12 religious congregations no longer serves any parish in the Archdiocese.

interviews and focus groups. The initial plan did not include interviewing religious priests, but four were added to the list of interviewees (so that they were in approximately the same proportion in the sample as in the total number of priests serving in parish ministry) in order to shed some light on this issue. These four religious priests, and others with whom I have discussed this issue, generally supported the theory about diocesan and religious life set out above. Although some were quick to point out that the grass on the other side of the fence always appears greener, that not all experiences within religious congregations live up to the ideals they espouse and that religious life has its own specific stresses and tensions, they all agreed that, on balance, the factors listed below would tend to make parish ministry less stressful for religious priests than for their secular counterparts and that it would be worth exploring whether some of these factors could be appropriately replicated in the diocesan setting. This issue was discussed at length in the focus groups of priests already serving multiple parishes and the view I am proposing was strongly confirmed by most members. It was noted in one of the groups that the religious priest present spoke very positively about the experience of serving more than one parish and that he habitually used the plural pronouns ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ (usually in reference not simply to other members of his congregation but to the team of ordained, laypeople and religious working in that pastoral area), whereas the diocesan priests tended to use the singular pronouns ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’ and to see themselves as lone and sometimes embattled figures, struggling to involve others. The sections below give a brief summary of the proposed factors, each followed by some quotations expressing the views of religious and diocesan priests about that particular factor. Most of the quotations from diocesan priests are from the focus group discussion, as this question was not discussed in detail in most of the individual interviews.

### **Clarity about charism and mission**

Since the Second Vatican Council, most religious congregations have invested time and energy in processes of reflection on their history and the initial charisms of their founders, and these processes have generally borne fruit in a clear sense of mission and purpose. Most of the comments listed here confirm this view and illustrate the contrasting lack of clarity felt by many of the diocesan clergy, which is reflected also in the uncertainty about models or images of priesthood reported at the start of this chapter (see p.105).

*[a religious priest speaking about his congregation’s charism in relation to his vocation and how this charism applies in parish ministry] ... I would look*

back to *[name of founder]* as a sort of an ideal and the *[name of congregation]* priests I knew as a boy and young man as being the sort of models that I would look to and what attracted me to the priesthood ... in fact next week the priests in this province who work in parishes, we are meeting for three days to look at a document, 'A *[name of congregation]* Parish' that's come out from our centre, looking at what should be the characteristics of a parish which is given to the *[name of congregation]* to administer and that sees, um, involving more and more laypeople in, in group work, as being an essential part ... it should be a place where we are working with the poor ... and obviously a focus on the needs of young people, so that those characteristics must be there if we are going to accept and run a parish so the, the two aren't in opposition in any way I don't think, priesthood and *[name of congregation]*. R03

*[a diocesan priest speaking about a religious colleague in the pastoral area]* ... I think he enjoys being the parish priest, but he enjoys being part of an order, I think and they have their own agenda, no doubt about it ... he's a good caring guy, would have a *[name of congregation]* agenda as opposed to a diocesan agenda or, which is a slight problem ... D25

It should be noted, however that the religious priest referred to in the above quotation, when asked '*is your ministry different from that of your secular colleagues?*' and ... '*is your spirituality rooted in the charism of your congregation?*' responded as follows:

No, they are easy to work with and we get on quite well, which is good, so there isn't any, there isn't er a difference made between me and them ... *[our Provincial]* says 'We will go along with what the diocese says and you have to work with the diocese' and that is the policy of our order ... no, I don't think there is any one order or any one diocese or the Church owns a, a spirituality. You have to integrate with the spirituality of the people that's there and where they are at ... as long as it is one whole healthy spirituality as a parish, yeh, and er I wouldn't, I wouldn't, I don't think it would be a healthy thing for me to push my spirituality on a parish. R01

*[a diocesan priest expressing confusion]* ... I am a little lost at the moment. Not just at the moment, actually, it's been a while um, lost something of the sense of direction, purpose ... I think things have become quite confused um, you know er, there's an old model um which perhaps is not sustainable er or is not working and, you know, most of us are still working out of that old model, um out of necessity really. F10

*[another diocesan priest expressing confusion]* ... I am not sure I have clarity about charism and mission erm, other than that which results from being a priest who is in a parish and I get on with what is in front of me um, and, hopefully can raise my head above the parapet and go to some places where I might not be, feel so comfortable but which should also be part of my charism and mission. F01

*[a diocesan priest concurring with the view that the religious clergy enjoy greater clarity]* ... I feel the religious are more reflective on their charism in the sense of where they are um. We haven't had, we haven't time to think about it, er, we are more concerned I think with our mission. F02

*[a diocesan priest amongst the minority disagreeing with that view]* ... I think I am pretty clear about, about em my job as a priest um and I'm, I'm happy enough to tackle the, whatever comes before me if I think I can make it a more, in a sense the spirit, a much more Christ-like area. F06

### **Structures of support and accountability**

Religious congregations tend to have clear and effective structures for the support and accountability of individual members. The religious priests interviewed spoke of regular contact with their congregations and two spoke of regular meetings of all the members of their congregations engaged in pastoral ministry, in one case annually and in another case, five or six times a year. One spoke (as reported above, see p.160) of guidelines for parish ministry and the other of the congregation providing training and specialist services for the people of the parish, for instance in bereavement ministry:

... you'll have a Mass for all the bereaved over the past three years and they usually get somebody in that is specialised in that area to come in and to do the Mass and to speak to them, someone within our own order we'll say er, a psychologist or a counsellor or somebody like that to come in and is able to and er the church is packed ... then we have a bereavement group which we sent away to be trained which my order paid for ... They paid for two people to be trained as counsellors. R03

The diocesan priests who spoke on this issue sometimes referred, as has been reported above (see p.116), to informal supports offered by priests to one another, to support groups like the Jesus Caritas movement,<sup>313</sup> to initiatives taken by priests in individual pastoral areas to spend time together socially, for prayer, or for structured reflection and planning, and to the recent diocesan programme of retreats and inservice courses, in which each priest is expected to participate, in predetermined groups, for one retreat and one inservice course in each four-year cycle. They were, however, almost unanimous in feeling the lack of any organised system of support and accountability. A few examples of this contrast with the views expressed by the religious participants will suffice:

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<sup>313</sup> A movement based on the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld which includes a fraternity of priests: <http://www.jesusc Caritas.net> (accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012).

Structures of support and accountability, well there aren't really, the support's only what you make for yourself um, and nobody makes you accountable for anything you do really unless you really screw up ... and then it's only because they have to. F10

... we have support for each other, priests support each other, but I am not so sure we get support from above, you know experiences I have had when I have tried to seek it, it is usually 'So well, make, decide for yourselves' sometimes. I just remember again, ... one bishop some time ago who will remain nameless er said 'How are you getting on?' as he was walking backwards, you know, and it was as if to say, 'I don't really want to hear but it's just a comment I am asking', so one wonders sometimes ... are you really accountable to them, are we accountable to ourselves at the end of the day? F02

My experience is that in terms of structures for support, there aren't any. Yes we all have priest friends and they do support us but that is not structural. Accountability, little or none. F01

I was a Pastoral Area Leader for a while, I am not anymore but, I always made sure that, I felt the one thing I had to do was find a way of supporting the other guys within the pastoral area. So I always either went to see them or phone them once a week ... unless I was on holiday or they were on holiday but I always felt that gave me a real sense of what this was about and even if it was just a phone call, I made something up to ask them but, you know, just because I think that was a, a structure of support that I felt I was responsible for putting into place, because I don't believe there are any structures of support at all other than that really. I mean I am not a leader now and I don't get that support, [laughs] so it's obviously not an ongoing ... it's not. F08

There was discussion in one of the focus groups of an appraisal scheme which had been piloted some years previously. One of those involved gave this account of the scheme and the reason why it had not been taken up:

I think the appraisal scheme as it was set up was misunderstood. It was essentially guided self-appraisal, which was totally confidential ... the priest would be appraised by his parishioners but he'd select say 15 parishioners out of whom, anonymously, only five or six would be chosen. His appraiser would do everything in complete confidence with him and the only person who had all the documentation at the end was the priest himself and how he reacted to it was completely up to him and [the Archbishop] at no stage would have been allowed any access to any information and I don't think that total confidentiality was appreciated enough at the time and the word 'appraisal' then gave the impression that it was a top down system ... I was sad to see it go and I think it went because it was badly promoted and [the Archbishop] was doing his usual sit back and wait to see what happens before we decide whether it is good or bad. F15

Whilst no-one present at the focus group disagreed with this account, one member did raise doubts as to whether the priests would in fact use any structures that were made available:

I am not sure that, despite how much we may say as priests that we would like that, I am not sure really how convinced we are, or, at least, if structures and support are provided whether we would actually make use of them. F11

It is interesting that none of the participants referred, in this context, to the present Archbishop's recent practice of inviting all the priests, every other year, to come to his house for a short individual conversation (usually 15-20 minutes) with him.

### **Close relationships with superiors**

Religious superiors are selected from among (and often elected by) their peers and hold office for limited periods, which can lead to closer and more equal relationships between superiors and members. This contrasts with the experience of diocesan priests who seem often to be critical of the appointments of bishops and to view them as more distant. The different ways in which the religious and diocesan priests tend to speak about their superiors was noted in this revealing comment by one of the religious:

There are times when you don't like what the Provincial does or you might not even like him particularly as a person but I, I have never really heard [*name of congregation*]'s talking derogatively about the Provincial to others, whereas lots of, of diocesan priests speak very badly about the bishop, you know, to me ... our Provincial serves for six years, maybe another six, and then steps down and somebody else takes his place so there isn't that sort of 'it's there for life' sort of thing, so it is a very different feeling, I think ... . I have never really had a meeting with [*name of bishop*] ... it's very remote compared to our experience, you know, where [*name of Provincial*] will come for official visitation every year and a couple of other times in the year pops in and has a meal, and, you know, sees how we are and what, so, um that is a, a difference. R03

One of the Benedictine participants commented on the difference in this way:

I think the role of an abbot is quite different from the role of a bishop really. I mean I think that the sense of concern and care which an abbot has for his brethren um, who have elected him and that is a very important consideration ... I mean, not to underestimate the importance of relationships between diocesan priests and the bishop but it isn't the same as with an abbot and I think your sense of stability to a community even though one is working away from it ... R02

There were many expressions of the negative experience of secular priests in this regard. Some have already been quoted in the section above on concerns, but a few more will illustrate the point:

Relationship with superiors well, you could easily go along and never see them um, you know, you, you um. This is quite negative isn't it? I am sorry, um. There is a real sense in which you are just pegs filling holes um. I am not convinced, um, that there is any real thought in putting the right person in the right place, it's just that there is a gap there and there is somebody who is free um, and perhaps there is more thought when you are trouble. If you are not trouble and, you know, you get on with it, then that's fine: they will just let you get on with it. F10

Relationship with superiors – I don't have one, I don't think. I have contact with them but I am not sure that I have a relationship with them if I am honest. F01

A number of diocesan participants compared the present Archbishop with his predecessor in this respect and there was some ambiguity in their responses. Some referred to the previous Archbishop as a more fatherly figure but one at least acknowledged that there had been some unhealthy dependency in that relationship (and noted that he had in any case been much younger then). Others referred to the previous Archbishop as having been both more remote for most of the time and more proactive whenever a priest was facing a personal crisis. There were also references from some of the older priests to earlier times when the Archbishop would not necessarily know who all of his priests were.

One member of the focus group gave a more positive assessment of the present Archbishop's approach, which was echoed by a small number of other participants in the study:

I very much um welcome *[name of Archbishop]*'s attitude, you know, he, leaves you, as far as I can see, to get on with things and trusts you um and er if you are in difficulty he, he'll support you and, and I value that. He doesn't dictate at all, leaves you free to do your own thing and I love that, I don't, I don't want lots of advice and so on at this stage in my life, you know, um, so erm he almost leaves you to be your own little bishop in your area. F15

Clifford Longley's comment, cited in Chapter One, perhaps bears repeating here:

Catholic bishops play a surprisingly important role in the emotional lives of their priests even when they do not see each other very often – an aspect of the

psychology of celibacy, perhaps – and some clergy develop an almost neurotic preoccupation with ‘what the bishop thinks of me’.<sup>314</sup>

The following comments from two of the participants indicate that they are not affected by the preoccupation Longley has observed in some clergy and interestingly they also both scored lower than average on the Neuroticism scale in the survey which will be reported in Chapter 4, (see p.209):

I’ve always got on very well with er um, you know, the bishops and that, but I’ve never been a priest who um, contacts bishops much, I don’t, so they are not really part of your life, only when they come on parish visitation and er confirmations and things like that er and I just try to get on with your job without bothering them because I always feel that your bishops have a lot of responsibility and that it’s bad enough as a parish priest the responsibilities that you have and I always feel sorry for them but, unless it’s really important, don’t burden them, get on with the job that you’ve been appointed to. F09

I am sure [*name of Archbishop*] will give you whatever support you wanted if, if, if you really turned to him, you know, but as I say I am just happy that he leaves us alone ... I find that I get on well with our bishops. I don’t see much of them and that’s fine but they’re good and they have got plenty to keep them occupied. F06

Another participant contributed a thoughtful comment on this issue:

I think ... if our expectations of leadership have been disappointed, do we need to check what leadership is about and perhaps find that we might have been less disappointed if we understood leadership was different than we thought it was? F03

### **Collaborative processes for decision-making**

My argument here is that, since decision making within religious communities often involves processes of consultation and collaboration, priests who are accustomed to that way of working are likely to have learned skills and habits which will equip them for the more collaborative style in parish life which has been encouraged since the Second Vatican Council, and especially, in England and Wales, since the publication by the Bishops’ Conference in 1989 of *The Sign We Give*,<sup>315</sup> a visionary document which sets out a process of decision making sadly more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Very little direct evidence of this difference emerged in the interviews. Some of the religious priests interviewed, as noted above (see p.161), referred to meetings within their congregations for

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<sup>314</sup> Longley, *The Worlock Archive*, p.275.

<sup>315</sup> CBCEW, *The Sign We Give* (Chelmsford: Matthew James Publishing, 1995).



consultation, inservice training or decision making, and to the support and oversight they received from superiors. The ways in which the religious spoke about their experience of living and working in community rather than alone will be considered under the heading of 'communal living' below (see p.168). A religious priest in one of the focus groups spoke in this way about his approach to parish ministry:

We adopted the Emmaus model, you know, and we said 'Right, that was going to be our model of working as a parish, that we would meet people where they're at' and that's what we've tried to do in all our teams and all the ministry that goes on in the parish, we've tried to meet people where they're at ... for example, you know, I don't do any parish visiting or very little in terms of the outreach, and it's a team led by a very able sister who is a sociologist by profession and she is able to go out and she has actually trained up some parish workers to actually go out and work on the outreach and it's amazing, we've got people coming back for weddings and we haven't had weddings in [*name of parish*] for five years ... and that's not down to me that's down to the people going out and actually knocking on doors and doing the old fashioned sort of visiting and ... issues come up, they'll say 'Can you go round and see such a body, can you see such a body?' and you know that sort of model for us seems to be working well. F12

There were few references in the interviews, as in the diaries, to parish or pastoral area team meetings or other examples of collaborative decision making, though some of the words and images used to describe priestly ministry indicate a desire to work collaboratively (e.g. 'enabler', 'empowering'). One of the few references was the example (partly quoted above in the section above on personality traits, p.156) of a diocesan parish priest who spoke of working collaboratively with employed workers and volunteers through regular team meetings at which he himself was also accountable for what he had undertaken to do:

... we have a parish pastoral team which is the day-to-day running ... every three or four weeks we meet and we literally plan the following month or three months in advance so that is the Parish Pastoral Team and then there's all these other teams, Finance Team, Liturgy Team who look at liturgy with me to see how we can do things perhaps differently um, then there is the office staff and then there's the um, all the different groups in the parish, but I am not involved with them all ... I don't work very well alone, um, the stuff that I obviously I have to do on my own I do that and get it done ... I just say to them tell me what I need to know, don't tell me everything because I don't need to know everything and um, and that's, that's generally how I work, I am not a power freak, you know controller, um, so working collaboratively suits me ... I think as parish priest ultimately you've got to take the ... somebody has got to be in charge in that sense and I take that charge you know reticently I suppose but I

do see myself as one of the team and I will question, you know, so if I have asked for stuff to be done, I make sure my stuff is done so I can report back to them and ask advice and you know ... I suppose for some priests that would be quite difficult but for me it's not. D14

A discussion of this topic in the focus groups revealed that most of the priests involved felt that, in their pastoral experience, collaborative decision making processes in the parish were more of an aspiration than an achievement. Two examples are given here of a negative view, fairly frequently expressed, that the people are not prepared to accept responsibility:

Collaborative decision making, again, there is differences in different parts of the diocese but um in my experience it, it doesn't exist. Um, people are happy to support Father and do what Father wants to a point um, um. They are also quite happy to leave Father carrying the can so that they can bitch about it afterwards um, and say what they didn't like about it but as for actually taking on responsibility and making decisions for themselves, they are quite often not prepared to so um, you know, in that sense perhaps it, it doesn't work. F10

... too often people will come along and expect you to make the decisions and I say 'No get on with it, you know, I don't have to make all your decisions for you'. People are so reluctant, they, they have still got this idea the priest is there to make the decisions. F02

Two more positive views follow:

Collaborative decision making is really important and I mean, I have been six months where I am now and, you know, we have got, I think the makings of a very good parish council already because for me it's crucial. I mean, I am only one cog in a, in a, a big kind of wheel and I think without that collaborative nature um, it just doesn't feel right. F08

... in the parish context particularly at the moment um, yeh there is that sense of collaborative decision making but only after a huge amount of work in trying to build up structures to allow that to happen. F11

The final two quotations in this section illustrate two different problems encountered in trying to work collaboratively. The first is a limitation the priest recognises in himself and the second is a sense that the system itself makes collaborative decision making impossible:

I think I have worked hard with others, those who cooperate, to create space for collaborative decision making um, but I am not clever at seeing structures through. F03

I do have a parish council, in fact we have a joint parish council now for the two parishes that I have, which are totally different types of parish um, and it is

gradually beginning to play a more positive role in the um the life of the two communities um, but again in the end the decision is mine, I make, I decide what does, I, I take advice and I do have help but I have to carry the can in the end, so collaborative decision making is, is a misnomer really. I think it is collaborative decision seeking perhaps but not decision making. F04

### **Frequent changes of responsibility**

The theory advanced here is that religious priests in parishes tend to move frequently between different types of ministry and different dioceses or countries and that this gives them a greater sense of perspective and, perhaps, of detachment from the immediate situation, both of which could make the experience of pastoral ministry less stressful. Again the evidence from the interviews and focus groups was ambiguous. It was generally acknowledged that religious priests in parish ministry do tend to move more frequently than diocesan priests, though policies vary between different congregations, but the experiences of the diocesan priests varied greatly. One of the participants had been in only two appointments during more than 50 years of priesthood, and it was not unusual for a parish priest to have been in the same place for more than 20 years, though other responsibilities, e.g. for neighbouring parishes, had sometimes been added during that time. There were, however, a number of participants who had experienced a series of shorter appointments. Some argued that moving is always stressful in itself and that staying in one appointment for a long period has advantages. More than one mentioned the danger that a priest appointed to a parish for a set period might be tempted to do only the minimum necessary:

... if you knew that you were going to be here for five years, you don't get too involved, you know, you don't try and do too much because in five years' time somebody else will turn it around anyway. F02

Others welcomed more frequent moves, including this participant whose comment indicates that the different attitudes to this issue may be linked to personality differences:

I like frequent changes of responsibility because I like new challenges. I'd hate to be doing the one thing all the time because I think I would get bored with it um, so I am very happy to, to, you know, to be having fingers in different pies. I think it gives, it gives a, a life, it's energising. F08

### **Communal living**

Few religious priests in parish ministry live alone and even those who do will have experience of, and some continuing connection with, community life within their congregation. The level of this communal engagement will vary, depending on the size and

character of the religious community, but it will usually involve a pattern of shared prayer, eating and socialising together, community meetings and division of responsibility for both household and ministerial tasks. One of the religious participants spoke about this in terms of creating 'space'. Where there are a number of religious priests living together and serving one or more parish communities, this can have a double effect. There can be less pressure on each individual priest, because the workload can be shared and priests can cover for one another, but it also means that the differing gifts and capacities of the individuals can complement each other, whereas the diocesan priest working on his own can feel that he has to keep going, even if he is feeling tired or unwell, and that he has to attempt every aspect of priestly ministry, whether gifted for it or not. The diocesan priest participants displayed a range of attitudes to communal life. Many (especially amongst the older age group) spoke of the fact that living and working alongside other priests had been the norm in this diocese until relatively recently, but that most priests in parish ministry now live alone and there are very few situations in the diocese where groups of priests are working closely together as teams. Some referred to negative experiences as curates in former times and had no desire to return to sharing a house, having become accustomed to their own space and independence, even though some of them also spoke of feeling lonely and isolated in that situation. A few commented that diocesan priests had not joined a religious community and that communal living was not to be expected as a normal part of the life of a diocesan priest. Reference was made to the small but significant number of diocesan priests who had joined religious communities in search of a communal form of life and to the fact that some had returned to diocesan life, because they felt their primary calling was to pastoral ministry, but still regretted the loss of community life. One of the diocesan priests who had experimented with joining a religious order expressed a feeling also mentioned by others, that, whilst diocesan priests are not members of a religious community, some form of communal living must be possible within the diocesan context:

I am very much a diocesan priest but I do think there is a possibility within the diocesan priesthood of some kind of mutual support, that isn't religious life because we are not religious um, but I am sure there must be other models, other structures that we can use. D18

Some participants, including some of the religious priests, spoke of the tensions and difficulties of community life and warned against too rosy a view of its advantages. Some

of the diocesan priests spoke about building or experiencing community with other priests without living with them:

I don't feel rooted in a community though I have got some very good friends. Parish on another level, I am not sure it's on all the levels community should exist but we really work together I think, in lots of ways. I have a couple of groups of fellow priests um. One is a sort of reading group um, which has been monthly for well more than a decade and a half and um, two decades now with, with a support group which has really been important to me um, but we only meet up monthly and we don't live in each other's back pockets so you can use it as much as you like and reveal as much as you like and you don't reveal as much as you don't want to reveal and so I am not so sure how solid that is really. F03

We have lost that community life where we share although many priests would argue they wouldn't want it back anyway: they prefer to be on their own and I think that is probably true for most of us now, we have got that independence but at the same time there are other aspects where it is very good to share community life and we do in several ways, lunch on a Sunday at *[name of priest]*'s and so on. Sunday night I meet with half a dozen priests, sorry that number's going less now, they keep dying um, um, but that community, sharing with other priests and nowadays community over the phone, priests will ring and just ring for a chat, sometimes that community in the modern ways of communicating. F02

The community life that, that is most valuable for me, is the Monday golf, I have to say, and I have always said that, that if I didn't, 40 years ago, join the golf club I probably wouldn't be here now um and that is a very important community. F04

In this context it is worth noting that the previous Archbishop, not himself a golfer, frequently commented that in all the time he was bishop, in Portsmouth and Liverpool, he had never, in his terms, 'lost' a priest who was a regular member of the clergy golf society, though whether that was because of its supportive effect or whether the sort of priest who was likely to leave would be unlikely to join such a society is not clear. Again, the finding of the Hoge-Wenger research of the experiences of resigned priests is relevant here: that in all cases, whatever the specific crisis which precipitated resignation, 'the man felt lonely and unappreciated. This is a necessary requirement in the process of deciding to resign; when it is absent, resignation from the priesthood is unlikely.'<sup>316</sup>

Others participants spoke of building or experiencing community with their parishioners, rather than simply with other priests, e.g.:

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<sup>316</sup> Hoge, *The First Five Years*, p.64.

For me community life is really ... if we are going to have a celibate priesthood then it is up to people to provide, in, within the parish structures, to provide community. If they want a celibate priesthood then, you know, it's not just about me being celibate. It's about something to do with them as well as me ... so for me, my community has always been where I have been sent to serve so I give my all to where I am and, you know, and that, that's costly really but I think that's for me real. F08

One religious priest spoke of hospitality as a service which his community offered to their local diocesan colleagues:

... perhaps the most useful thing we do is providing a Sunday lunch for the local clergy um ... some may come sometimes, they don't come all the time but we usually have between sort of six and ten on a Sunday including ourselves, so you have sort of three to five local parish priests ... and they are on their own, they don't have a housekeeper anymore um, many of them do have friends or family they can go to but quite often it provides them also with an informal context to share experience ... those sorts of connections are really ... important. R02

### **Complex sense of identity**

Perhaps the most significant factor in making parish ministry less stressful for religious clergy than it is for diocesan clergy may be that the identity of the religious priest serving in parish ministry is necessarily complex. He may, for instance, think of himself as a monk, a missionary, a teacher, a member of a specific congregation, a priest, a parish priest, a local superior or any combination of these roles. One religious priest was very clear that his vocation had been to the religious community: he would never have been a priest otherwise, but was persuaded by his superior to be ordained mainly so as not to be different from his confreres and to be able to take part in the community's pastoral mission. He commented about his priesthood in these terms:

Anyway as it turned out I'm enormously grateful for ordination and have always felt it's been an addition not a sort of distraction but you are quite right, one has other identities. R02

In this connection, Linville's theory<sup>317</sup> that people with a multi-faceted self-understanding tend to be less affected by stressful events in one area of their lives may well be relevant. Her simplest explanation of the theory is as follows:

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<sup>317</sup> Linville, 'Self-Complexity and Affective Extremity'; Linville, 'Self-Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer'.

Consider the example of a woman going through a divorce. Assume that she has a simple self-representation with only two important self-aspects, wife and lawyer. Furthermore, assume that these two self-aspects are closely associated in memory, perhaps because her husband is also an attorney with whom she has shared many professional experiences. In this case, the negative affect and self-appraisal associated with her divorce will be massive because it will spill over to affect her thoughts and feelings about both important aspects of her self. In contrast, consider a woman with a more complex self-representation that involves several important self-aspects, for example, wife, lawyer, tennis-player and friend. Furthermore, assume that the self-aspect *wife* is not closely associated in memory with other self-aspects. In this case, negative affect and self-appraisal associated with the divorce are less likely to spill over and adversely affect her feelings about other self-aspects. Thus, there will be three unaffected self-aspects to buffer against negative feelings associated with the divorce.<sup>318</sup>

A search of academic references to Linville's work revealed that it has been widely quoted, especially in recent psychological discussions of the nature of the self. Diehl and Hay offer this assessment of Linville's work and subsequent research by others:<sup>319</sup>

Self-concept complexity (Linville, 1985, 1987) is one of the most frequently studied features of self-concept organization and refers to the extent to which a person's different self-aspects are defined by distinct attributes. Thus, measures of self-concept complexity combine two components of a person's self-concept, namely the number of different self-aspects and their distinctness (Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002) ... Linville's (1987) affective spillover hypothesis postulates that greater self-concept complexity should be advantageous in coping with life stress because it results in less spillover from the affected self-aspect to other self-aspects. Although some initial studies provided support for Linville's assumption, the overall empirical findings regarding this hypothesis have been rather mixed (Koch & Shepperd, 2004; Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002). For example, Rafaeli-Mor and Steinberg's (2002) review of the literature found little support for self-concept complexity as a stress buffer. Instead, these authors showed that self-concept complexity served more often as a moderator of positive, uplifting events. Koch and Shepperd (2004) arrived at similar conclusions. Based on these reviews of the literature, more recent studies have investigated the effects of number of self-aspects and distinctness of self-aspects separately and have shown that it is mostly the number of self-aspects that moderates the relationship between stress and well-being (Rothermund & Meiniger, 2004).

The conclusion of that quotation supports the view that Linville's theory may well speak to the experience of some diocesan priests who, having served (and, in some cases, suffered) as curates for some years, have focused their sense of identity on becoming 'Parish Priest'.

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<sup>318</sup> Linville, 'Self-Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer', pp.664-5.

<sup>319</sup> Diehl, 'Contextualized Self-Representations in Adulthood'.

Having arrived at that pinnacle at a time of decline in many measures of church life, when the role of parish priest no longer brings with it the rewards it once offered, they may now experience feelings of personal failure. Stephen Bevans, Professor of Mission and Culture at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, who has written extensively on the topic of religious life and priesthood, commented, in affirmative response to this view, that it may be important to encourage diocesan priests to develop more complex self-images, e.g. as friend, golfer, amateur scholar.<sup>320</sup> Antony Ford, a secular priest whose experience includes working with the Ministry to Priests programme and offering formation and counselling to priests in the UK and the USA, was equally affirming of this insight and cited two applications of it, both with potentially harmful consequences: some priests have so identified themselves with their ministry that on retirement they lose all sense of identity and purpose; others have focused their sense of self so completely on priesthood that they have little personal sense of being human and male and this may render them vulnerable to exploitative relationships.<sup>321</sup>

Stephen Bevans takes up the point that ‘Vatican II’s image of the presbyter takes as its norm the *diocesan* priest, working in a parish among already-believing Catholics in union with the local bishop’ and, commenting on this as a religious priest, he argues:

... the Vatican and our bishops have not sufficiently recognized that our understanding, practice and formation for priesthood as religious is *distinctively different* from that of the diocesan clergy. In our understanding, practice and formation for priesthood, therefore, we must learn to “flee ... from bishops” - not in the sense that Cassian meant in the fifth century, eschewing ordination altogether, but in a truly analogous sense that we religious need to understand, practice and form candidates for a priesthood that is neither parallel to nor eclipses our religious life, but rather draws and builds upon its strengths and resources. Priesthood in the context of the religious life is certainly not lived *apart* from real communion with the local bishop, but it has its own integrity as lived out within the wide variety of charisms and forms of religious life.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Stephen Bevans, personal communication, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007

<sup>321</sup> Antony Ford, personal communication, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007

<sup>322</sup> Bevans, ‘Learning to “Flee from Bishops”’.



Here Bevans applauds Paul Philibert's argument that, while for diocesan clergy priesthood is 'an office that gives an identity', for religious priests 'it is an office in the service of their religious identity which provides a charism as a warrant for ministry'.<sup>323</sup>

The self-understandings of religious priests may thus help to open the way to further exploration of complex conceptions of identity. Such conceptions would take into account the variety of roles and relationships involved in priesthood and avoid simplistic definitions of priesthood which are so tightly focused on the work of diocesan parish priests that they exclude many other priests whose ministry does not fit that mould (for instance, retired priests or those involved in specialised ministries such as chaplaincy or education).

In this context Kathleen Cahalan's argument, quoted in the introduction, that the practices of ministry, far from being merely functional, are 'integral to the formation of identity',<sup>324</sup> is an interesting contribution to the recent thinking about relational ontology of which the 2001 Collegeville seminar is a good example.<sup>325</sup> It may also be worth noting here that much of the theological writing about priesthood is by priests who are themselves members of religious congregations.

### **Summary of views on the different experiences of religious and secular priests**

To summarise this section on the different experiences of religious and secular clergy in parish ministry, the majority of participants, both religious and secular, agreed with the general view that the experience of religious priests in parish ministry is likely to be less stressful than that of their diocesan colleagues. In relation to the seven possible factors I identified, there was strong agreement that the religious generally have a clear sense of their charism and mission, whereas many of the diocesan clergy expressed a lack of clarity in that area. There was limited evidence that the religious congregations have good structures for support and accountability and a great deal of evidence that the diocesan clergy feel they do not have such structures, though a small minority would not welcome them anyway. The religious clearly enjoyed close relationships with their superiors, while the diocesan clergy mainly did not have close relationships with the bishop, again with a

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<sup>323</sup> Philibert, P. J., 'Religious Priesthood: Issues and Concerns for Renewal', in *The Charism of Priesthood: Diocesan and Religious Priests Together in Ministry* (Chicago: National Federation of Priests' Councils, 1996), p.11. For a fuller account of his argument, see Philibert, P. J., 'Priesthood within the Context of Religious Life', in *Being a Priest Today*, ed. Donald Goergen (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

<sup>324</sup> Cahalan, 'Pastoral or Practical Theology?', pp.27-28.

<sup>325</sup> Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*.

small minority not wishing for any such closer relationship. The religious made limited reference to traditions of collaborative decision making whilst the diocesan priests regarded such traditions as largely absent in their setting, though some were striving to establish them. The factor which gathered least support was frequent changes of responsibility: whilst it seemed that most religious did move more frequently than most diocesan priests, opinions were divided, possibly in relation to differing personality traits, as to whether more frequent moves would be beneficial or would cause more stress. Most of the religious spoke positively about their experience of communal living, but, whilst accepting its benefits in principle, most of the diocesan priests in the sample would prefer (some of them quite strongly) to continue living alone, though a significant number would be keen to see more elements of communal living introduced into their lifestyle. Finally, there was strong agreement with Linville's theory that having more aspects to one's self-understanding was likely to protect against becoming unduly stressed by events in one area of life. The religious in the sample were clearly conscious of different facets to their self-understanding, amongst which seeing themselves as members of their congregation was very significant, and they viewed this positively. Most of the diocesan priests acknowledged the danger of identifying oneself too closely with one's role, though some felt they had sufficient aspects to their self-understanding to avoid that danger. The diocesan priests varied in their views as to how far it would be possible or beneficial to replicate any of these seven factors in the context of diocesan priesthood. Some of the implications of this discussion will inform the recommendations made in Chapter 5 of this study (see pp.254ff).

### **Formation for ministry**

The topics for conversation in the interviews did not address directly the question of the adequacy or otherwise of the formation the priests had received for their ministry, but some references to seminary formation did occur and it is worth commenting briefly on them here.

Louden and Francis' 1996 survey of priests in England and Wales reported rates of approval for various specific aspects of seminary formation ranging from 68% for

‘developing a spiritual life’ and 66% for ‘conducting the liturgy’ down to 14% for ‘marriage counselling’ and 13% for ‘ministry to teenagers’.<sup>326</sup>

Where references to formation did occur in the interviews they tended to support the Loudon-Francis view that seminaries had prepared the priests better for liturgical and spiritual aspects of ministry than for practical aspects: maintenance of buildings, governance of schools and cooking were instanced as skills that had to be learnt ‘on the job’. One area of dissonance with the Loudon-Francis report is that some priests commented that the spiritual life of their seminary days did not equip them for developing a spirituality appropriate to active pastoral ministry. This appears to be consistent with the Hoge-Wenger study’s finding that 66% of the American diocesan clergy felt they needed more opportunity for and help with their personal spiritual development.<sup>327</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter, whilst providing a wealth of insight into the challenges facing priests today, has demonstrated that the qualitative data from the interviews, focus groups and case study supports the first and last theories of the five theories which have emerged from this project:

- a) That the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood prevalent in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual’s view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes.
- e) That the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity) which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests.

Chapter 4 will use the survey results to examine more closely the remaining three theories:

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<sup>326</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*. @23-50, 197-200

<sup>327</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.82-83, 93-95.

- b) That the divisions between adherents of these models of priesthood on questions of ontology and attitudes to the magisterium are more complex than they appear in the Hoge-Wenger analysis.
- c) That the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*, described here as the first and second views of Catholicity.
- d) That the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals can be related to their personality types.

## 4. Confirmatory data from the survey

Following the description and analysis in Chapter 3 of the qualitative data from the interviews, case study, focus groups and diaries, in relation to the first and last of the five theories that emerged during the course of this research project, this chapter will set out and analyse the data from the survey sent to all the participants in the study, highlighting the findings which support the conclusions drawn in Chapter 3 and exploring further the remaining three theories:

- b) That the divisions between adherents of the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood on attitudes to ontology, the magisterium and theology are more complex than they appear in the Hoge-Wenger analysis.<sup>328</sup>
- c) That the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*, described here as the first and second views of Catholicity and explained in Chapter 2 (see p.87).
- d) That the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals can be related to their personality types.

For the purpose of this analysis, these three theories will be further divided into seven hypotheses (see p.189).

### Description of survey design and process

As I explained in Chapter 2 (see p.67), the initial research plan was to use interviews, focus groups and a case study to gather information which would lead to a postal survey of all the priests in the Archdiocese. However, because the information gathered from these sources was rich and extensive, and because of the external factors discussed in Chapter 2 (see p.77), I decided, with the advice of my supervisors, to postpone the full survey until after

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<sup>328</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

completion of this thesis and to concentrate on analysis of the data from the interviews and groups.

In the interviews, the semi-structured conversations about the model of priesthood adopted by the priests and about their general theological stance seemed to indicate that these two factors were related and I began to wonder whether they might also be related to the personalities of the individuals. In line with the grounded theory method I was following, I sought a way of gathering further information to test this emerging theory and decided to use a small survey of the 30 priests I had interviewed and, in order to gain a broader base, to extend the survey to the 25 other participants in the project (i.e. the bishops I interviewed and the members of the case study and the two focus groups).

The survey had four sections, shown in Appendix 6, each of which was designed to achieve specific aims.

#### **Survey Table 1: Background information**

Table 1 was designed to gather demographic and biographical information about the participants to enable analysis of responses to the other sections of the survey in relation to age, date of ordination, seminary formation and other factors. In the event, the small number in the sample and the wide variety of seminaries attended and ministries undertaken made it difficult to draw inferences from factors other than the age and ordination date of the participants.

#### **Survey Table 2: Models of priesthood**

Table 2 had two aims: firstly, to provide further evidence of the extent to which the two models of priesthood proposed as significant in the Hoge-Wenger<sup>329</sup> analysis of priests in the USA (the servant leader model and the cultic model) were reflected amongst the priests in this sample; and secondly, to provide a more nuanced expression of the relationship between these two apparently polarised positions. To achieve the first aim, the table was constructed by taking the five pairs of polarised positions which, in the Hoge-Wenger analysis, summarised the key differences between these two models, and asking the priests in the sample to indicate their own stance on a continuum between each pair of statements. The second aim arose because a number of participants in the interviews and focus groups

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<sup>329</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

had expressed reservations about some aspects of these polarities. In response to these concerns, three pairs of supplementary position statements, devised in consultation with my primary supervisor, Professor Paul Murray, were added to this table in order to provide a more nuanced test of the participants’ self-understanding. The supplementary statements are shaded green in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.1: Cultic and servant leader models of priesthood, expanded version**

CULTIC MODEL	AREAS OF DIFFERENCE	SERVANT LEADER MODEL
“man set apart”	<i>Ontological Status of the Priest</i>	pastoral leader
sees priesthood as a matter of life and being		sees priesthood as a matter of role and function
values strict hierarchy	<i>Attitude Toward the Church Magisterium</i>	values flexible structure
values vertical accountability		values mutual accountability
follows established rules	<i>Liturgy and Devotions</i>	allows creativity
defends “orthodoxy”	<i>Theological Perspective</i>	allows for theological differences
values strict adherence to established expression of faith		values renewal of theological language and understanding
essential to the priesthood	<i>Attitude Toward Celibacy</i>	optional for the priesthood

The first factor in the Hoge-Wenger summary is described as ‘Ontological Status of the Priest’ and the two opposing position statements are ‘ “man set apart” ’ and ‘pastoral leader’. Because some participants who were broadly sympathetic to the servant leader model, whilst not wishing to say they were ‘set apart’, had appeared unwilling to ‘concede

all the ontological ground' to those supporting the cultic model, an alternative set of position statements was added: 'sees priesthood as a matter of life and being' as opposed to 'sees priesthood as a matter of role and function'. The second factor, which the Hoge-Wenger summary described as 'Attitude Toward the Church Magisterium', was represented by the pair of statements 'values strict hierarchy' and 'values flexible structure': because some participants had commented that they favoured flexibility but within limits, a further pair of statements was added to invite a choice between 'values vertical accountability' and 'values mutual accountability'. The final supplementary pair of statements was added in response to comments that the fourth factor 'Theological Perspective', in setting 'defends "orthodoxy" ' against 'allows for theological differences', had identified orthodoxy with the cultic model, whereas some priests favouring the servant leader model would claim to be entirely orthodox in doing so. The alternatives added in this case were 'values strict adherence to established expression of faith' and 'values renewal of theological language and understanding'. The position statements in the third and fifth factors in the Hoge-Wenger summary, on 'Liturgy and Devotions' and 'Attitude Toward Celibacy' were considered to be relatively straightforward and so no supplementary statements were added to them.

### **Survey Table 3: Theological worldviews or views of Catholicity**

As noted earlier (see p.87), various authors have attempted to describe or define two tendencies with Catholic theology, differing principally in their view of God's relationship with and action in the world. Robert Schreiter<sup>330</sup> attempted to provide a neutral description of these tendencies which others have associated in recent times with Rahner and von Balthasar or with the journals *Concilium* and *Communio*. Avoiding the labels sometimes attached to these tendencies, which those who hold them find unhelpful, he referred to them simply as 'first' and 'second' 'views of Catholicity'. Table 3 took some of the phrases Schreiter and others have used to encapsulate these views and invited participants to express their agreement or disagreement with each one. Four pairs of statements were devised, each of which was intended to convey significant contrasting features of the two views. The odd-numbered statements (1, 3, 5 and 7) were intended to express what Schreiter calls the first view of Catholicity and the even numbered statements (2, 4, 6 and 8) the second view. It must be admitted here that, whilst my supervisor again provided

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<sup>330</sup> Schreiter, 'Pastoral Theology as Contextual'.



some assistance in framing these statements, the last pair (7 and 8) were devised somewhat hurriedly against a logistical deadline which had already been set for the mailing of the survey. The section of this chapter detailing the results of the survey and the feedback from participants will reveal that many respondents had great difficulty in understanding and responding to this final pair of statements.

**Figure 4.2: Two views of Catholicity**

<b>Two views of Catholicity</b>	
<i>First view (more world-affirming, associated with Rahner)</i>	<i>Second view (more world-judging, associated with Balthasar)</i>
1. Grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church's task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace	2. The world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation
3. God's saving work is served by all people of good will	4. Explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work
5. The opening lines of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs	6. <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> is overly optimistic about human nature and culture
7. In order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem	8. In order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world

### **Personality types: NEO-FFI Five Factor Inventory**

This inventory was used to establish the personality type of each of the participants in order to search for any correlations between the personality types, the models of priesthood and the views of Catholicity.

The NEO-FFI Five Factor Inventory<sup>331</sup> was selected after consultation with Dr Brendan Geary FMS, then Director of Human Formation at Ushaw College, who kindly agreed to administer the test and (with the help of Nathan Horne, then a student at Ushaw) to enter the data for this test and the responses to the three tables described above into the SPSS

<sup>331</sup> Costa, *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*. The acronym NEO reflects three of the five factors it measures: Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness.

statistical analysis programme.<sup>332</sup> The NEO-FFI instrument was chosen for the following reasons:

- it is based on a broad consensus amongst personality theorists that the five factors it tests (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness), often referred to as ‘The Big Five’, explain most of the variation observed between individuals and subsume the additional factors in instruments which posit a higher number of traits;
- the fact that four of its factors are broadly comparable with the three factors (Neuroticism, Extraversion and Psychosis) tested by the Eysenck (EPQ) scale, which has been used in some UK-based studies of clergy, allows comparisons with those studies whilst, at the same time, providing more information about personality type and its influence by the inclusion of the fifth factor, Openness;<sup>333</sup> and
- it has been used in studies of ministers of various denominations outside the UK, providing potential for comparison with those studies.

### ***Explanation of the Five Factor Theory***

The five factors (also called ‘domains’) are described by Costa and McCrae in the NEO PI-R Professional Manual,<sup>334</sup> and an edited summary of their key points follows here:

Neuroticism (N). The most pervasive domain of personality scales contrasts adjustment or emotional stability with maladjustment or neuroticism ... The general tendency to experience negative effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt and disgust is the core of the N domain ... men and women high in N are also prone to have irrational ideas, to be less able to control their impulses, and to cope more poorly than others with stress. Individuals who score low on Neuroticism are emotionally stable. They are usually calm, even-tempered, and relaxed, and they are able to face stressful situations without becoming upset or rattled.

Extraversion (E). Extraverts are of course, sociable, but sociability is only one of the traits that comprise the domain of Extraversion. In addition to liking people and preferring large groups and gatherings, extraverts are also assertive, active, and talkative. They like excitement and stimulation and tend to be cheerful in disposition. They are upbeat, energetic and optimistic ... introversion should be seen as the absence of extraversion rather than what might be assumed to be its opposite.

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<sup>332</sup> SPSS 15.0.1 - November 2006, later updated to IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0 - August 2010.

<sup>333</sup> See p.186 for the relationship between NEO and EPQ scales.

<sup>334</sup> Costa, *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*, pp.14-16.

Thus introverts are reserved rather than unfriendly, independent rather than followers, even-paced rather than sluggish. Introverts may say they are shy when they mean they prefer to be alone: they do not necessarily suffer from social anxiety ... although they are not give to the exuberant high spirits of extraverts, introverts are not unhappy or pessimistic ... the conceptualization of Extraversion embodied in the NEO PI-R differs in many respects from Jung's (1923) theory. In particular, introspection or reflection is not related to either pole of E, being instead a characteristic of individuals who are high on Openness to Experience.

Openness (O). The elements of O *[are]* active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independence of judgment ... Open individuals are curious about both inner and outer worlds, and their lives are experientially richer. They are willing to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values, and they experience both positive and negative emotions more keenly than do closed individuals ... Openness is especially related to aspects of intelligence, such as divergent thinking, that contribute to creativity. But Openness is by no means equivalent to intelligence. Some very intelligent people are closed to experience, and some very open people are quite limited in intellectual capacity ... men and women who score low on O tend to be conventional in behaviour and conservative in outlook. They prefer the familiar to the novel and their emotional responses are somewhat muted ... Closedness does not imply hostile intolerance or authoritarianism. These qualities are more likely to be signs of extremely low Agreeableness.

Agreeableness (A). The agreeable person is fundamentally altruistic. He or she is sympathetic to others and eager to help them, and believes that others will be equally helpful in return. By contrast, the disagreeable or antagonistic person is egocentric, sceptical of others' intentions, and competitive rather than cooperative. It is tempting to see the agreeable side of this domain as both socially preferable and psychologically healthier, and it is certainly the case that agreeable people are more popular than antagonistic individuals. However the readiness to fight for one's own interests is often advantageous, and agreeableness is not a virtue on the battlefield or in the courtroom. Sceptical and critical thinking contributes to accurate analysis.

Conscientiousness (C). During the course of development, most individuals learn how to manage their desires, and the inability to resist impulses and temptations is generally a sign of high N among adults. But self-control can also refer to a more active process of planning, organizing, and carrying out tasks; and individual differences in this tendency are the basis of Conscientiousness. The conscientious individual is purposeful, strong-willed, and determined, and probably few people become great musicians or athletes without a reasonably high level of this trait ... On the positive side, high C is associated with academic and occupational achievement; on the negative side, it may lead to annoying fastidiousness, compulsive neatness, or workaholic behaviour. Conscientiousness is an aspect of what was once called *character*; high C scorers are scrupulous, punctual, and reliable. Low scorers are not necessarily lacking in moral principles, but they are less exacting in applying them, just as they are more lackadaisical in working towards their goals.

A complementary description of the Five Factor Theory is provided in Daniel Nettle's *Personality*,<sup>335</sup> synthesised here and tabulated in Figure 4.3 below.

‘Wanderers’: Extraversion is variation in the responsiveness of positive emotions. In the high scorer, responsiveness is great, and so the person is prepared to work hard to get the buzz of company, excitement, achievement, adulation and romance. The low scorer's positive emotion systems are less responsive, so the psychological benefits of getting these things are fewer. Given that the costs of getting them are the same for introvert and extravert alike, the introvert is not so motivated to do so.<sup>336</sup>

‘Worriers’: Neuroticism is to negative emotions what Extraversion is to positive ones ... [*negative emotions include*] fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, disgust and sadness ... If positive emotions are designed to make us locate and go towards things which are good for us, negative emotions are designed to make us detect and avoid things that would be bad for us ... Neuroticism predicts the size of one's negative response to a daily hassle and also the size of one's response to a more serious threat. Very high scorers can be pushed under by threats that would be brushed off or not even noticed by low scorers.<sup>337</sup>

‘Controllers’: ... the dimension related to impulse control is called Conscientiousness. High scorers are disciplined, organized and self-controlled, whereas low scorers are impulsive, spontaneous, and have weaknesses of the will ... Conscientiousness is the ability to follow internally set goals or plans. High scorers set a lot of goals and stick to them; low scorers set goals less often and are also inclined not to stick to them. Low scorers are procrastinators and put things off, which is a way of not executing goals.<sup>338</sup>

‘Empathizers’: to be high in Agreeableness is to be disposed to pay attention to the mental states of others, and, crucially, to factor these into behavioural choices ... [*high scorers*] help others more, have harmonious interpersonal relationships, enjoy good social support, and relatively rarely fall out with or insult people. They are quick to forgive, and slow to anger, even with people who are in fact blameworthy. [*Low scorers*] will be less inclined to trust or help others, more inclined to be cold or antagonistic [*and*] have less harmonious interpersonal relationships.<sup>339</sup>

‘Poets’: Openness is a strong predictor of participation in artistic and cultural activities of all kinds ... the exemplar of the high Openness person is the poet or artist ... four themes, namely ... broad associations of meaning, restless unconventionality, supernatural beliefs, and psychosis-like experiences – are characteristic not just of poets, but of Openness as a personality dimension more generally.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Nettle, Daniel, *Personality: What Makes You the Way You Are* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>336</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, p.93.

<sup>337</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, pp.107-15.

<sup>338</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, pp.138-43.

<sup>339</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, pp.163-65.

<sup>340</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, pp.161-90.

**Figure 4.3: Nettle's tabulation of the Five Factor Theory<sup>341</sup>**

Dimension	Core Mechanism	Benefits	Costs
Extraversion	Response to reward	Increased reward pursuit and capture	Physical dangers, family instability
Neuroticism	Response to threat	Vigilance, striving	Anxiety, depression
Conscientiousness	Response inhibition	Planning, self-control	Rigidity, lack of spontaneous response
Agreeableness	Regard for others	Harmonious social relationships	Not putting self first, lost status
Openness	Breadth of mental associations	Artistic sensibility, divergent thought	Unusual beliefs, proneness to psychosis

***Relationship of the NEO Five-Factor Scale to other personality scales***

Personality theory is by no means an exact science and there has been a bewildering multitude of attempts to categorise the key dimensions of human personality, with any number from 2 to 16 factors being regarded as fundamental. There is broad agreement in the discipline that the two dimensions usually described as Neuroticism (or Emotional Stability) and Extraversion (or Energy) are central features. Reference to these two dimensions can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, but their use in the modern era is usually credited to Hans Jurgen Eysenck, whose two-dimension theory of personality was the basis of the 1959 Maudsley Personality Inventory<sup>342</sup> (MPI), succeeded in 1964 by the Eysenck Personality Inventory<sup>343</sup> (EPI). In the 1970s Eysenck added to his model a third basic dimension of personality, which he called Psychoticism, and this three factor model has been widely adopted, known in its various versions as the Eysenck Personality

<sup>341</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, p.208.

<sup>342</sup> Eysenck, H. J., *Manual of the Maudsley Personality Inventory* (London: University of London Press, 1959).

<sup>343</sup> Eysenck, H. J. and Eysenck, S. B. G., *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Inventory* (Sevenoaks, Kent: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964).

Questionnaire<sup>344</sup> (EPQ) and the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire<sup>345</sup> (EPQ-R). The five factor model championed by Costa and McCrae,<sup>346</sup> often called the Big Five Theory, emerged in the 1990s from analysis of language used to describe personality traits: it claims that the three factors of Eysenck's approach do not account for all the variance between personalities. Costa and McCrae argue that the trait which Eysenck labels as Psychoticism is a conflation of two separate traits which they name (in a reverse of the Psychoticism scale) as Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, so that a person who scores high on the Eysenck Psychoticism scale would exhibit low scores on their scales for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. They further argue that a fifth factor, which they label Openness to Experience, is also fundamental to personality and that it accounts for variance which is not measurable by any of the three Eysenck scales. A long-running debate has been maintained between Eysenck and Costa and McCrae and their supporters in the pages of the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, founded by Eysenck and now edited by his wife and collaborator, Sybil. This discussion was most prolific in 1992,<sup>347</sup> but continues into the present. Eysenck conceded that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are factors in Psychoticism, but he did not believe they are of the same order as the three factors he uses, and he denied that there is adequate evidence for a separate factor of Openness. Other theorists and practitioners have attested the similarity between the NEO and EPQ scales for Neuroticism and Extraversion and the correlations between high Psychoticism on the EPQ scale and low Agreeableness and low Conscientiousness on the NEO scales.<sup>348</sup> The situation is further complicated by the fact that each theory lists a number of component factors for each of its principal factors (the NEO inventory, for instance, lists six facets to each of its five major factors, which it also calls 'domains'). The relevance of this academic discussion to the present study is threefold:

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<sup>344</sup> Eysenck, H. J. and Eysenck, S. B. G., *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire: Adult and Junior* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975).

<sup>345</sup> Eysenck, *Eysenck Personality Scales*; Eysenck, S. B. G., Eysenck, H. J. and Barrett, P., 'A Revised Version of the Psychoticism Scale', *Personality and Individual Differences* 6, no. 1 (1985).

<sup>346</sup> Costa, *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*.

<sup>347</sup> Costa, P. T. Jnr. and McCrae, R. R., 'Four Ways Five Factors Are Basic', *Personality and Individual Differences* 13, no. 6 (1992); Costa, P. T. Jnr. and McCrae, R. R., 'Reply to Eysenck', *Personality and Individual Differences* 13, no. 8 (1992); Eysenck, H. J., 'Four Ways Five Factors Are Not Basic', *Personality and Individual Differences* 13, no. 6 (1992); Eysenck, H. J., 'A Reply to Costa and McCrae: P or A and C - the Role of Theory', *Personality and Individual Differences* 13, no. 8 (1992).

<sup>348</sup> Draycott, S. G. and Kline, P., 'The Big Three or the Big Five - the EPQ-R vs the NEO-Pi: A Research Note, Replication and Elaboration', *Personality and Individual Differences* 18, no. 6 (1995); Saggino, A., 'The Big Three or the Big Five? A Replication Study', *Personality and Individual Differences* 28 (2000).

- that comparisons can be made between the scores for Extraversion and Neuroticism in studies using the two scales;
- that the NEO division of the EPQ Psychoticism scale into two separate factors, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, may help in interpreting the results more accurately; and
- that the fifth NEO factor, Openness, may shed light on aspects of personality which remain untested by the EPQ instrument.

### **Distribution and response rate**

The NEO-FFI inventory and the purpose-designed questionnaire, made up of Tables 1, 2 and 3 described above, were sent to 56 participants (55 in September 2009 and a 56th, who had recently been appointed to the case study deanery, in November 2011): 30 priest interviewees and 26 others (four bishops, five case study members and 17 focus group members). Two did not respond to the invitation, four declined to complete either the personality inventory or the questionnaire, two completed the questionnaire but declined to complete the personality inventory and one returned the questionnaire with a significant number of questions unanswered. The following analysis is based on the responses of the remaining 47 who fully or substantially completed both parts of the survey, i.e. 86% of those invited to participate. These 47 represent just less than one fifth of the total number of diocesan and religious priests engaged in or retired from parish ministry in the Archdiocese between 2009 and 2011. The survey was accompanied by a letter from myself explaining that Dr Geary would be scoring the personality inventory and providing his contact details in case of any concerns or questions. Respondents were invited to request a computer-generated profile based on their responses and were offered the opportunity to contact Dr Geary should they have any concerns about the results. A summary of the results was presented to the focus groups and the case study group and some of their feedback is reflected in the analysis that follows. In the small number of instances where a respondent failed to register a response to a specific question, the non-responses are indicated in the charts and the accompanying descriptions but have been excluded on a case-by-case basis from the calculation of correlations.

## Seven hypotheses

My expectations, based on the interviews, focus groups and case study, on my personal experience and on the reading I had done, were that priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be very much in the majority and would also lean towards the first view of Catholicity, whilst the minority who favoured the cultic model would lean towards the second view of Catholicity. I expected some variation from the results in the Hoge-Wenger survey in relation to the supplementary questions added to Table 2 (see p.181) about the priests' views on the ontological status of the priest, attitudes to the magisterium and theological perspectives, since the supplementary statements were intended to probe a greater complexity in relation to these topics than seemed apparent in the Hoge-Wenger analysis. I had no clear expectations of the overall distribution of personality types within the sample. A study of Roman Catholic parochial secular clergy in England and Wales by Loudon and Francis<sup>349</sup> using the 1975 Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ)<sup>350</sup> had found their respondents to be more introverted and more neurotic than men in general and had concluded from these results that the priests in their sample displayed a personality profile more characteristic of women in relation to these two scales, but had also found that they scored more highly than men in general on the EPQ's third scale, Psychoticism, and were therefore described as more tough-minded than men in general. Since Eysenck argues that Psychoticism is usually defined by a lack of empathy and by cruelty, impulsiveness, hostility, aggressiveness, emotional indifference, socialisation deficit and psychopathy,<sup>351</sup> I was hoping that this finding would not be replicated in the Liverpool sample. In terms of links between the five NEO personality traits, the two models of priesthood found in the Hoge-Wenger study and the two views of Catholicity outlined in the survey, it seemed logical to expect that those who adopted the servant leader model, with its more relaxed approach to regulations, and the first view of Catholicity, with its more positive attitude to the world, might also be likely to score higher on Openness and Agreeableness and lower on Neuroticism and Conscientiousness than those who supported the cultic model of priesthood, with its more rigid stance on authority

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<sup>349</sup> Loudon, S. H. and Francis, L. J., 'The Personality Profile of Roman Catholic Parochial Secular Priests in England and Wales', *Review of Religious Research* 41 (1999).

<sup>350</sup> Eysenck, *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire: Adult and Junior*.

<sup>351</sup> Eysenck, H. J., 'The Definition and Measurement of Psychoticism', *Personality and Individual Differences* 13, no. 7 (1992). Cited in Aluja, A., Garcia, O., and Garcia, L. F., 'Replicability of the Three, Four and Five Zuckerman's Personality Super-Factors: Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the EPQ-RS, ZKPQ and NEO-PI-R', *Personality and Individual Differences* 36 (2004).



and discipline, and the second view of Catholicity, with its more critical approach to the world.

I developed two further expectations in relation to different categories of participants within the sample, one related to the date of ordination and the other to a possible difference between the priests interviewed and those participating in the case study and focus groups. The American research proposed 1985 as the watershed between the servant leader priests and the 'new priests' who adhered to the cultic model, but one focus group member in the current study who had experience of a number of seminaries in the 1990s suggested that, in the UK, 1990 would be a more significant dividing point. My expectation was that those ordained after 1985 would be more likely to support the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, whilst showing less strong support for the first model of Catholicity and that these tendencies would be more pronounced in those ordained after 1990. The priest interviewees represented the whole age range of the current population of clergy, including some ordained in each decade from the 1940s to the 2000s (there being no surviving priests ordained before the 1940s). The other participants (bishop interviewees, case study members and focus group members) were chosen because of particular experiences and tended to be neither very old nor very young. My expectation was that there would be a slightly higher proportion of responses leaning towards the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity amongst the priest interviewees, because of the presence of some younger priests in that group.

These expectations can be expressed as a number of hypotheses capable of being supported or not supported by the data contained in the survey:

- i. that priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be very much in the majority, whilst those favouring the cultic model would be in the minority;
- ii. that priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be more likely to support the first view of Catholicity than those who favoured the cultic mode;
- iii. that priests who favoured the cultic model would be more likely to support the second view of Catholicity than those who favoured the servant leader model;

- iv. that the responses to the supplementary statements about ontology, the magisterium and theology would differ from the responses to the original statements in the Hoge-Wenger analysis;
- v. that priests who supported the servant leader model of priesthood and the first view of Catholicity would be more likely to have higher scores on Openness and Agreeableness and lower scores on Conscientiousness and Neuroticism than those who supported the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity;
- vi. that those ordained after 1985 would be more likely to support the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, whilst showing less strong support for the first model of Catholicity, and that these tendencies would be more pronounced in those ordained after 1990;
- vii. that there would be a slightly higher proportion of responses leaning towards the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, whilst supporting less strongly the first view of Catholicity, amongst the priest interviewees than amongst those participating in the case study and focus groups.

## **Description of responses**

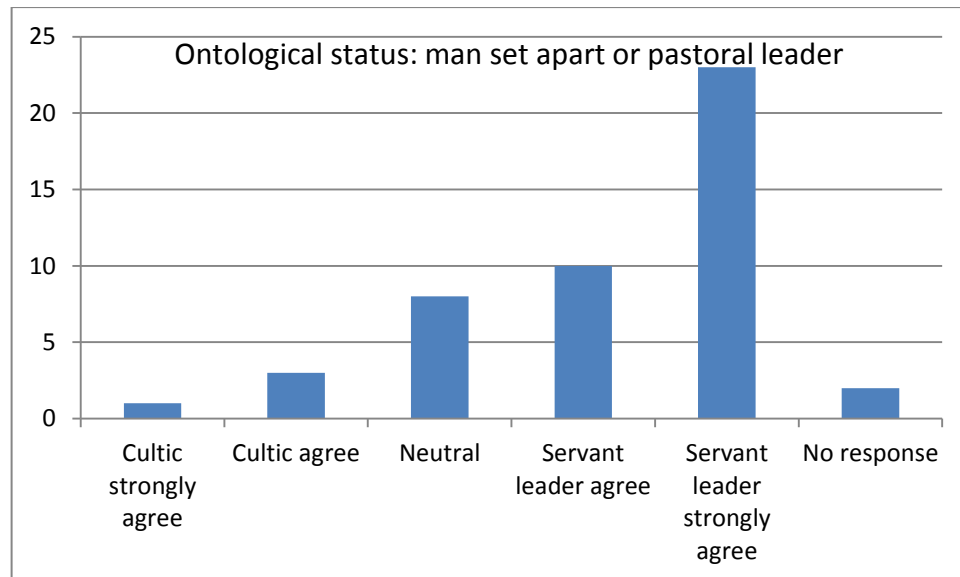
### **Model of priesthood**

The responses showed that the majority of the priests in the sample inclined more towards the servant leader model of priesthood than to the cultic, though a significant minority gave responses favouring the cultic model. Responses to the supplementary question on the ontological status of the priest showed clearly that a number of priests who supported the servant leader model and rejected the description of the priest as a man set apart, nevertheless maintained that their priesthood was a matter of life and being rather than one of role and function, indicating that the polarity between the two models in relation to ontology is more complex than it appears in the Hoge-Wenger study. The supplementary questions on attitude to the magisterium and on theological perspective also showed a clear, though less significant, variation from the pattern found in the American research.

The eight charts below, Figures 4.4 to 4.12, illustrate the responses to the eight sections of Table 2, showing the proportion of the 47 respondents placing themselves in each of the

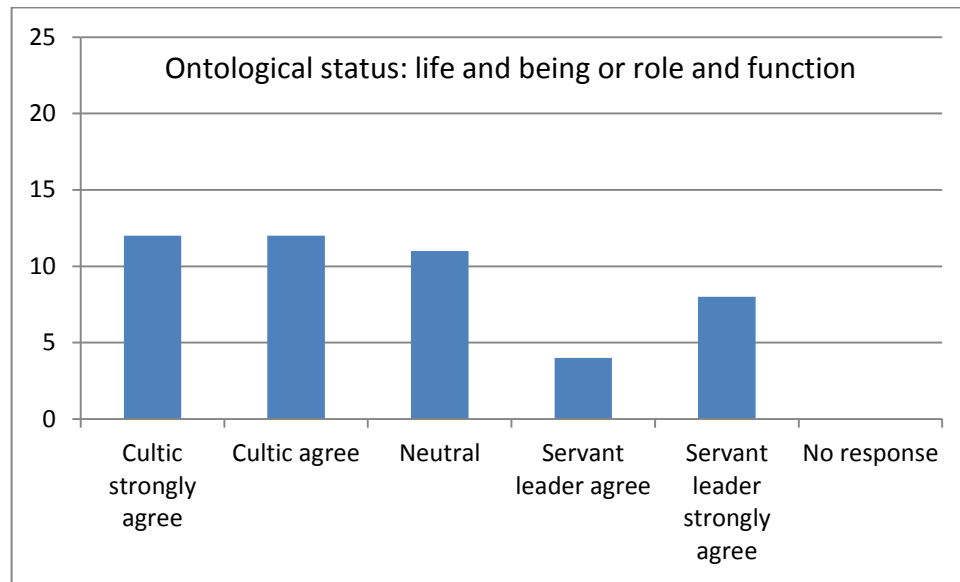
five positions on the continuum between each of the eight pairs of opposed statements, from those strongly agreeing with the description of the cultic model on the extreme left of each chart to those strongly agreeing with the characterisation of the servant leader model on the extreme right of each chart (apart from the ‘No response’ column).

**Figure 4.4: Ontological status of the priest: man set apart or pastoral leader**



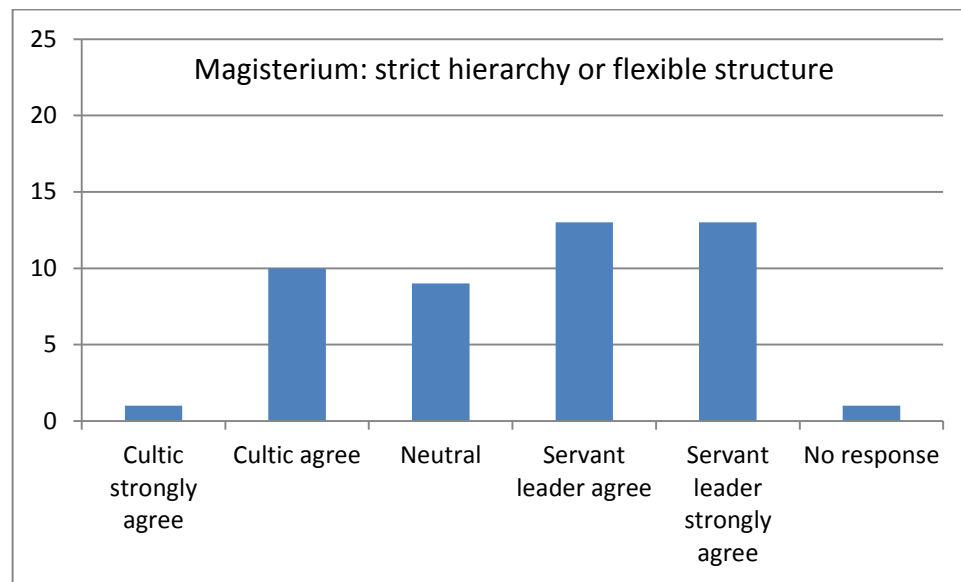
This chart gives the responses to the Hoge-Wenger descriptions of the two opposed positions in relation to the ontological status of the priest, indicating that only a small minority (four) agreed or strongly agreed with the definition of the priest as a man set apart (associated with the cultic model), whilst a large majority (33) agreed or strongly agreed with the definition of the priest as a pastoral leader (associated with the servant leader model), with eight placing themselves in between those two positions and two not responding to this section. Some participants said later that they found this question difficult as they did not see the two statements as opposites.

**Figure 4.5: Ontological status of the priest: sees priesthood as a matter of life and being or as a matter of role and function**



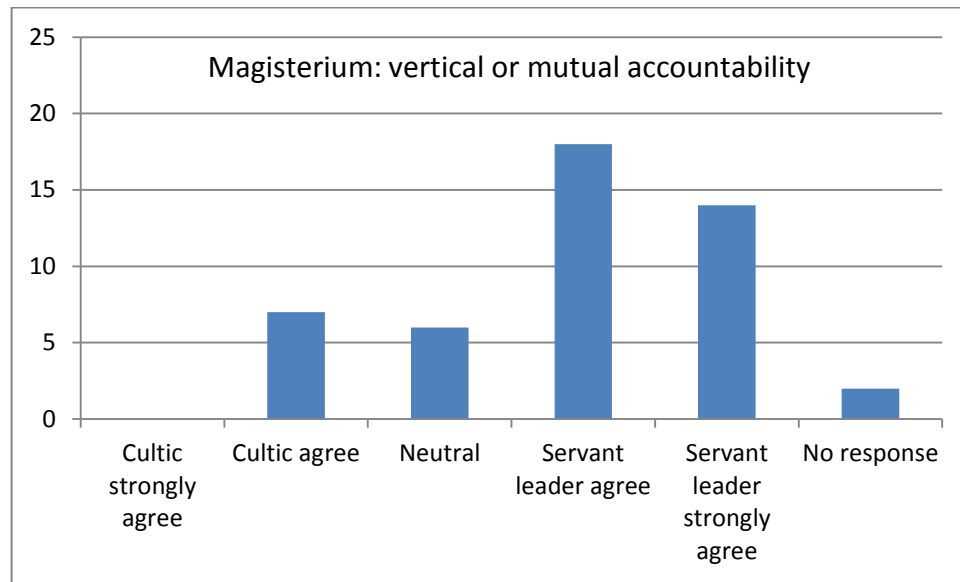
This chart shows that the supplementary statements on the ontological status of the priest evoked a very different response from the previous pair, with a majority (24) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the description of priesthood as a matter of life and being, only 12 agreeing or strongly agreeing that they saw it as a matter of role and function, and 11 placing themselves in the middle of this continuum. The difference between this result and the previous one supports the hypothesis that the respondents' attitudes to ontology are more complex than is apparent in the Hoge-Wenger study.

**Figure 4.6: Attitude toward the Church magisterium:  
values strict hierarchy or values flexible structure**



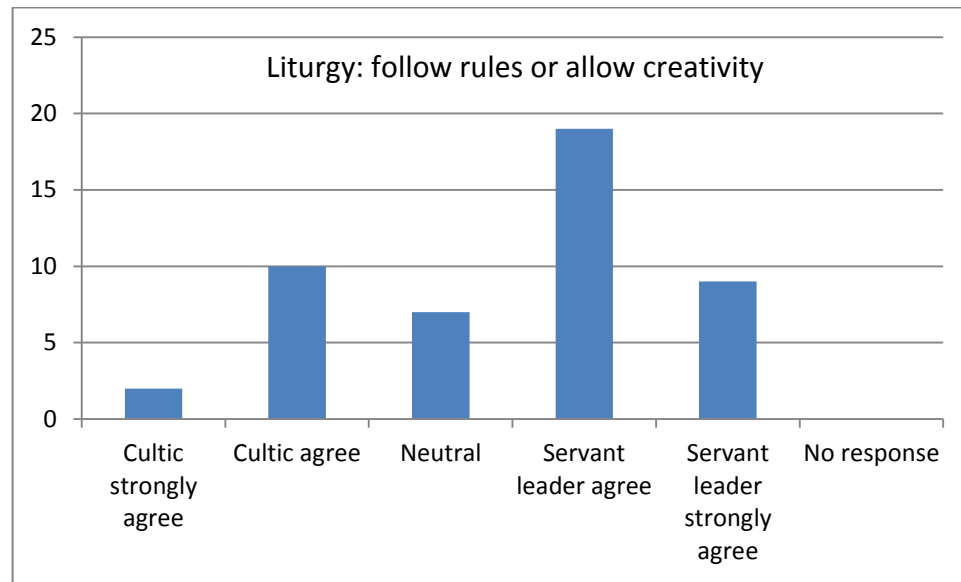
The description of the cultic model's attitude toward the Magisterium given in the Hoge-Wenger analysis, 'values strict hierarchy', attracted only a minority of votes (10 agreeing and only one strongly agreeing), whereas the opposing description of the servant leader model's attitude, 'values flexible structure', was supported by the majority (26), with nine occupying the middle position and one failing to respond to this section.

**Figure 4.7: Attitude toward the Church magisterium:  
values vertical accountability or values mutual accountability**



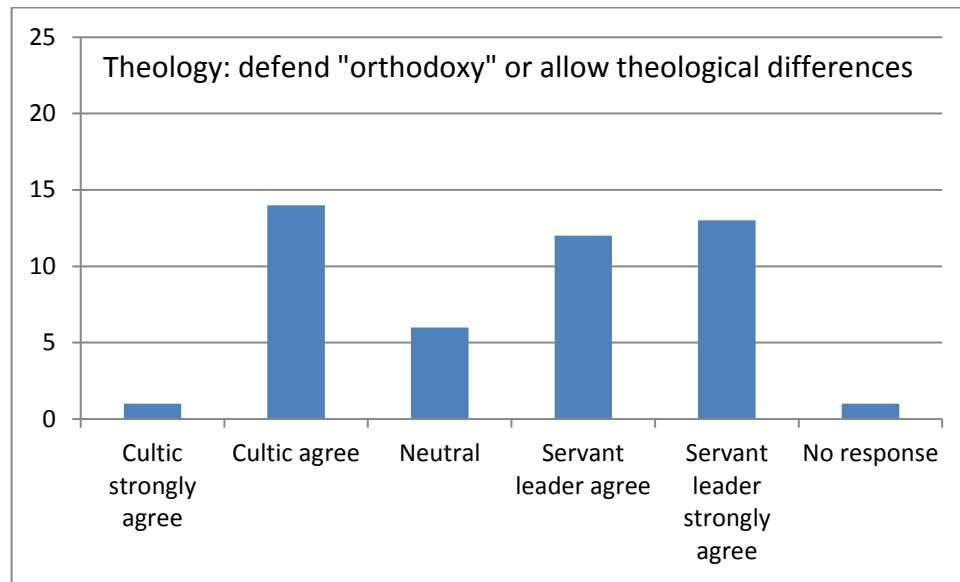
The supplementary pair of stated attitudes towards the magisterium shows an even smaller minority supporting the alternative description of the cultic model's attitude 'values vertical accountability' (only seven agreeing and none agreeing strongly) with 32 supporting the description of the servant leader model's attitude 'values mutual accountability', six remaining neutral and two failing to place themselves on this continuum. The contrast between this result and the preceding one supports the hypothesis that the participants' attitudes towards the magisterium are more complex than can be inferred from the Hoge-Wenger study.

**Figure 4.8: Liturgy and devotions:  
follows established rules or allows creativity**



This chart shows a majority (28) of the participants favouring the Hoge-Wenger description of the attitude to liturgy associated with the servant leader model, ‘allows creativity’, whilst only 12 agreed or strongly agreed with the attitude ascribed to the cultic model, ‘follows established rules’, and seven located themselves in the middle of this scale.

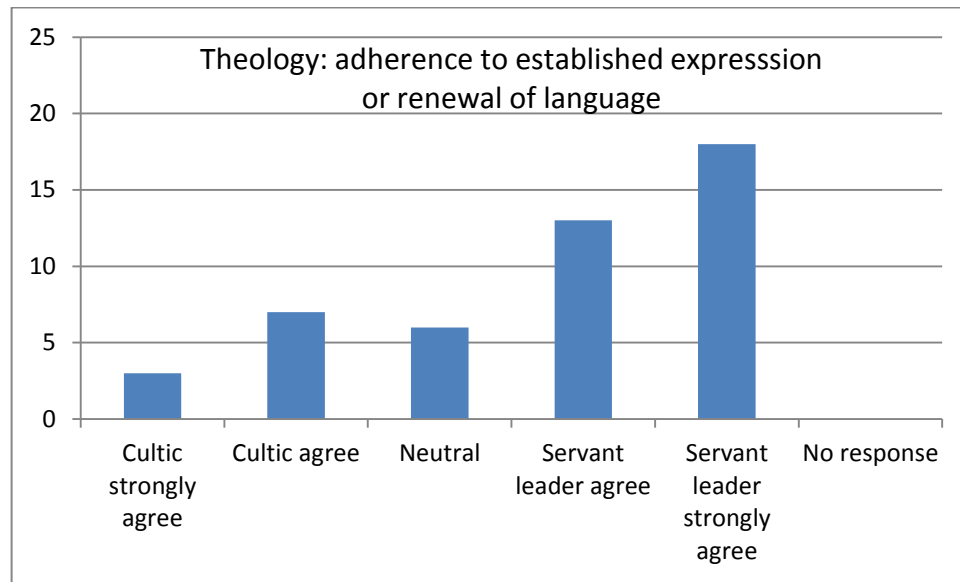
**Figure 4.9: Theological perspective: defends “orthodoxy” or allows for theological differences**



This chart shows a minority of the priests (15) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the original Hoge-Wenger description of the cultic model’s theological perspective ‘defends “orthodoxy”’, while the majority (25) supported the description of the servant leader’s theological perspective, ‘allows for theological differences’, with six taking the centre ground between these two positions and one failing to take up a position on this scale.

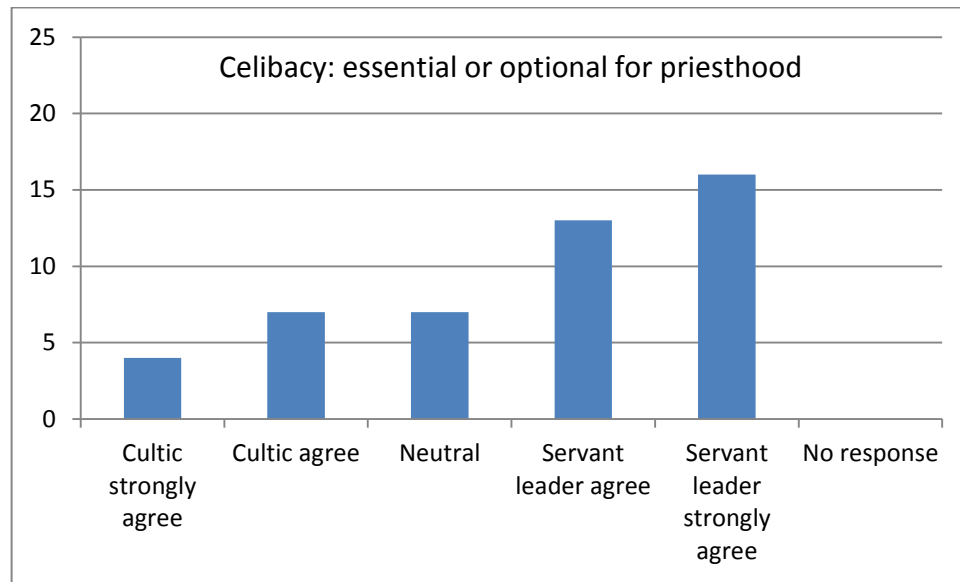


**Figure 4.10: Theological perspective: values strict adherence to established expression of faith or values renewal of theological language and understanding**



Here we see that the supplementary question on theological perspective produced a significantly different result, with a smaller minority (10) embracing the alternative description of the cultic model's perspective 'values strict adherence to established expression of faith' and a larger majority (31) choosing the alternative description of the servant leader perspective 'values renewal of theological language and understanding', while six took the middle position. This result, taken alongside the previous one, supports the hypothesis that the respondent's approaches to theology are more complex than appears in the Hoge-Wenger study.

**Figure 4.11: Attitude toward celibacy: essential to the priesthood or optional for the priesthood**



The responses to this relatively straightforward question showed a clear majority (29) agreeing or strongly agreeing that celibacy should be optional for priesthood and a minority (11) agreeing or strongly agreeing that it should remain essential for priesthood, while seven registered a neutral position on this issue.

### **Summary of responses on models of priesthood**

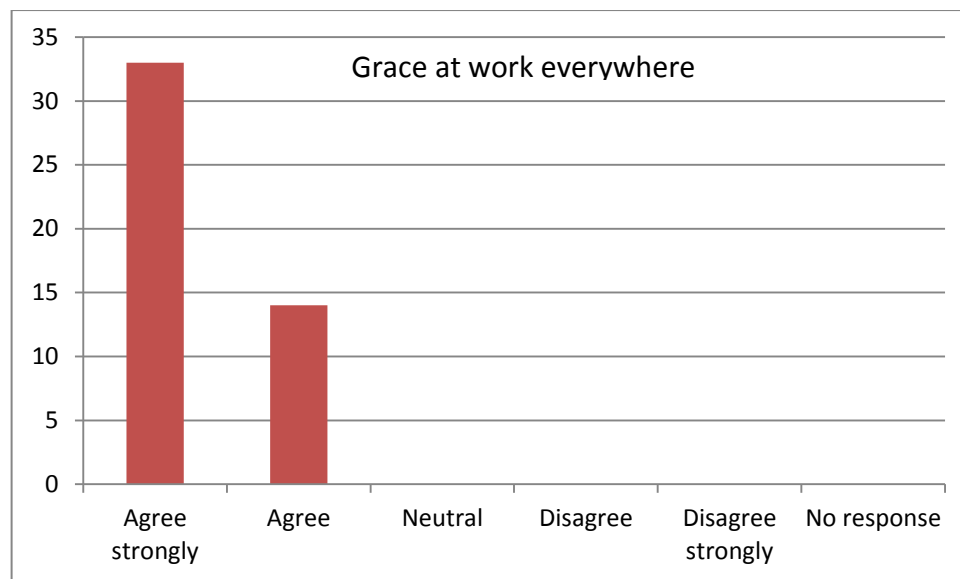
To summarise the responses to Table 2 on models of priesthood, the majority of the respondents supported the statements reported by the Hoge-Wenger as characterising the servant leader model of priesthood, while a small minority supported the statements associated with the cultic model, but the responses to the three supplementary questions indicated that a significant number of those identifying with the servant leader model also regarded priesthood as a matter of life and being (i.e. an ontological reality), valued hierarchical structures characterised by mutual accountability and supported the renewal of theological language and understanding.

### **Views of Catholicity**

The next group of eight charts, Figures 4.12 to 4.19, shows the responses to the eight statements in Table 3. As was noted above, this table included four pairs of statements, each pair intended to convey significant contrasting features of the two views of Catholicity explained in Chapter 2, (see p.87). The odd-numbered statements (1, 3, 5 and 7) were

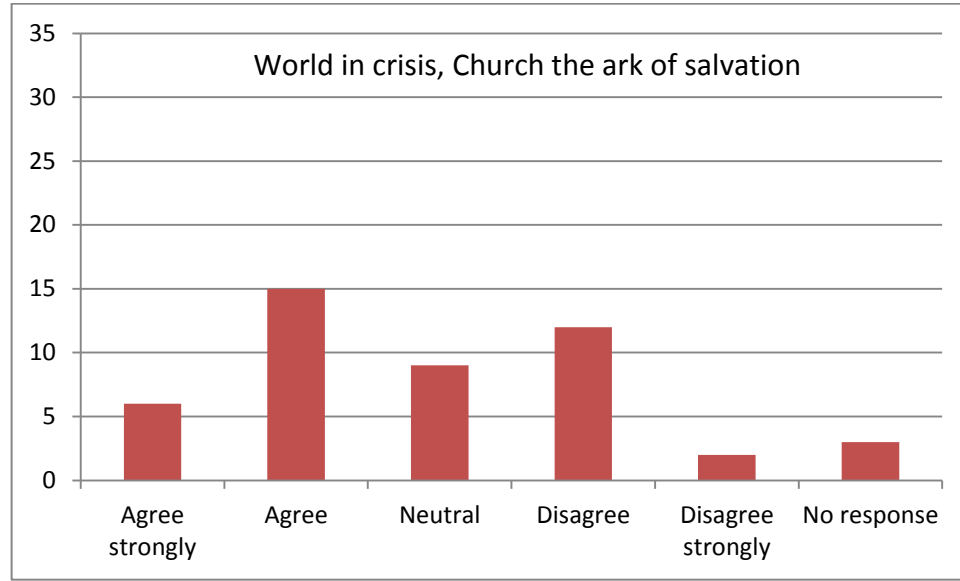
intended to express the first view of Catholicity and the even numbered statements (2, 4, 6 and 8) the second view. The responses indicate that all of the participants supported to some extent most of statements expressing the first view of Catholicity, whilst around three quarters of the sample also supported to some extent (sometimes a lesser extent) most of the statements expressing the second view. The implications of this finding will be explored in the analysis which follows. The higher incidence of non-responses to questions in this section indicates, as noted above (see p.182) that some of the respondents found some of these statements (especially 7 and 8) ambiguous or contentious, e.g. they may have agreed with one part of a statement but disagreed with another part of it.

**Figure 4.12: Grace at work everywhere**



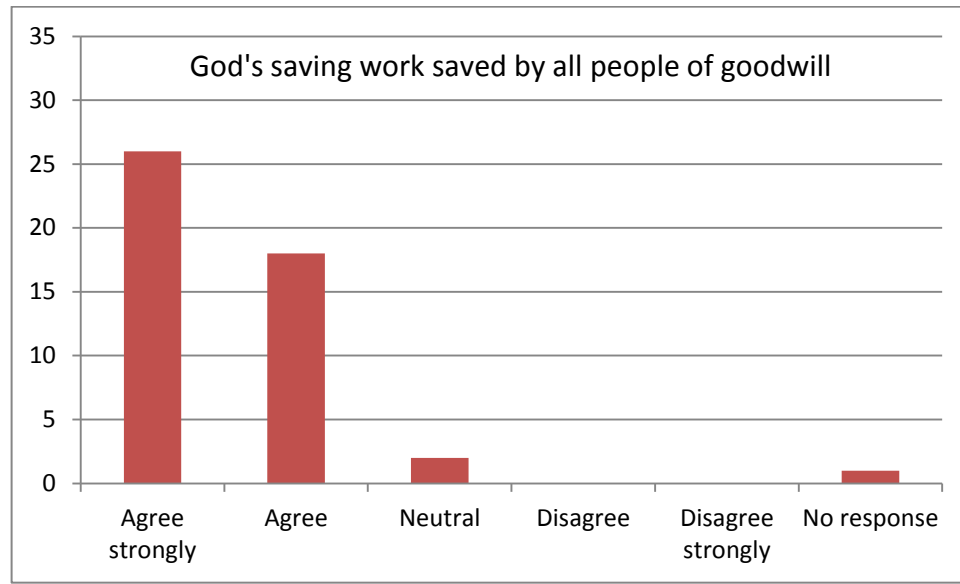
This chart shows unanimous agreement with this clear statement of the first view of Catholicity: ‘grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church’s task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace’. 14 respondents agreed and 33 agreed strongly with the statement: no disagreement was registered and no participants declared themselves to be neutral in this regard.

**Figure 4.13: World in crisis, Church the ark of salvation**



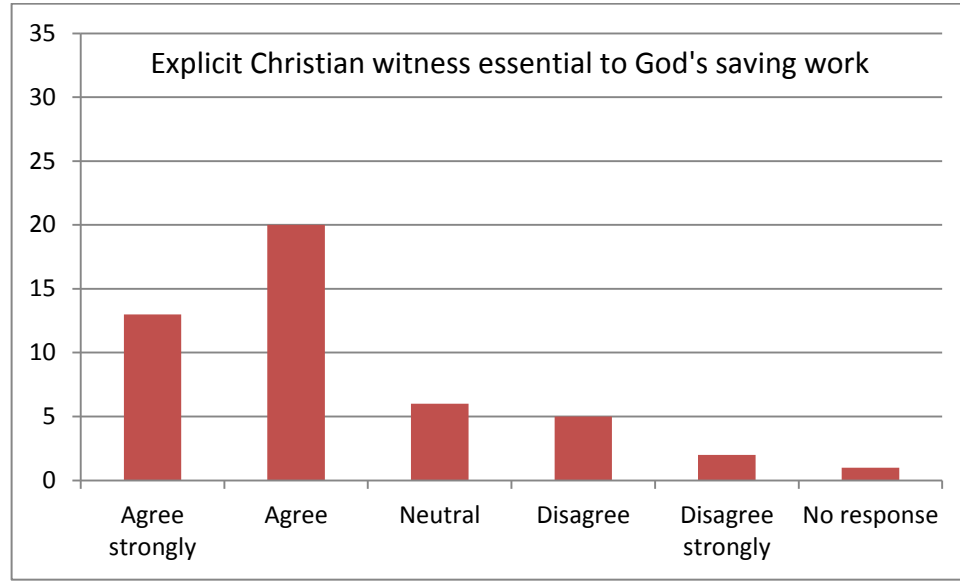
This chart shows 21 (less than a simple majority) agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement of the second view of Catholicity: ‘the world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation’. 14 disagreed or disagreed strongly and nine remained neutral, while three did not register a position. One commented later that he agreed with the first part of the statement but not the second and so could not decide how to respond to the statement as a whole.

**Figure 4.14: God's saving work served by all people of goodwill**



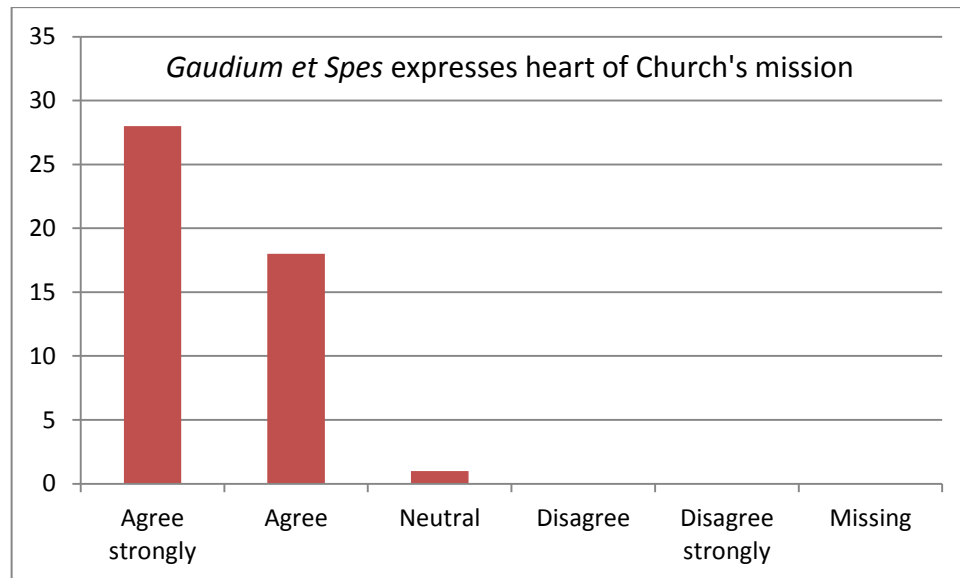
Here there was almost unanimous support for this statement of the first view of Catholicity: 'God's saving work is served by all people of good will'. 44 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with no expressions of disagreement, two remaining neutral and one failing to register a position.

**Figure 4.15: Explicit Christian witness essential to God's saving work**



A sizeable majority (33) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement of the second view of Catholicity, 'explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work', despite its apparent contradiction of the previous statement, 'God's saving work is served by all people of goodwill' which had received almost unanimous support. Seven participants disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, six expressed neutrality and one failed to register a response.

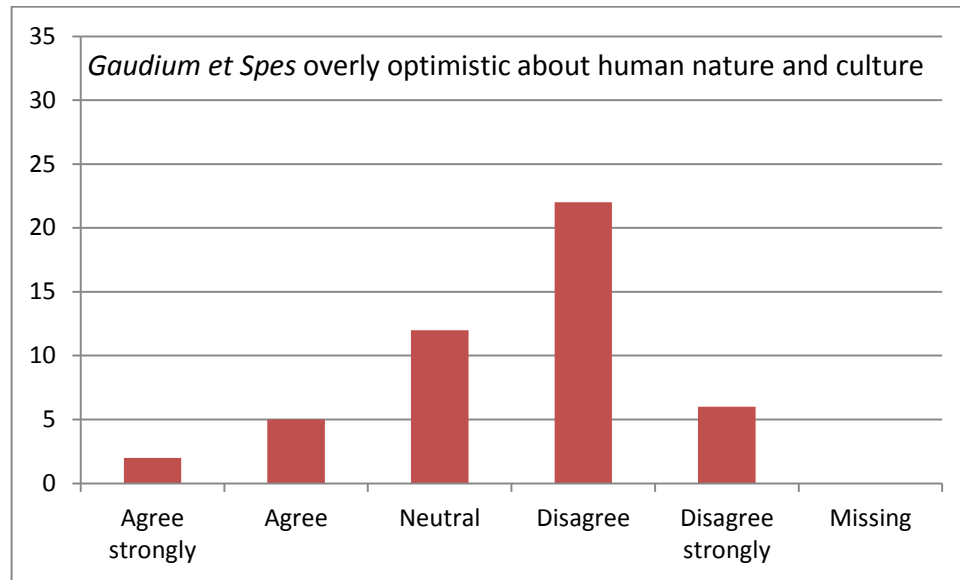
**Figure 4.16: *Gaudium et Spes* expresses heart of Church's mission**



This statement and the following one were designed to distinguish the two views of Catholicity on the basis of the association of the first view of Catholicity with followers of Karl Rahner and of the second view with devotees of Hans urs Von Balthasar, and of John Allen's statement that Rahnerians tend to take *Gaudium et Spes* as their charter, while Balthasarians often see that text, and especially subsequent interpretations of it, as dangerously naïve.<sup>352</sup> The chart shows that the programmatic opening of *Gaudium et Spes* was indeed close to the hearts of all the priests in the survey. The statement of the first view of Catholicity that 'the opening lines of *Gaudium et Spes* express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs' was supported by 46 of the 47 participants, with only one expressing neutrality and no disagreement with the statement recorded.

<sup>352</sup> Allen, 'Word from Rome'.

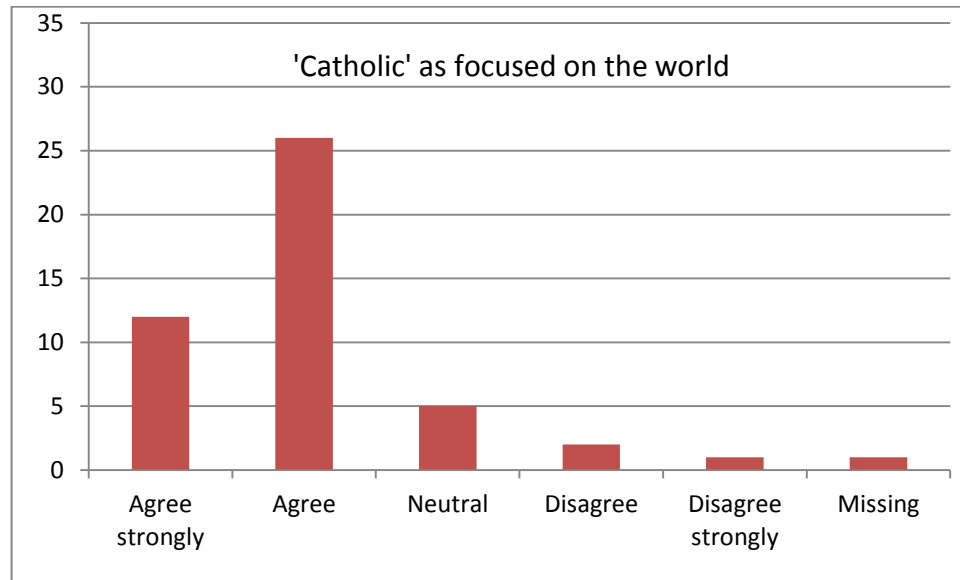
**Figure 4.17: *Gaudium et Spes* overly optimistic about human nature and culture**



The contrasting statement of the second view of Catholicity, that '*Gaudium et Spes* is overly optimistic about human nature and culture' was, however, supported by only seven of the respondents with 28 disagreeing or disagreeing strongly and 12 remaining neutral. It is of course not inconsistent to believe that the opening paragraph of this document holds the key to the Church's mission whilst maintaining that some of its later sections betray a naïve optimism.



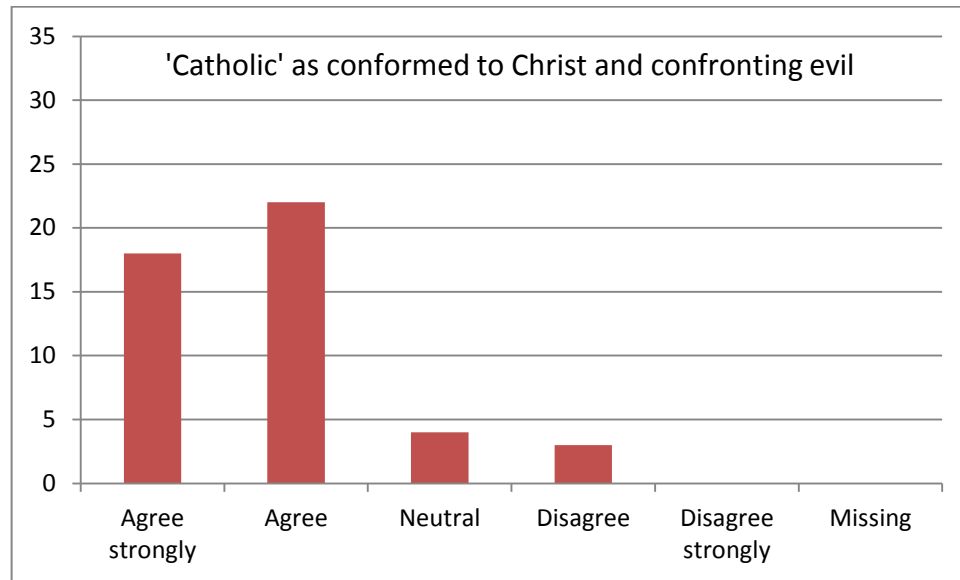
**Figure 4.18: 'Catholic' as focused on the world**



As was acknowledged in the introduction to this chapter, the final pair of statements in Table 3 was devised somewhat hurriedly and a number of participants in the study later said they found these statements complex and confusing, so the resulting responses should be treated with greater caution.

The chart shows that the statement intended to express the first view of Catholicity: 'in order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem' was supported by more than three quarters of the respondents (38) with only three disagreeing or disagreeing strongly, five remaining neutral and one failing to register a response.

**Figure 4.19: ‘Catholic’ as conformed to Christ and confronting evil**



The second of the final pair of statements attempted to express the second view of Catholicity in the phrase, ‘in order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world’. This was supported by an even larger majority (40) than the previous statement, intended to be its opposite, with only three disagreeing, none disagreeing strongly and four remaining neutral. The last part of the statement was intended to convey the “over-againstness” with which Dulles characterised Balthasar’s views of priesthood<sup>353</sup> but participants later commented that the statement contained too many concepts and that it was hard not to agree with one or more of them.

### **Summary of responses on views of Catholicity**

To summarise the responses to Table 3 on the two views of Catholicity, this is an even more complex and delicate issue than the question of models of priesthood and the responses reflect that level of difficulty. As noted in individual cases above, some respondents commented that some of these statements were complex and difficult to respond to, or that they wanted to support both sets of statements. The responses show no disagreement whatsoever with the first three statements intended to express the first view of Catholicity (not even any ‘neutral’ responses to the first, about grace) and a very low level of disagreement (three out of 47) with the fourth, admittedly complex, expression of that

<sup>353</sup> Dulles, *The Priestly Office*, p.21.

view. There was a mixture of agreement and disagreement with the four statements intended to express the second view of Catholicity, the strongest disagreement being with the statement that *Gaudium et Spes* is overly optimistic about human nature and culture. Whilst some of this variation may be due to a lack of clarity in the statements, it seems clear that, whilst all those surveyed support the first view of Catholicity to some extent, around three quarters also support the second view to some extent, i.e. that these are not two views held exclusively by two distinct groups, but that one is held by all and the second also held by some, but not by others. Correlations between these responses and those for Table 2, on models of priesthood, will be discussed below (see p.223).

### **Personality types**

The next group of six charts, Figures 4.20 to 4.25, gives the results for the NEO-FFI personality inventory, the categories having been explained above (see p.182).

In the charts given below for each of the five factors, the mean expected in the general male population is 50, so a score between 45 and 55 is described as average, a score between 56 and 65 is described as high, a score between 66 and 75 is described as very high and any score over 75 is described as extremely high. Similarly, a score between 35 and 44 is described as low, a score between 25 and 34 is described as very low and any score below 25 is described as extremely low. The black lined bell-curve on each chart shows the normal distribution in the general male population and the Standard Deviation figure indicates the extent to which this sample deviates from the norm. The deviations are all within the range to be expected in a sample of this size.

**Figure 4.20: Neuroticism**

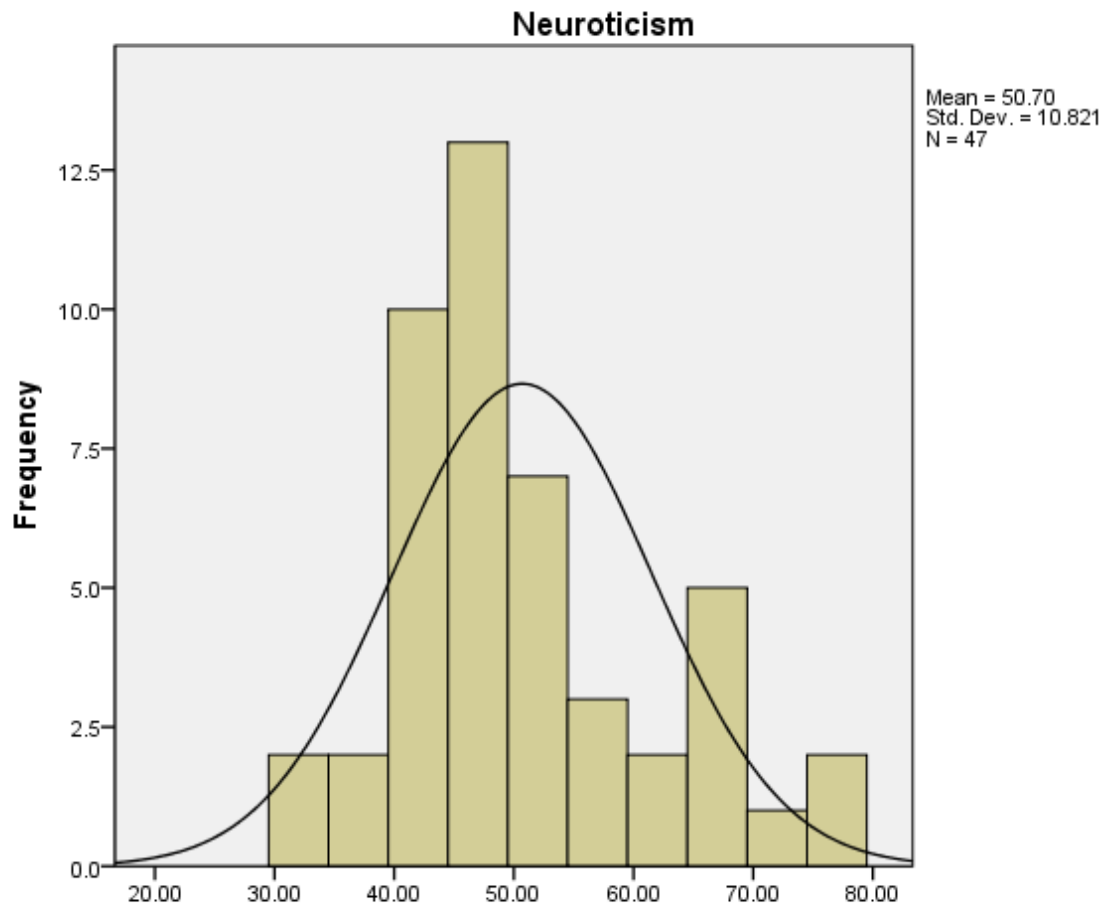


Figure 4.20 shows the scores on Neuroticism: as a group, the priests in the sample scored a mean of 50.7 (as compared with 50 for the general male population) and a Standard Deviation of 10.821. The majority of the scores would be described as average (20) and low (12), with two being described as very low, none as extremely low, seven as high, four as very high and two as extremely high. Although the mean of 50.7 is very close to the average for the general male population, the small number of very high and extremely high scores disguises the fact that the majority of the participants showed an average or below average level of Neuroticism: 34 (72%) scored less than 55 and 27 of these (57% of the total) scored less than 50. This result is in line with that found in a study of 62 successful candidates for diocesan and religious priesthood in Malta over a period of nine years (1996-2004), during which time the NEO PI-R instrument was used in the course of their

psychological evaluation, where the aggregate results of the 62 cases of seminarians and religious show a pattern characterised by average to low scores on Neuroticism.<sup>354</sup>

This result and the similar Maltese finding appear to contradict those of a number of previous studies using the Eysenck personality profile, which found Roman Catholic clergy to be significantly more neurotic and introverted than men in general, traits described as indicating a more feminine response than that of men in general.<sup>355</sup> These studies are summarised in Loudon and Francis's 1999 article which describes the findings of their own study that 'Roman Catholic parochial secular clergy record a more feminine profile than men in general in terms of the two personality dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism'.<sup>356</sup> The view that women are generally more introverted and more neurotic than men was, however, challenged by a small study in the University of Chile exploring the relationship of sex and left or right handedness to the Eysenck personality type which concluded:

The results of this study suggest that there is no consistent association between the influence of sex or handedness and the personality traits assessed by the EPQ-R.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

<sup>355</sup> Francis, L. J., 'The Personality Characteristics of Anglican Ordinands: Feminine Men and Masculine Women?', *Personality and Individual Differences* 12 (1991); Loudon, 'Personality Profile of Roman Catholic Priests'; Robbins, M., Francis, L. J. and Kay, W. K., 'The Personality Characteristics of Methodist Ministers: Feminine Men and Masculine Women?', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40 (2001).

<sup>356</sup> Loudon, 'Personality Profile of Roman Catholic Priests', p.73.

<sup>357</sup> Camposano, S., Corail, J. and Lolas, F., 'Relationship between Sex, Handedness and Eysenck's Personality Traits (EPQ-R)', *Personality and Individual Differences* 12, no. 11 (1991).

**Figure 4.21: Extraversion**

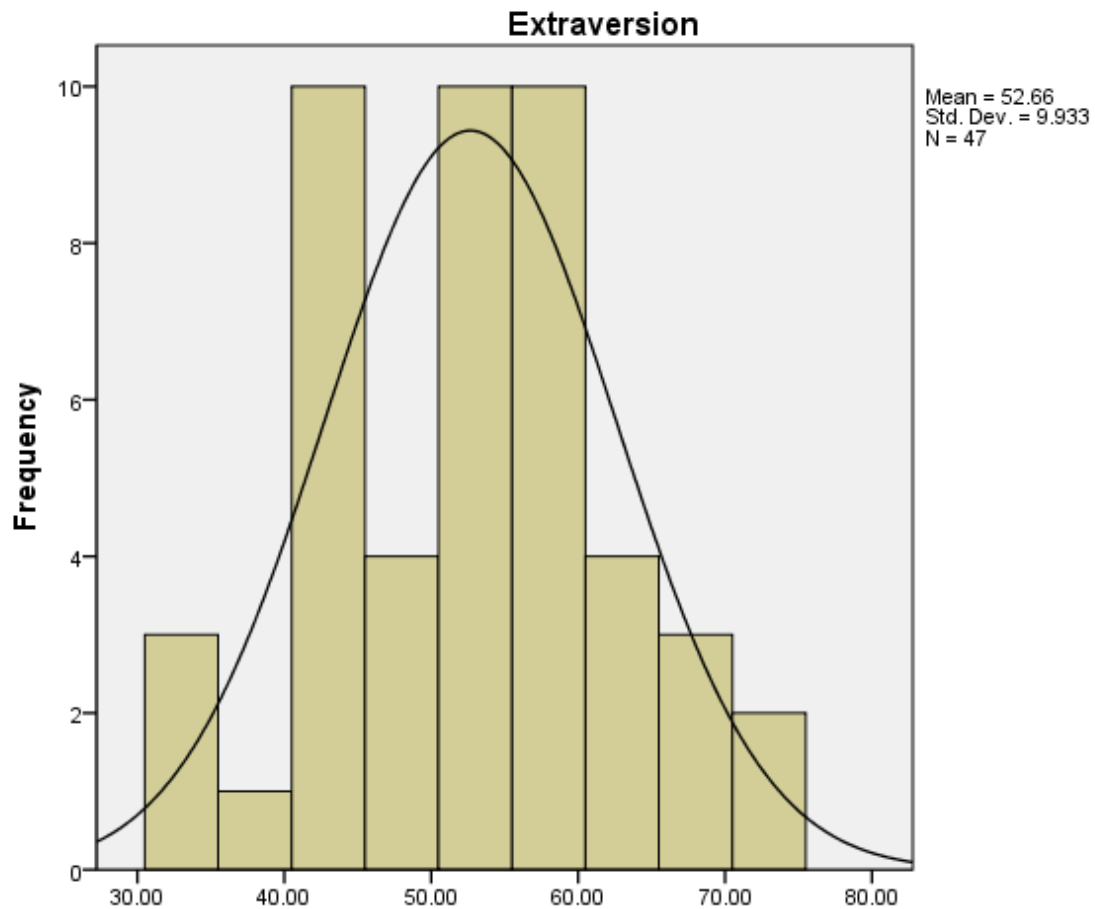
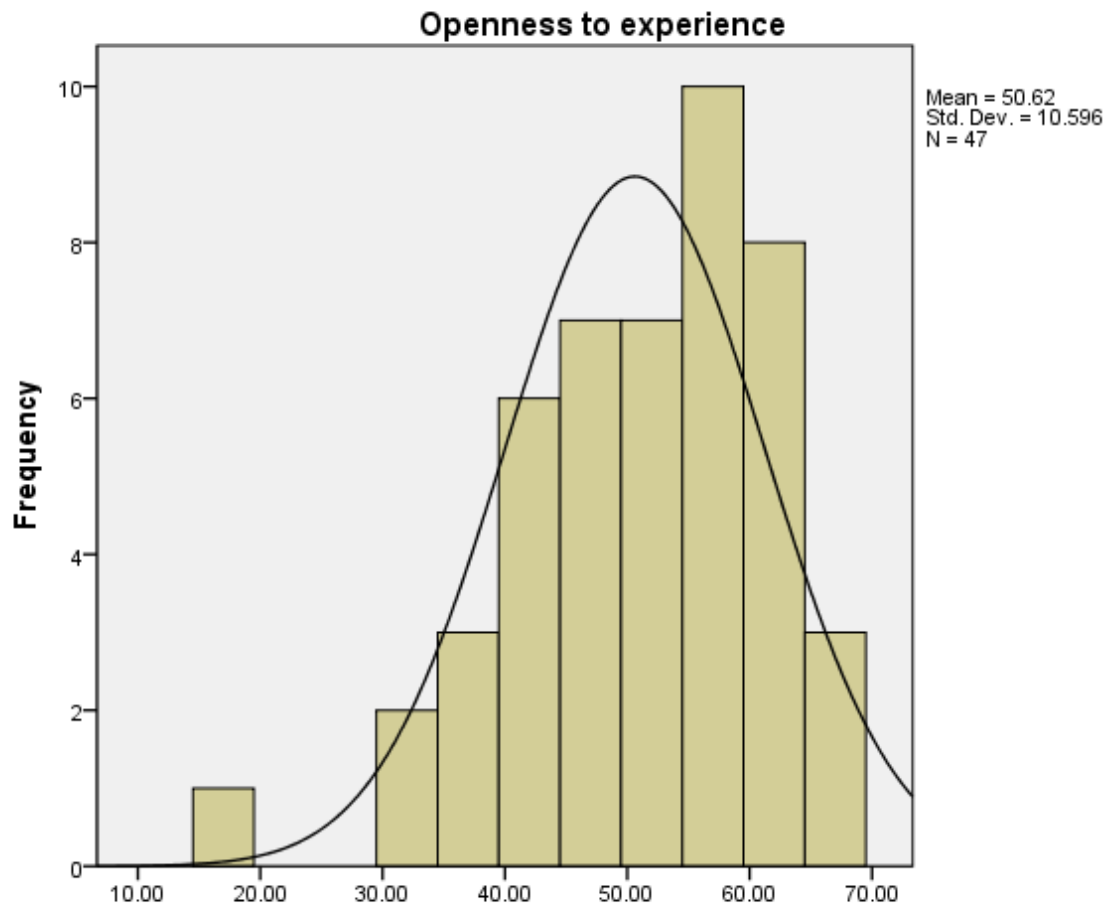


Figure 4.21 shows that, as a group, the priests in the sample had a slightly higher score than men in general for Extraversion, with a mean of 52.66 and a Standard Deviation of 9.933. There were no extremely high or extremely low scores. Only 18 (38%) scored 50 or less while 29 (62%) scored more than 50. Again this result is in line with the Maltese study,<sup>358</sup> which found average scores for Extraversion, but both are at variance with the findings of the previous studies mentioned above. One possible explanation of the difference in relation to the Liverpool study is the comment by a number of the respondents that, since pastoral ministry demands a good deal of interaction with others, they had found it difficult, in responding to the questions, to distinguish between activities their role required and their natural inclinations, so they felt they may have overrated their natural inclinations in relation to Extraversion.

<sup>358</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

**Figure 4.22: Openness to experience**



The scores on Openness given in Figure 4.22 show that the priests as a group had a mean of 50.62, very similar to that of the general male population, and a Standard Deviation of 10.596, though in this case the distribution was somewhat different from the norm, with only three respondents registering a score outside the middle range 35-65, two of these being only just above that range (67) and one being extremely low (17). The individual who scored 17, on receiving the computer-generated profile, contacted me to say he felt he must have made errors in responding to some of the questions as he did not feel that this particular score was an accurate reflection of his personality. If that score had been adjusted in line with his self-assessment to somewhere just below the average, the mean for the group would have been marginally higher, though still very close to the mean for the

general male population. Once again this finding is consistent with the Maltese study, which reported an average aggregate score for Openness.<sup>359</sup>

**Figure 4.23: Agreeableness**

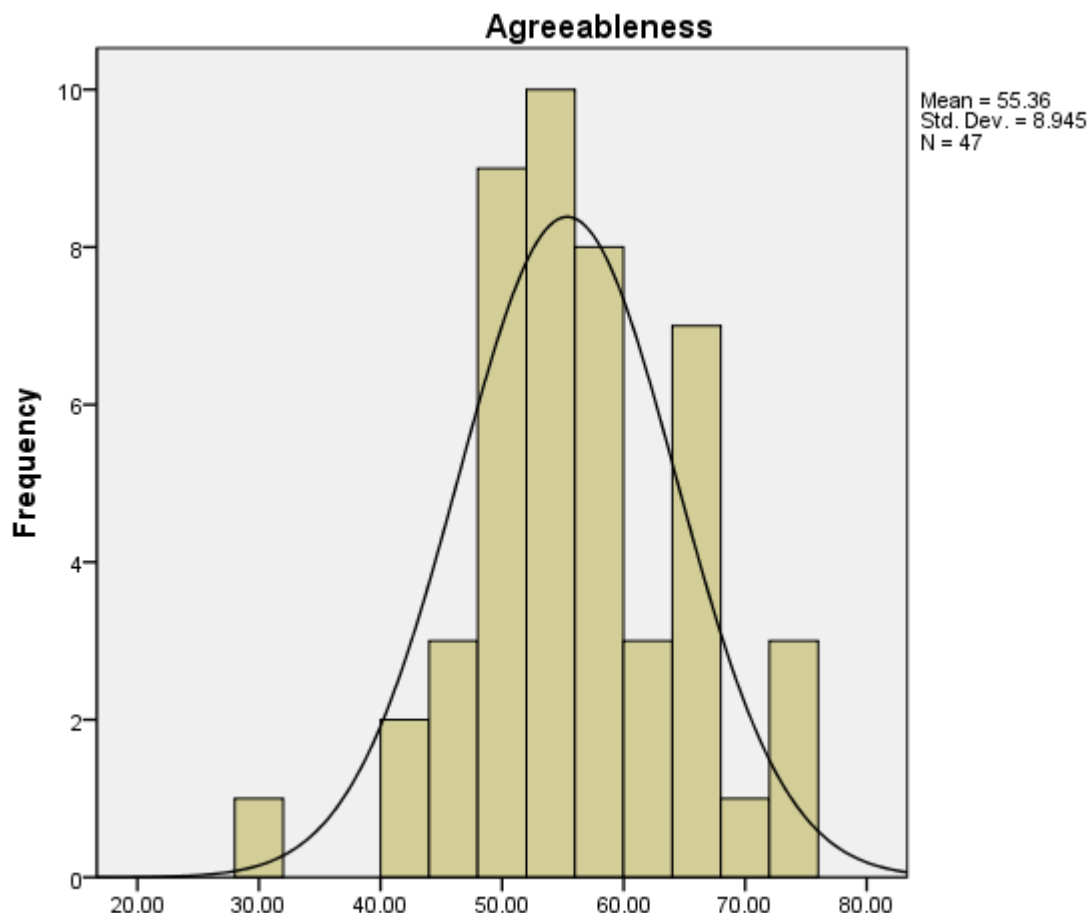


Figure 4.23 indicates that the priests as a group scored considerably higher on Agreeableness than a random group of men would be expected to, with a mean of 55.36 and a Standard Deviation of 8.945. There were no scores at the extremes. 21 scores were in the average range (46-55), with 22 above that range and only 4 below it. Only 15 (32%) scored 50 or less, while 32 (68%) scored above 50. This might be considered a predictable result given the definition of Agreeableness as sensitivity to the feelings of others and the nature of pastoral ministry, and again it is in line with the Maltese study, which found a pattern of higher scores for Agreeableness among its subjects,<sup>360</sup> but it appears inconsistent

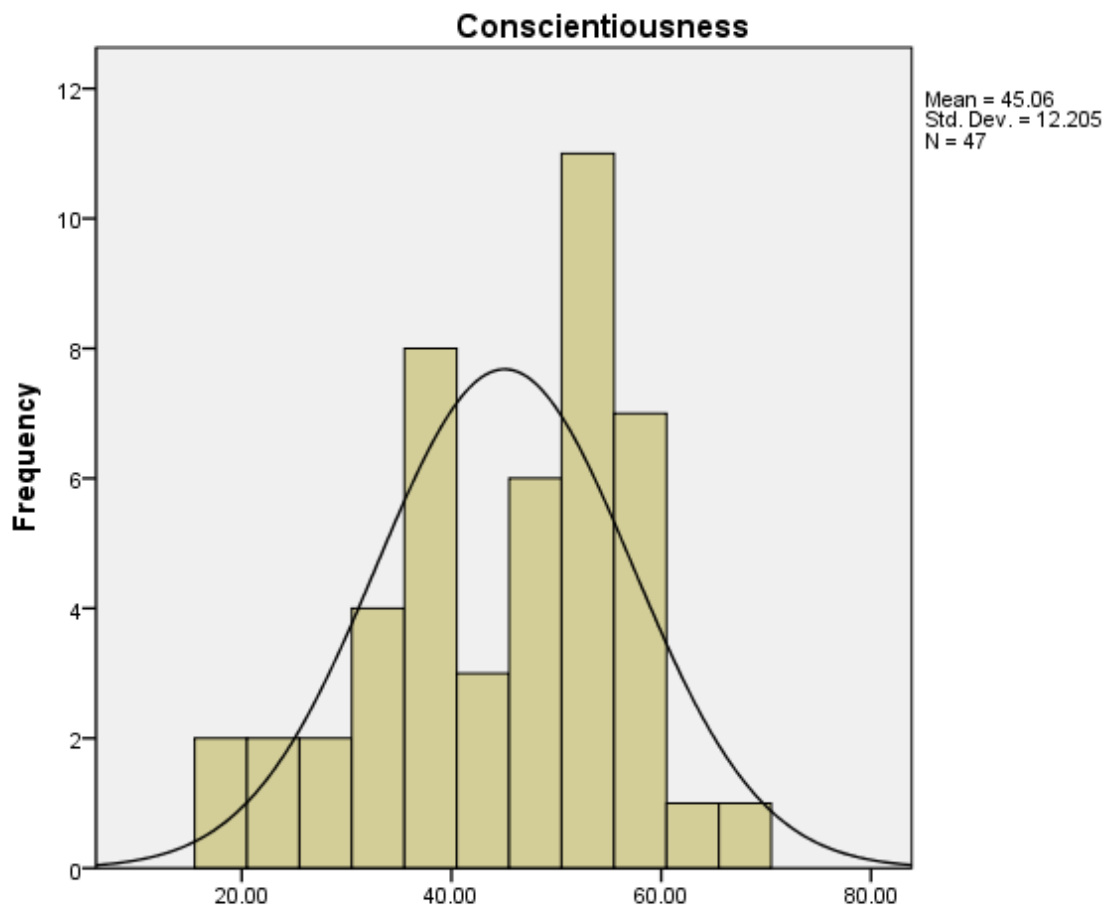
<sup>359</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

<sup>360</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.



with the finding of Louden and Francis, using Eysenck's Psychoticism scale, that 'Roman Catholic clergy emerge as more toughminded than men in general' and that 'their profile of toughmindedness is even further from the norms of femininity than the position occupied by men in general'.<sup>361</sup>

**Figure 4.24: Conscientiousness**



By contrast with the previous chart, this result shows that the priests in the sample scored much lower for Conscientiousness than the general male population. The mean score of 45.06 shown in Figure 4.24 with a Standard Deviation of 12.205 and the rather flatter distribution, with several extremely low individual scores and 27 (57%) scoring 50 or less, is initially surprising, since one might expect that priests would be at least as conscientious as a random group of men. It is worth recalling, however, that Conscientiousness is described as pertaining to the setting and keeping of internal goals and to the controlling of

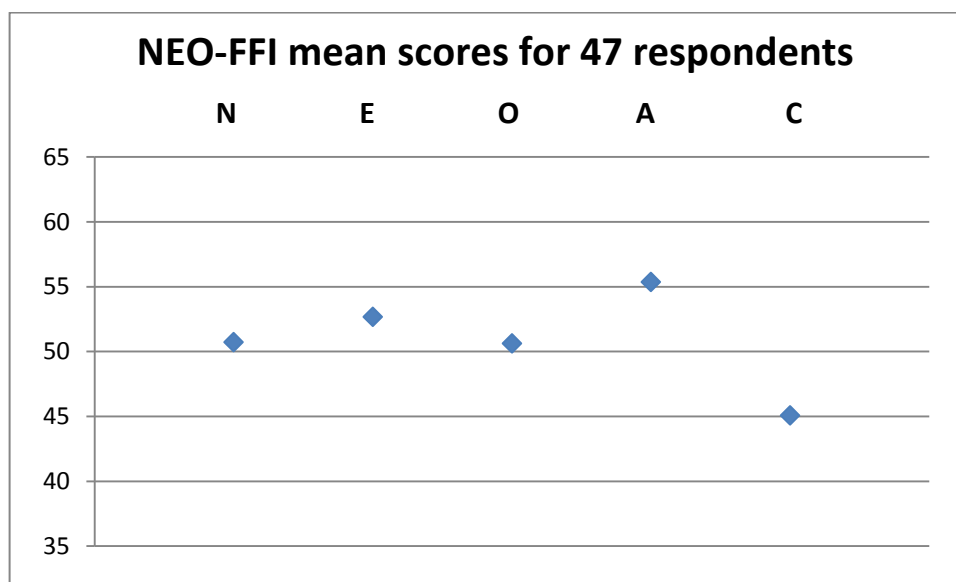
<sup>361</sup> Louden, 'Personality Profile of Roman Catholic Priests', pp.72-73.

impulses: one of the disadvantages of high levels of this attribute is rigidity and lack of spontaneous response, whilst one of the benefits of low levels is flexibility. Given the largely unstructured nature of priestly ministry in the contemporary Church, one might consider slightly lower than average Conscientiousness a positive feature in priests. On the other hand, very low scores on this scale could give rise to concern as they indicate impulsiveness and weak self-control. This result differs from that in the Maltese study, which recorded higher than average scores for Conscientiousness.<sup>362</sup>

### Summary of personality scores

Figure 4.25 shows the mean scores of the sample group of priests, reiterating the finding that, as a group, they scored in the middle of the average range for Neuroticism (50.07) and Openness (50.62), slightly above the average but still within the middle range for Extraversion (52.66), towards the bottom of the middle range for Conscientiousness (45.06) and just above the middle range for Agreeableness (55.36).

**Figure 4.25: NEO-FFI mean scores**



These results are broadly in line with those in the NEO PI-R study of 62 successful candidates in Malta (with the exception of lower than average scores on Conscientiousness, where the Maltese study found higher than average scores on that factor), but they differ significantly from the previous studies of Catholic clergy reported by Loudon and Francis and from the findings of Loudon and Francis' own 1996 study of Roman Catholic parochial

<sup>362</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

clergy in England and Wales using the Eysenck instrument (see p.210). The Liverpool sample differs from the Maltese sample in significant ways: not only are the two situations culturally different (for instance the same study indicates that the population of Malta at the time was 95.6% Catholic) but the Maltese participants were candidates for priesthood, the majority aged 18-24, whilst the Liverpool participants were serving priests aged 30-91 at the time of the survey. The common elements are that both showed mean results above the average in Agreeableness and close to the average for Extraversion and Openness. The disparities are that the Liverpool sample scored close to the average on Neuroticism whilst the Maltese sample scored average to low on that facet of personality and, more significantly, that the Liverpool sample scored below the average on Conscientiousness whilst the Maltese sample scored above the average on that facet of personality. The author of the Maltese study, Galea, offers an overall comment on the suitability for ministry of this cohort of candidates:

Being an agreeable person is indeed an important quality, both in ministry and in life in general ... However, to be ready to fight for one's own interests, or even more for those of others, is equally important ... high scores could perhaps be interpreted more as a sign of passivity, compliance, and lack of interest, or courage in criticizing authority and the institution, if necessary. The same ambivalent interpretation could be given to the high scores on C. While a degree of organization and control is needed in keeping strong one's motivation and in goal-directed behaviour, too much emphasis on these may lead to rigidity, annoying compulsive neatness, and workaholic behaviour.<sup>363</sup>

Because the Maltese study used the full NEO PI-R instrument, rather than the shorter NEO-FFI chosen for the Liverpool study, the author was able to offer this additional comment about one of the subscales within Openness:

Within this factor, the seminarians-religious group scored average scores on all subscales, except for O6, which is openness to *Values*, on which they scored lower than average. A high score on this item is indicative of a disposition to re-examine social, political, and religious values. On the contrary, a low score is indicative of closed individuals who tend to accept authority and to honour tradition. As a consequence, such individuals tend to be generally conservative, regardless of political party affiliation. Carried to its extreme, not being open to Values may be considered as a sign of dogmatism ... Combined together, these two factors could be interpreted as indicative of a generation of seminarians and religious, who while on the one hand, show to be trusting; mild and meek; tender-minded and altruistic, on

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<sup>363</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

the other hand, they might not be particularly open to change and quite attached to tradition.<sup>364</sup>

The overall picture emerging from the responses of the Liverpool participants to the NEO-FFI personality inventory is of a group of priests whose average scores in each domain are fairly close to those one would expect to find amongst men in general, indeed very close to the expected average for Neuroticism and Openness, slightly above the average for Extraversion, on the border of average and high for Agreeableness and just over the border between average and low for Conscientiousness. In each domain there was a relatively normal spread of scores from very low to very high with the majority concentrated in the average range. A very small number of individuals registered extremely high scores on Neuroticism (and without their scores the rest of the group would have been significantly below average on that factor), one individual scored extremely low on Openness (and a possible explanation for this has been offered above) and a small number of individuals registered extremely low scores on Conscientiousness. This picture differs significantly from that reported in the Loudon and Francis study of Roman Catholic secular priests, which confirmed the results of previous studies using the EPQ instrument in finding that Roman Catholic priests, when compared to men in general, were higher in Neuroticism and lower in Extraversion (see p.210). Loudon and Francis also found that the priests they studied scored higher than men in general in Psychoticism on the EPQ scale, which equates to being lower in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness on the NEO scale, whereas the present study found that the Liverpool priests as a group were higher in Agreeableness but lower in Conscientiousness. The implications of these results will be explored in the concluding section of this chapter (see p.236).

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<sup>364</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

## Correlations and findings

### Probability

Before reporting on the correlations between the responses to Table 2 on models of priesthood, Table 3 on views of Catholicity and the NEO-FFI personality inventory and their significance for the hypotheses listed above, it is important to explain the measures of probability that will be quoted. The SPSS programme provides a wide range of statistical tests and uses a variety of methods to calculate the significance of each of the correlations it finds. The correlations described in this study used the Pearson calculation method and are reported in three categories,  $p < .1$ ,  $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$ , where  $p$  is the probability that the correlation is coincidental, i.e. that the 'null hypothesis' (the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the two sets of data and any apparent relationship is due to chance or factors beyond the scope of the study) is true. This statistical shorthand can be expressed in plain language as follows. If the strength of a correlation between two sets of data is  $p < .1$ , there is a 10% chance of the null hypothesis being true, i.e. that the correlation is due to chance rather than any significant relationship between the data sets. If the correlation is described as  $p < .05$ , there is a 5% possibility of the null hypothesis being true. If the correlation is described as  $p < .01$ , there is a 1% possibility of there being no significant relationship between the sets of data. A graphic explanation of this principle is given in a short article entitled 'What does  $p < .05$  mean?' and illustrated in the table below:

Imagine you tossed a coin eight times ... If the coin is balanced equally on both sides, then each toss of the coin has a 1 in 2 chance of being heads ... so on the first toss of the coin there is a 1/2 chance of heads. The chance of two heads in a row is 1/4. The chance of three heads in a row is 1/8. Four in a row is 1/16. Five in a row is 1/32. Six in a row is 1/64. Seven in a row is 1/128. Eight in a row is 1/256 ... So if you did get eight heads in a row you would be justified in thinking that the coin must surely be weighted on one side more than the other.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Joseph, S., Dyer, C. and Coolican, H., 'What Does  $p < .05$  Mean?', *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 5, no. 2 (2005).

**Figure 4.26: Illustration of probability ratings**

Number of tosses	Probability of heads in a row	Probability as decimal
1	1 / 2	.50
2	1 / 4	.25
3	1 / 8	.125
4	1 / 16	.063
5	1 / 32	.031
6	1 / 64	.016
7	1 / 128	.008
8	1 / 256	.004

On this basis, a correlation described as  $p < .1$  indicates that the probability of the null hypothesis being true is roughly equivalent to the chance of throwing three or more heads in a row, for  $p < .05$  the probability of there being no significant connection between the data sets is roughly equivalent to the chance of throwing five or more heads in a row, and for  $p < .01$  it is roughly equivalent to the chance of throwing seven or more heads in a row. If the level of significance is described as  $p < .001$ , the probability of the correlation being due to coincidence is roughly equivalent to the chance of throwing ten heads in a row. Different strengths of correlation would be required as evidence in different settings, but it is conventional to use  $p < .05$  as the standard level required to reject the null hypothesis and assume that there is a statistical significance to the correlation.

The same article, however, goes on to warn that any of these significance levels only describes the probability of there being some non-coincidental relationship between the

data sets. A strong significance level gives a greater confidence in rejecting the null hypothesis: it does not indicate that the alternative hypothesis proposed by the researcher is proven.

The correlations, of whatever strength, may be positive or negative: in the context of this study a positive correlation between two data sets indicates that respondents who scored high in relation to one question or set of questions were more likely to score high in the other, while a negative correlation between two data sets (indicated in the charts below by 'Neg.') indicates that respondents who scored high in one question or set of questions were more likely to score low in the other.

The correlations are colour coded in the charts below according to the scheme given in Figure 4.27 below, where red indicates a weak correlation ( $p < .1$ ), yellow indicates a strong correlation (i.e. one which passes the conventional level of  $p < .05$ , so can be regarded as statistically significant) and green indicates a very strong correlation ( $p < .01$ ).

**Figure 4.27: Key to probability colour codes**

$p < .1$	
$p < .05$	
$p < .01$	

Where a statement is correlated against itself in a chart, the convention is to give the value 1.00, indicating that there can be no hypothetical connections between the two elements because they are identical.

## Servant leader and cultic model correlations

**Figure 4.28: Internal correlations between aspects of models of priesthood**

Internal Correlations – Table 2: Models of Priesthood								
Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader	1.0							
Ontological status – life and being or role and function	.125	1.0						
Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure	.001	.002	1.0					
Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability	.005	.086	.000	1.0				
Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity	.000	.013	.000	.000	1.0			
Theology – defend 'orthodoxy' or allow theological differences	.000	.182	.000	.000	.000	1.0		
Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language	.000	.025	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.0	
Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood	.137	.005	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.0
	Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader	Ontological status – life and being or role and function	Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure	Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability	Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity	Theology – defend 'orthodoxy' or allow theological differences	Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language	Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood

Figure 4.28 demonstrates that most of the answers to the questions on model of priesthood correlated very strongly with each other, i.e. those supporting the servant leader model or the cultic model in relation to one pair of statements were more likely to support the same



model in relation to the other pairs of statements, showing that this two-model division is apparent within the presbyterate in Liverpool, though the distribution of the responses indicates that the cultic model group are in the minority. The correlations were weaker in the case of the supplementary questions on ontology, magisterium and authority, indicating that, as I had expected, there is less polarisation and more commonality between these groups than was found in the US study. Specifically, the different responses to the supplementary question about ontology show that there are a significant number of servant leader priests who believe strongly that their priesthood is a matter of life and being and not simply of role and function, while the responses to the supplementary questions on the magisterium and on theology indicate that the respondents' attitudes to these issues are more complex than is apparent from the Hoge-Wenger analysis. The lack of a significant correlation between responses to the original statements on ontological status and those on celibacy is also interesting: it indicates that there was no significant correlation between the small minority agreeing that celibacy should remain compulsory for priesthood and the even smaller minority agreeing the priest is a man set apart, nor between the majorities opposing these views. This result is surprising, since it would seem logical that those two views would coincide: it may be due to the small numbers involved.

## Correlations between models of priesthood and views of Catholicity

**Figure 4.29: Correlations between models of priesthood and first view of Catholicity**

Correlations between Table 2: models of priesthood and the odd numbered statements in Table 3 expressing the first view of Catholicity								
	Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader	Ontological status – life and being or role and function	Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure	Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability	Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity	Theology – defend 'orthodoxy' or allow theological differences	Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language	Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood
Grace at work everywhere						neg.049	neg.003	
God's saving work served by all people of goodwill								
Gaudium et Spes expresses heart of Church's mission		neg.016		neg.083			neg.079	
'Catholic' = Church focused on the world			neg.023	neg.031	neg.017			

Figure 4.29 shows significant correlations between some statements on the models of priesthood and three of the four statements of the first view of Catholicity. In this chart the correlations are all negative because a high score on Table 2 indicates support for the servant model of priesthood whilst a low score on the odd numbered statements in Table 3 indicates agreement with the first view of Catholicity. The correlations all indicate that those adopting the servant leader model would be more likely to agree with the first view of Catholicity than those who support the cultic model. Given that all participants agree with the first view of Catholicity to some degree, this result is relevant to the strength of that agreement. It gives qualified support to the hypothesis, but indicates it would be best re-phrased: that those priests who support the servant leader model are more likely to agree strongly with the first view of Catholicity than those who favour the cultic model.

**Figure 4.30: Correlations between models of priesthood and second view of Catholicity**

Correlations between Table 2: models of priesthood and even numbered statements in Table 3, expressing the second view of Catholicity								
	Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader	Ontological status – life and being or role and function	Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure	Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability	Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity	Theology – defend ‘orthodoxy’ or allow theological differences	Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language	Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood
World in crisis, Church the ark of salvation	.034		.009		.005	.001	.053	.066
Explicit Christian witness essential to God’s saving work	.082	.011			.030	.067		
Gaudium et Spes overly optimistic		.002						
‘Catholic’= Church conformed to Christ and confronting evil			.084					

Figure 4.30 shows that there are some significant correlations between priests’ responses to the statements about models of priesthood in Table 2 and the even numbered statements in Table 3, intended to express the second view of Catholicism. In each case, the correlations indicate that those inclining towards the cultic model of priesthood were more likely to support the second view of Catholicism. The correlations are strongest with the first statement, that the world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation, and weakest with the last, that in order to be truly Catholic the Church must conform itself to Christ and confront evil. All of these correlations support the hypothesis that those who adopt the cultic model of priesthood are more likely to favour the second view of Catholicity.

In order to test further the hypothesis that priests who adopted the cultic model of priesthood would also be likely to support the second view of Catholicity and to be less firm in their support for the first view of Catholicity, whilst those adopting the servant

leader model would be less likely to support the second view of Catholicity and firmer in their support for the first view, I used the SPSS programme to conduct a further Pearson correlation, the results of which appear in Figure 4.31 below, where:

‘Mean 1 SL/C’ is the mean of their scores on Table 2 (servant leader vs. cultic) where a low score indicates support for the cultic model and a high score indicates support for the servant leader model.

‘Mean 2 Cath1’ is the mean of their scores on the odd numbered statements in Table 3 (two views of Catholicity) where a low score indicates agreeing strongly with the first view of Catholicity and a high score indicates agreeing less strongly with that view, though all support it to some extent.

‘Mean 3 Cath2’ is the mean of their scores on the even numbered statements in Table 3 (two views of Catholicity) where a low score indicates agreement with the second view of Catholicity and a high score indicates disagreement with that view.

**Figure 4.31: Correlations between means of responses on models of priesthood and views of Catholicity**

Correlations between means of responses on models of priesthood and views of Catholicity			
Mean 1 SL/C	1		
Mean 2 Cath1	neg .000	1	
Mean 3 Cath2	.002	.316	1
	Mean 1 SL/C	Mean 2 Cath1	Mean 3 Cath2

This result shows that in two cases the probability ratings are much stronger than  $p > .01$ : there is a very strong positive correlation ( $p = .002$ ) between ‘Mean 1 SL/C’ (the mean scores on Table 2 on model of priesthood) and ‘Mean 3 Cath2’ (the mean scores on the even numbered statements in Table 3 on the second view of Catholicity) and there is the strongest possible negative correlation ( $p = .000$ ) between ‘Mean 1 SL/C’ and ‘Mean 2 Cath1’ (the mean scores on the odd numbered statements in Table 3 on the first view of

Catholicity), but there is no significant correlation between ‘Mean 2 Cath1’ and ‘Mean 3 Cath2’. In other words, there is a very strong probability that priests who adopt the cultic model of priesthood will support the second view of Catholicity more strongly than those who adopt the servant leader model of priesthood; there is an extremely strong probability that priests who adopt the servant leader model of priesthood will support the first view of Catholicity more strongly than those who adopt the cultic model of priesthood; and the test did not reveal any significant correlations between the mean scores on the two views of Catholicity.

To explore further the relationships between these results, I ranked the participants in relation to each set of mean scores, so as to test further the hypothesis that priests who adopted the cultic model of priesthood would also be likely to support the second view of Catholicity and to be less firm in their support for the first view of Catholicity (though all support it to some extent), whilst those adopting the servant leader model would be less likely to support the second view of Catholicity and firmer in their support for the first view. For this purpose I ranked the scores on the even numbered questions in Table 3 on the second view of Catholicity in reverse order, so that a high position in all three rankings would indicate strong support for the servant leader model, strong agreement with the first view of Catholicity and disagreement with the second view of Catholicity while a low position in all three rankings would indicate strong support for the cultic model, weak agreement with the first view of Catholicity and strong support for the second view of Catholicity.

Taking the lowest 12 scores on each ranking, including those tied for 12th place, four individuals were in the bottom 12 on all three scales, i.e. leaning towards the cultic model and the second view of Catholicity whilst showing weaker support for the first view of Catholicity: one of these was ordained in the 1950s, the other three in the 2000s. A further six were in the bottom 12 on two out of the three rankings: two of these were ordained in the 1950s, two in the 1960s and two in the 1990s, though one of the latter was born in the 1930s and spoke in the interview of his affinity with priests of the 1950s.

Taking the highest 12 scores on each ranking, including those tied for 12th place, six individuals were in the top 12 on all three of the above rankings, i.e. leaning towards the servant leader model and away from the second view of Catholicity whilst strongly

supporting the first view of Catholicity: three of these were ordained in the 1970s, two in the 1980s and one in the 1990s. A further three, all ordained in the 1960s, were in the top 12 on two out of the three rankings.

This bears out the impression derived from the qualitative data that, whilst most of those ordained before Vatican II have embraced the servant leader model and strongly support the first view of Catholicity, a few have retained some attitudes characteristic of the pre-Vatican II cultic model of priesthood and of strong support for the second view of Catholicity, and that they have been joined in these views by some of those ordained after 1990.

Another interesting feature of the responses is the range and distribution of mean scores in relation to each of the tables. For Table 2 (servant leader vs. cultic, where a low score indicates support for the cultic model and a high score indicates support for the servant leader model) the whole range of responses is represented from 5 to 1, but with a predominance of higher scores (five participants scoring a mean of 5 and only one scoring a mean of 1, the median score being 3.625). For the odd numbered questions in Table 3 (where a low score would indicate support for the first view of Catholicity), as mentioned earlier, there were no responses indicating disagreement with all of the statements, the range of mean scores being from 1 to 2.25 and the median score being 1.75. For the even numbered questions in Table 3 (where a low score leans towards the second view of Catholicity) the distribution is more even, with a range of mean scores from 4.25 to 1.25 and a median score of 2.5. This further illustrates the conclusions: that the sample includes individuals who range across the spectrum from servant leader to cultic model but the majority of the priests in the sample lean towards the servant leader model; that there are varying levels of support for the first view of Catholicity right across the sample; and that the second view of Catholicity is supported by the majority of participants but with a minority not supporting it.

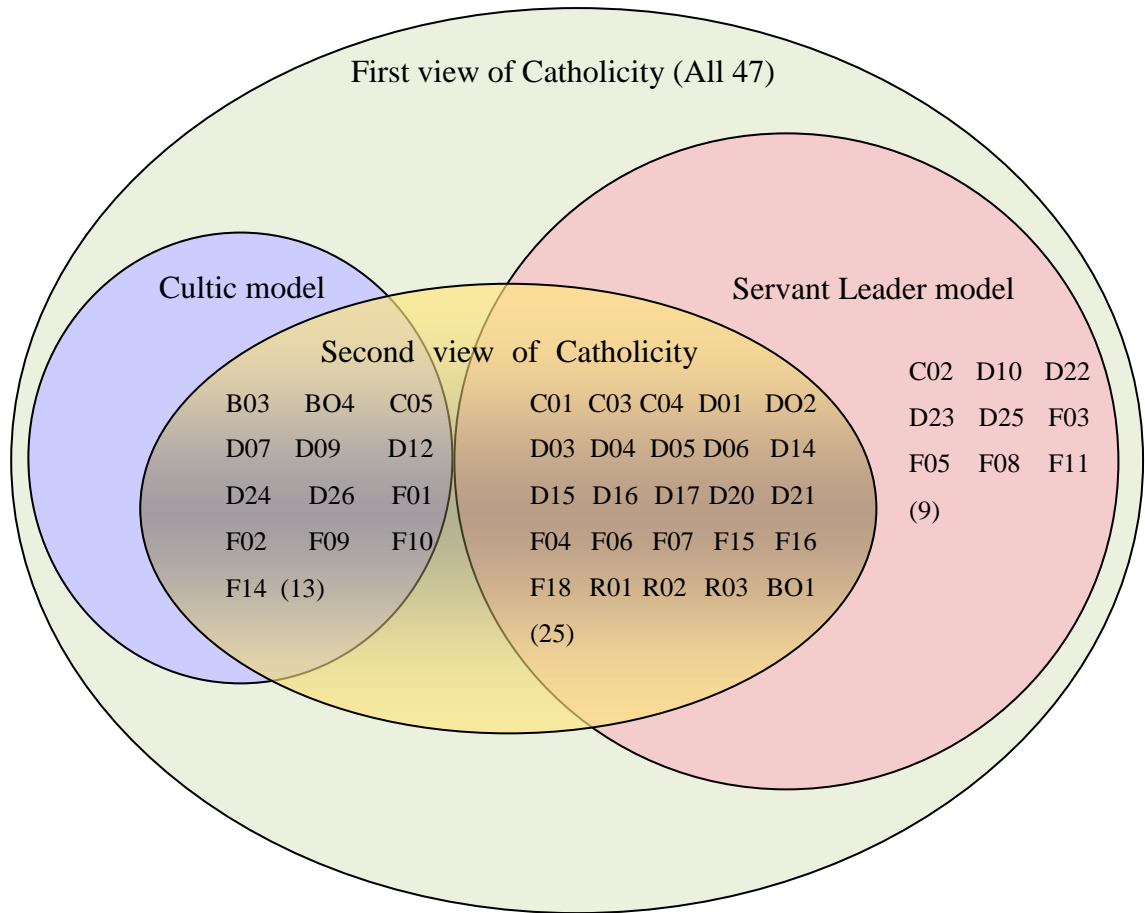
A further comparison of the respondents' mean scores in the two sections of Table 3 revealed that only three individuals scored the even numbered statements (expressing the second view of Catholicity) more highly than the odd numbered statements (expressing the first view of Catholicity): their mean scores in Table 2 indicate that two of these individuals strongly favoured the cultic model over the servant leader model while the third's mean

score on that table was 3.125 (close to the mean of 3 but well below the median of 3.625 on that scale, i.e. showing very slightly more support for the servant leader model than for the cultic in absolute terms but showing a greater degree of support for the cultic model than most priests in the survey). Four respondents registered the same mean score for the statements expressing both views of Catholicity and 40 scored the statements expressing the first view more highly.

A further way to describe these results is that, of the 47 who completed the survey (taking the number 3 as the objective mid-point on each scale and bearing in mind that all 47 showed some support for the first view of Catholicity), 25 indicated support for both the servant leader model and the second view of Catholicity, nine indicated support for the servant leader model whilst not supporting the second view of Catholicity, and 13 indicated support for both the cultic model and the second view of Catholicity. None indicated support for the cultic model without also supporting the second view of Catholicity.

The Venn diagram below, Figure 4.32, puts this analysis in a pictorial form, locating each participant within two or three of the four sets: supporting the first view of Catholicity (all 47); supporting the second view of Catholicity ( $13 + 25 = 38$ ) supporting the servant leader model ( $25 + 9 = 34$ ) and supporting the cultic model (13). Because of the limitation of its two dimensions, it does not, however, indicate the variations which have been discussed above in the strength of each individual's support for each view and therefore it exaggerates especially the division between servant leader and cultic, which is in fact more of a continuum.

**Figure 4.32: Distribution of participants by models of priesthood and views of Catholicity**

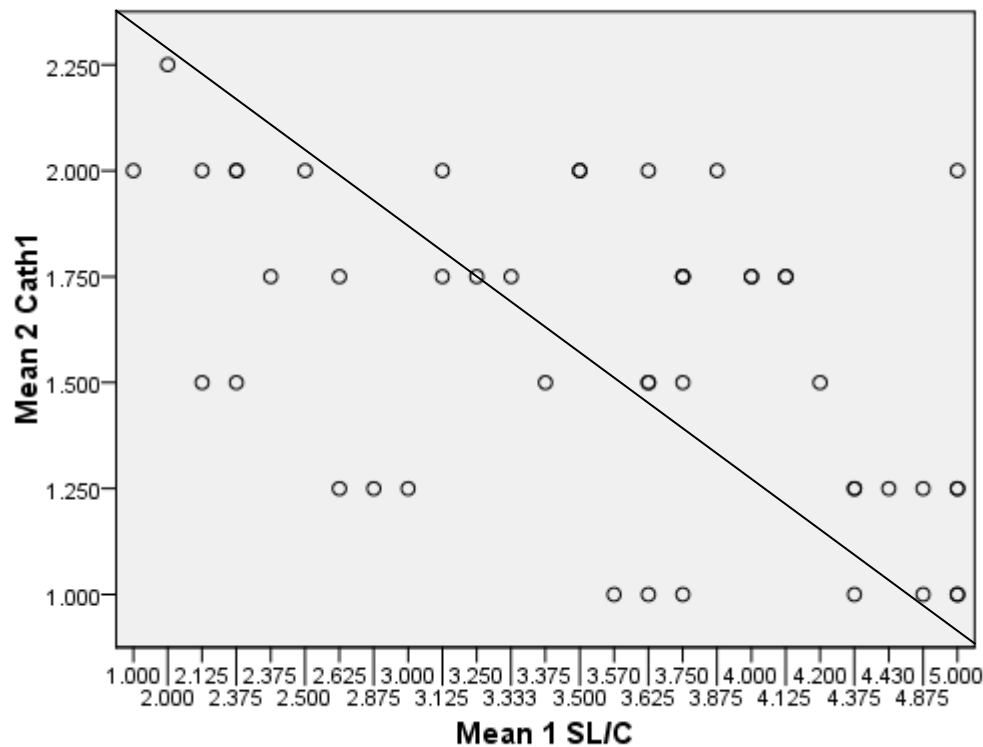


Figures 4.33 and 4.44 below are scatterplot graphs generated by the SPSS programme which correct this exaggeration by presenting the same data in a different fashion. Figure 4.33 locates each respondent in relation to two axes: the horizontal axis represents the mean scores in response to the statements about the two models of priesthood ‘Mean 1 SL/C’, with a low score at the left indicating strong support for the cultic model and a high score at the right indicating strong support for the servant leader model; the vertical axis represents the mean scores in response to the statements expressing the first view of Catholicity, ‘Mean 2 Cath1’, with a low score at the bottom indicating agreement with that view and a high score at the top indicating disagreement with it. The vertical axis on this the graph stops at 2.25 because of the finding that this view is supported to some extent by all the respondents, while the fact that the dots tend to gather around the diagonal from bottom right to top left illustrates the finding that those who favour the cultic model are less likely



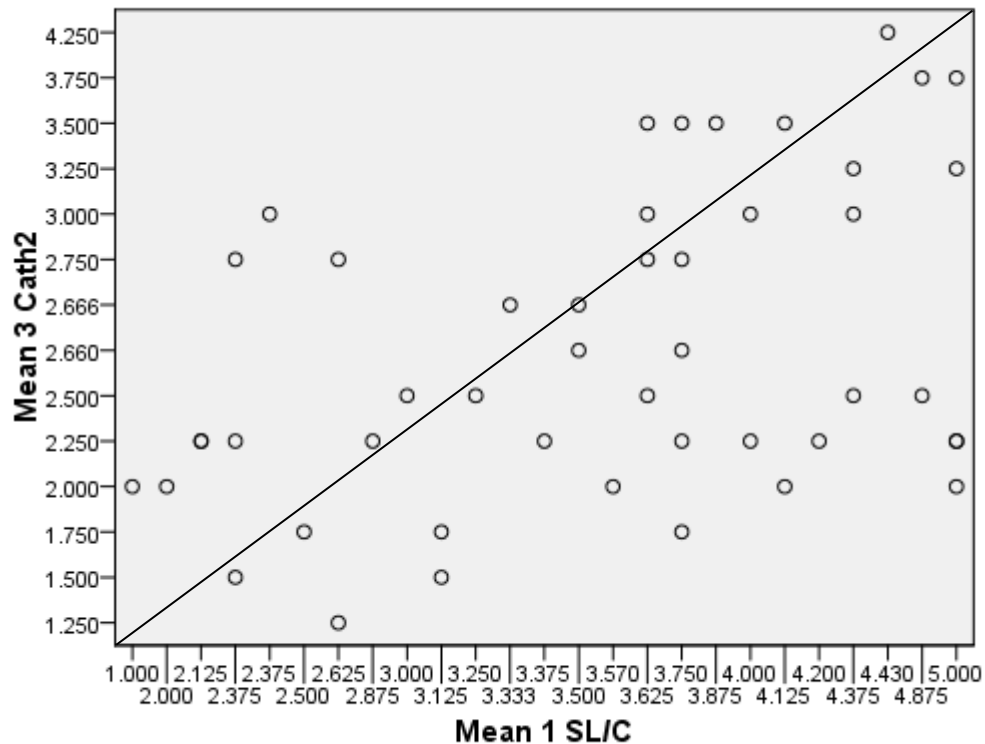
to agree strongly with this first view of Catholicity than those who favour the servant leader model, though there are some notable exceptions to this trend.

**Figure 4.33: Scatterplot of mean positions of participants in relation to model of priesthood and first view of Catholicity**



In Figure 4.34 the horizontal axis again represents the mean scores in response to the statements about the two models of priesthood ‘Mean 1 SL/C’, with a low score at the left indicating strong support for the cultic model and a high score at the right indicating strong support for the servant leader model; the vertical axis now represents the mean scores in response to the statements expressing the second view of Catholicity, ‘Mean 2 Cath2’, with a low score at the bottom indicating agreement with that view and a high score at the top indicating disagreement with it. The fact that the mean scores on the vertical axis range from 1.25 to 4.25 illustrates the wider range of responses to this view, while the fact that the responses tend to cluster around the diagonal from bottom left to top right illustrates the finding that those who favour the cultic model are more likely to agree strongly with this second view of Catholicity than those who favour the servant leader model, though again there are some notable exceptions to the trend.

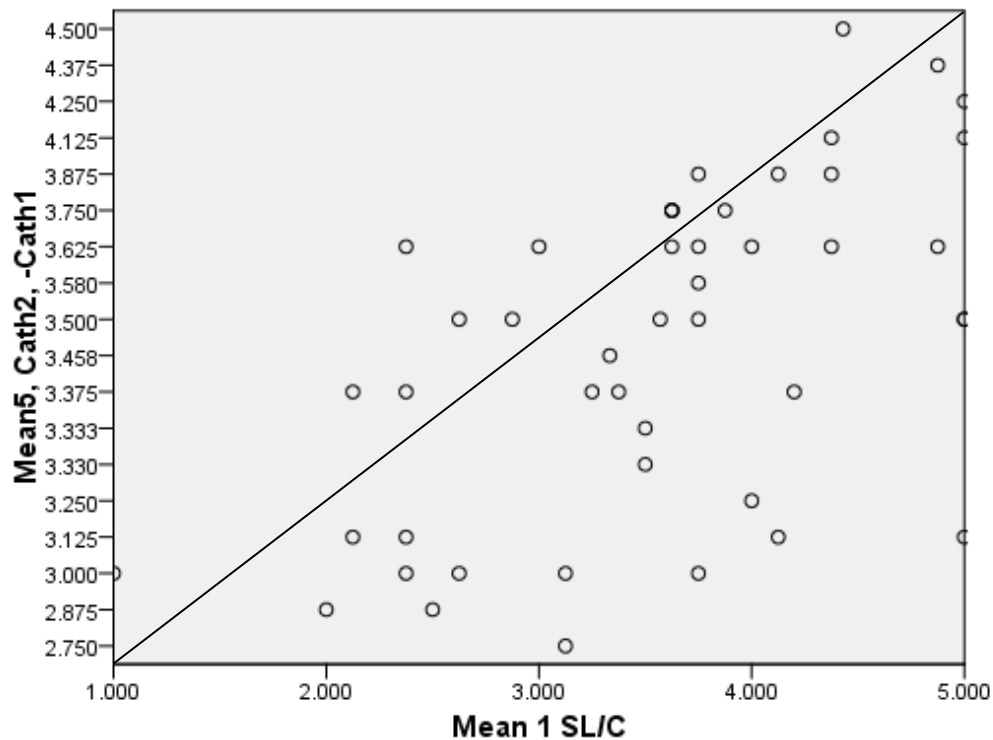
**Figure 4.34: Scatterplot of mean positions of participants in relation to model of priesthood and second view of Catholicity**



A final illustration of the results in Figure 4.35 plots each individual's position in relation to the two models of priesthood against the mean of their combined scores on the first and second views of Catholicity.<sup>366</sup> Again, with some notable exceptions, the majority of the positions tend to cluster around the diagonal, indicating the correlations between strong support for the servant leader model, strong agreement with the first view of Catholicity and disagreement or weaker agreement with the second view and, conversely, between strong support for the cultic model, strong agreement with the second view of Catholicity and weaker agreement with the first view.

<sup>366</sup> The same pattern is produced whether the means of the scores on the two views of Catholicity are added or subtracted: in order to keep the figures within the same range of values as in the two previous charts, I have added the mean of the score on the statements expressing the second view of Catholicity to the reverse of the mean score on the statements expressing the first view.

**Figure 4.35: Scatterplot of mean positions of participants in relation to model of priesthood and both views of Catholicity**



#### **Correlations between personality type, models of priesthood and views of Catholicity.**

As stated above (see p.189) my expectations were that priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would lean more towards the first view of Catholicity, whilst the minority who favoured the cultic model would lean more towards the second view of Catholicity. The results discussed above have supported these hypotheses, indicating that, whilst all the priests supported the first view of Catholicity to some extent, those adopting the servant leader model tended to support it more strongly than those favouring the cultic model and that, whilst there is some support for the second view of Catholicity amongst priests favouring the servant leader model, it is more strongly supported by those favouring the cultic model. I also hypothesised that those favouring the servant leader model would tend to score more highly on Openness and Agreeableness, whilst those adopting the cultic model would tend to score more highly on Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness. The three charts below set out the correlations found between the personality type and the three scales for model of priesthood, first view of Catholicity and second view of Catholicity.

**Figure 4.36: Correlations between personality traits and models of priesthood**

Correlations – Personality and Models of Priesthood					
	NEURO	EXTRA	OPEN	AGREE	CONSC
Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader?	neg .081				
Ontological status – life and being or role and function?					
Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure?			.044		
Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability?					neg .066
Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity?			.026		
Theology – defend ‘orthodoxy’ or allow theological differences?			.053		
Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language?	neg .019		.068		
Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood?			.018		

Figure 4.36 shows two negative correlations with Neuroticism: a relatively weak one with ‘Ontology – man set apart or pastoral leader’ and a statistically significant one with ‘Theology – values strict adherence to established expression of faith or values renewal of theological language and understanding’. Both of these correlations support the hypothesis that respondents with higher Neuroticism scores are more likely to hold the views associated with the cultic model of priesthood. As expected, there were no statistically significant correlations between Extraversion and any of the statements on model of priesthood. There were five correlations (two weak and three statistically significant) between Openness and the views associated with the servant leader model in relation to the magisterium, liturgy, theology and celibacy, supporting the hypothesis that participants

scoring higher on Openness would be more likely to adopt the servant leader model. Contrary to my expectation that those scoring higher on Agreeableness would be more likely to favour the servant leader model, there are no correlations between Agreeableness and any of the responses on model of priesthood. There is a weak negative correlation between Conscientiousness and one of the questions on the magisterium which is in line with my hypothesis that those higher in Conscientiousness would be more likely to incline towards the cultic model.

**Figure 4.37: Correlations between personality traits and first view of Catholicity**

Correlations – Personality and First View of Catholicity					
	NEURO	EXTRA	OPEN	AGREE	CONSC
Grace at work everywhere	.037				
God's saving work served by all people of goodwill					
Gaudium et Spes expresses heart of Church's mission					
'Catholic' = Church focused on the world					.018

Figure 4.37 records the two correlations that were found between aspects of personality and the first view of Catholicity: both are statistically significant. The positive correlation between Neuroticism and the statement 'God's grace is at work in every person and situation ... ' indicates that those showing higher levels of Neuroticism will be less likely to support strongly this expression of the first view of Catholicity. The positive correlation between Conscientiousness and the statement 'in order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem' indicates that those scoring highly on Conscientiousness would be less likely to support strongly that expression of the first view of Catholicity. Both of these findings are in line with my hypotheses.

**Figure 4.38: Correlations between personality traits and second view of Catholicity**

Correlations – Personality and Second View of Catholicity					
	NEURO	EXTRA	OPEN	AGREE	CONSC
World in crisis, Church the ark of salvation					
Explicit Christian witness essential to God's saving work					
Gaudium et Spes overly optimistic about human nature and culture			.052	neg .058	
'Catholic' = Church conformed to Christ and confronting evil			.096		

Figure 4.38 shows the three weak correlations found between aspects of personality and the second view of Catholicity. The positive correlation between Openness and the statement '*Gaudium et Spes* is overly optimistic about human nature and culture' supports the hypothesis that those low in Openness would tend to agree with this statement of the second view of Catholicism, but the positive correlation between Openness and the statement 'in order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world' runs counter to that hypothesis, though the difficulty, reported above, which some participants felt in deciding how to respond to this statement indicates that it would be unwise to read too much into this particular result. Similarly the negative correlation between the statement about *Gaudium et Spes* being over optimistic and Agreeableness appears to contradict my expectation that those scoring low in Agreeableness would also tend to agree with the second view of Catholicity.

## **Summary of correlations between personality traits, models of priesthood and views of Catholicity**

In summary, 11 of the 13 correlations found between personality, models of priesthood and views of Catholicity are in line with my expectations, whilst two contradict my expectations. In support of my hypotheses were correlations found between Openness and some aspects of the servant leader model and between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness and some aspects of the cultic model. Similarly consistent with my expectations were the correlations between Openness and strong support for some statements of the first view of Catholicity and between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness and weaker support for some statements of that view. Also in line with my expectations was a negative correlation between Agreeableness and one of the statements on the second view of Catholicity. One correlation which runs counter to my intuition, between Conscientiousness and the final statement of the first view of Catholicity may be discounted because of the difficulty many participants reported in interpreting and responding to this particular statement. The other correlation which contradicts my expectations is the weak negative correlation between Agreeableness and one of the statements of the second view of Catholicity: this remains unexplained.

The concern expressed in Galea's study of Maltese candidates for the priesthood and the religious life,<sup>367</sup> that the combination of high Conscientiousness with low Openness to Values might result in dogmatism (see p.216) prompts the observation that there are a number of resonances between the description in the Hoge-Wenger study of the characteristics of the cultic model of priesthood and descriptions in the literature on 'the dogmatic personality', for instance this definition of 'the dogmatic personality' in a 1970 article by Cryns, summarising earlier work by Vacchiano and others:

In a review of studies focusing on the relationship of dogmatism to personality patterns, the dogmatic individual is described as one characterized by dependency upon authority figures; resistance to change and conformity to majority opinion (Vacchiano et al. 1969). He is apt to be satisfied with what he has been taught to believe; inclined to accept the tried and true despite inconsistencies; cautious in regard to new ideas and generally in favor of tradition rather than of renewal or of change (Vacchiano et al. 1968).<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Galea, *Priestly Vocations in Malta*.

<sup>368</sup> Cryns, A. G., 'Dogmatism of Catholic Clergy and Ex-Clergy: A Study of Ministerial Role Perseverance and Open-Mindedness', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 9, no. 3 (1970), p.241.

There may be a fruitful avenue for furthering the present research by including in a possible future survey the full NEO PI-R instrument and instruments that measure dogmatism.

### Generational differences

It was noted above (see p.190) that the American research proposed 1985 as the watershed between the servant leader and the ‘new priests’ but one focus group member in the current study who had experience of a number of seminaries in the 1990s suggested that, in the UK, 1990 would be a more significant dividing point. Calculation of the correlations when taking the ordination years of 1985 and 1990 to divide the sample supported this intuition. Since there were no significant differences in personality type between those ordained before and after 1985 or 1990, the charts below show only the differences in relation to Table 2, on model of priesthood, and Table 3, on view of Catholicity.

**Figure 4.39: Correlations between ordination year and models of priesthood**

Correlations – Ordination Year with models of priesthood		
	After 1985	After 1990
Ontological status – man set apart or pastoral leader?		
Ontological status – life and being or role and function?		
Magisterium – strict hierarchy or flexible structure?	neg .071	neg .004
Magisterium – vertical or mutual accountability?	neg .089	neg .025
Liturgy – follow rules or allow creativity?		
Theology – defend ‘orthodoxy’ or allow theological differences?	neg .084	neg .012
Theology – adherence to established expression or renewal of language?	neg .017	neg .003
Celibacy – essential or optional for priesthood?		neg .055



The negative correlations in Figure 4.39 show that those ordained after 1985 are more likely than their predecessors to adopt the cultic model of priesthood in relation to four of the eight polarities in the table whilst those ordained after 1990 are more likely than their predecessors to do so in five of the eight areas, and that the strength of the correlation is in each case greater with the dividing line placed at 1990.

**Figure 4.40: Correlations between ordination year and first view of Catholicity**

Correlations –Ordination Year with first view of Catholicity		
	1985	1990
Grace at work everywhere		
God’s saving work served by all people of goodwill	.004	.006
Gaudium et Spes expresses heart of Church’s mission		
‘Catholic’ = Church focused on the world		.059

Figure 4.40 indicates little difference when moving the dividing point from the ordination year of 1985 to 1990 in the strong correlation between being ordained after 1985 and agreeing with the second statement of the first view of Catholicity but adds a weak correlation between being ordained after 1990 and agreeing with the fourth statement of that view. Thus it supports the hypothesis that those ordained after 1985 were more likely than those ordained earlier to support the first view of Catholicity and that the likelihood increases slightly when the dividing point is moved to 1990.

**Figure 4.41: Correlations between ordination year and second view of Catholicity**

Correlations –Ordination Year with second view of Catholicity		
	1985	1990
World in crisis, Church the ark of salvation	neg .082	neg .037
Explicit Christian witness essential to God’s saving work		
Gaudium et Spes overly optimistic about human nature and culture		
‘Catholic’ = Church conformed to Christ and confronting evil		

Figure 4.41 shows there is one significant correlation between being ordained after 1985 and supporting the second view of Catholicity and the same correlation pertains with a marginally stronger value, when the dividing line is placed at 1990.

**Figure 4.42: Correlations between ordination year and mean scores on models of priesthood and views of Catholicity**

Correlations –Ordination Year with Mean Scores on models of Priesthood and views of Catholicity		
	1985	1990
Mean 1: servant leader or cultic model	neg .090	neg .019
Mean 2: first view of Catholicity	.021	.016
Mean 3: second view of Catholicity		

Figure 4.42 above shows correlations between being ordained after 1985 and 1990 and the mean scores recorded in the questions on model of priesthood and views of Catholicity. The table shows negative correlations between the group ordained after 1985 and the servant leader model and positive correlations between both groups and the first view of Catholicity. In both cases the strength of the correlation increases when the dividing line is moved to the ordination year of 1990. Whilst the numbers involved are small (14 of the 47

respondents were ordained during or after 1990 and a further three between 1986 and 1990) the results support Hoge's argument that the 'new priests' were already in evidence in the mid-1980s but also suggest that, amongst this sample, the polarity was more pronounced by the early 1990s.

### **Comparison of priest interviewees' responses with those of 'others'**

My expectation here was that there would be a slightly higher proportion of responses leaning towards the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity amongst the priest interviewees, because of the marginally higher proportion of more recently ordained priests in that group. The SPSS programme calculations revealed that, whilst there were no significant differences in personality type between these two groups, there were two significant correlations in their responses to the other tables. The first (with a probability level of  $p = .023$ ) was that the priest interviewees were more likely than the others to regard priesthood as a matter of life and being rather than of role and function.<sup>369</sup> The second significant correlation ( $p = .013$ ) was that the priest interviewees were slightly less likely to agree with the statement about grace being at work in every person and situation. Both of these correlations were in line with my expectation that the priest interviewees might lean more towards the cultic model of priesthood and support less strongly the first view of Catholicity, though there was no evidence in support of the assumption that they would show more support for the second view of Catholicity.

### **Conclusion**

Bearing in mind the limitations of this survey, i.e. the small numbers involved and the difficulty some respondents registered in responding to some of the statements (notably the final two statements of the first and second views of Catholicity) it is possible to summarise the evidence produced in relation to each of the hypotheses listed at the start of this chapter.

- i. That priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be very much in the majority whilst those favouring the cultic model would be in the minority.

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<sup>369</sup> But note the discussion above of the way this question, added to test the validity of Hoge's linking of the cultic view of priesthood with an ontological view of ordination, reveals a more complex reality, with a significant number of priests who otherwise leaned to the servant leader model agreeing that priesthood is a matter of life and being rather than of role and function.

This hypothesis is clearly upheld by the data: taking 3 as the objective mid-point on the scale between the servant leader and the cultic model, 34 out of 47 participants supported the servant leader model whilst only 13 supported the cultic model.

- ii. That priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be more likely to support the first view of Catholicity than those who favoured the cultic model.

This hypothesis is not upheld exactly as it stands, because of the surprising discovery that all the participants supported the first view of Catholicity to some degree: I had not expected to find support for that view across the entire sample. However the data indicates clearly that those who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood were likely to support the first view of Catholicity more strongly than those who adopted the cultic model of priesthood, so the hypothesis could be deemed to have been upheld in the modified form indicated above (p.223): that those priests who support the servant leader model are more likely to agree strongly with the first view of Catholicity than those who favour the cultic model.

- iii. That priests who favoured the cultic model would be more likely to support the second view of Catholicity than those who favoured the servant leader model.

This hypothesis is clearly upheld by the data: again taking 3 as the objective mid-point on the scales between the servant leader and the cultic model and between agreement and disagreement with the second view of Catholicity, all 13 of those who favoured the cultic model also supported the second view of Catholicity, whereas only 25 out of the 34 who favoured the servant leader model also supported the second view of Catholicity. Although this hypothesis was upheld, I was surprised by the level of support for the second view of Catholicity amongst the priests favouring the servant leader model: although the correlation between support for the cultic model and agreeing with the second view of Catholicity is clear, I had expected it to be stronger.

- iv. That the responses to the supplementary statements about ontology, the magisterium and theology would differ from the responses to the original statements in the Hoge-Wenger analysis.

This hypothesis is clearly upheld, most strongly in the first instance, where the supplementary question about ontological status produced a markedly different result: a majority of 24 agreeing or strongly agreeing with the description of priesthood as a matter of life and being in contrast to only four agreeing or strongly agreeing with the definition of the priest as a man set apart (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5). In the other two instances, relating to the magisterium and theology, the contrasts were less dramatic but nonetheless clear (see Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.9 and 4.10).

- v. That priests who supported the servant leader model of priesthood and the first view of Catholicity would be more likely to have higher scores on Openness and Agreeableness and lower scores on Conscientiousness and Neuroticism than those who supported the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity.

Once again this hypothesis, like the second hypothesis, is affected by the surprising discovery of support for the first view of Catholicity (albeit at a lower level) amongst those priests who favour the cultic model, so it cannot be deemed to have been upheld as it stands. Also the evidence in relation to this hypothesis is weak and is best considered in relation to subdivisions of the hypothesis. In support of the hypothesis, some correlations were found between Openness and some aspects of the servant leader model, and between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness and some aspects of the cultic model whilst no correlations were found which contradict those links, so it may be said that there is some evidence in support of that element of the hypothesis. Similarly the correlations found between Openness and strong support for some statements of the first view of Catholicity and between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness and weaker support for some statements of that view, along with the negative correlation between Agreeableness and one of the statements on the second view of Catholicity, tend to support the hypothesis. One correlation which contradicts the hypothesis, between Conscientiousness and the final statement of the first view of Catholicity, may be discounted because of the difficulty many participants reported in interpreting and responding to this particular statement. The hypothesis is also undermined by the weak negative correlation between Agreeableness and one of the statements of the second view of Catholicity, which remains unexplained. In summary, it could be said that the hypothesis could stand if it were modified as follows to refer only to the models of

priesthood: that priests who supported the servant leader model of priesthood would be more likely to have higher scores on Openness and Agreeableness and lower scores on Conscientiousness and Neuroticism than those who supported the cultic model of priesthood.

- vi. That those ordained after 1985 would tend to support the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, whilst showing less strong support for the first model of Catholicity and that these tendencies would be more pronounced in those ordained after 1990.

This hypothesis is clearly upheld by the data, though again the evidence is stronger in relation to the models of priesthood than it is in relation to the views of Catholicity.

- vii. That there would be a slightly higher proportion of responses leaning towards the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, whilst supporting less strongly the first view of Catholicity, amongst the priest interviewees than amongst those participating in the case study and focus groups.

Only two correlations were found in comparing the two groups of participants. Both of these correlations support the hypothesis that the priest interviewees might lean more towards the cultic model of priesthood and support less strongly the first view of Catholicity, though there was no evidence in support of the assumption that they would show more support for the second view of Catholicity. No correlations were found to contradict the hypothesis. It could be said that this hypothesis was partially and weakly supported.

In general, data with a small number of respondents will not show any results in this type of analysis unless the variables being studied have a powerful effect. Since I obtained a number of significant correlations from this very small data set, a replication of the study with a large number of respondents would be a fruitful line of inquiry for future research.

The implications of these conclusions will be explored in the final chapter.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

This study of the self-understandings of a sample of priests in the Archdiocese of Liverpool found its focus in probing the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood described in the Hoge-Wenger<sup>370</sup> study of priests in the United States and in looking for connections between the positions which priests took on that spectrum, their stances in relation to two views of Catholicity (sometimes associated with Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar) and their personality traits as measured by the NEO-FFI Personality Inventory.

This final chapter will summarise the evidence gathered from the qualitative and quantitative data described in Chapters 3 and 4, discuss the implications of the findings for priestly ministry, make recommendations for action within the Archdiocese, report some progress already made in implementing these recommendations and identify avenues for further research to build on the findings of the present study.

For convenience, the statements used in the study to describe the cultic and servant leader models of priesthood and the two views of Catholicity, along with a description of the five personality traits measured by the NEO-FFI, are shown again in Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 below.

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<sup>370</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

**Figure 5.1: Cultic and servant leader models of priesthood, expanded version**

<b>CULTIC MODEL</b>	<b>AREAS OF DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>SERVANT LEADER MODEL</b>
“man set apart”	<i>Ontological Status of the Priest</i>	pastoral leader
sees priesthood as a matter of life and being		sees priesthood as a matter of role and function
values strict hierarchy	<i>Attitude Toward the Church Magisterium</i>	values flexible structure
values vertical accountability		values mutual accountability
follows established rules	<i>Liturgy and Devotions</i>	allows creativity
defends “orthodoxy”	<i>Theological Perspective</i>	allows for theological differences
values strict adherence to established expression of faith		values renewal of theological language and understanding
essential to the priesthood	<i>Attitude Toward Celibacy</i>	optional for the priesthood



**Figure 5.2: Two views of Catholicity**

<b>Two views of Catholicity</b>	
<i>First view (more world-affirming, associated with Rahner)</i>	<i>Second view (more world-judging, associated with Balthasar)</i>
1. Grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church's task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace	2. The world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation
3. God's saving work is served by all people of good will	4. Explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work
5. The opening lines of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs	6. <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> is overly optimistic about human nature and culture
7. In order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem	8. In order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world

**Figure 5.3 Nettle's tabulation of Five Factor Personality Traits<sup>371</sup>**

Dimension	Core Mechanism	Benefits	Costs
Extraversion	Response to reward	Increased reward pursuit and capture	Physical dangers, family instability
Neuroticism	Response to threat	Vigilance, striving	Anxiety, depression
Conscientiousness	Response inhibition	Planning, self-control	Rigidity, lack of spontaneous response
Agreeableness	Regard for others	Harmonious social relationships	Not putting self first, lost status
Openness	Breadth of mental associations	Artistic sensibility, divergent thought	Unusual beliefs, proneness to psychosis

### Summary and discussion of the evidence

During the course of this research project five theories emerged. Chapters 3 and 4 have set out the data from the interviews, case study, focus groups, diary exercise and survey, showing strong support for the first three theories, and weaker support for the fourth and fifth theories and the evidence relating to each of them is summarised here.

- a) That the polarity between the servant leader and cultic models of priesthood prevalent in research amongst Catholic priests in the USA is much less marked among the Liverpool priests, but is sufficiently present (sometimes within one individual's view) to be helpful in understanding their perceptions and attitudes.

The priests in this sample showed a range of attitudes on the servant leader model – cultic model spectrum as identified by the US research, with few individuals close to either end of the spectrum and the majority leaning more towards the servant leader

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<sup>371</sup> Nettle, *Personality*, p.208.

model. Many of the priests, whilst recognising this polarity, expressed the view that it is less stark in Liverpool than in some other dioceses in the UK and certainly less so than in the United States.

- b) That the divisions between adherents of these models of priesthood on attitudes to ontology, the Church's magisterium and theology are more complex than they appear in the Hoge-Wenger analysis.<sup>372</sup>

The issues of ontology and attitude to the magisterium and theology require a more complex analysis: some priests who adhered to the servant leader model also saw their priesthood as a matter of life and being (i.e. of ontology) rather than of role and function, valued hierarchical structures characterised by mutual accountability and saw orthodoxy as including room for legitimate diversity of theological expression.

- c) That the polarity between these two models of priesthood can be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>373</sup> described here as the first and second views of Catholicity.

The polarity between these two models of priesthood can indeed be related to a more fundamental divergence of theological stances towards the world and God's action in it which has been present throughout the history of the Church and finds its current expression in different readings of Vatican II and especially of *Gaudium et Spes*, described here as the first and second views of Catholicity, but the relationship is complex. All the priests supported the first view of Catholicity to some extent; those who inclined to the servant leader model tended to support the first view more strongly than those who favoured the cultic model; most of the majority who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood also supported the second view of Catholicity to some extent, though a few who strongly favoured the servant leader model also opposed

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<sup>372</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

<sup>373</sup> The Second Vatican Council's 1965 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, known by the Latin version of its opening words: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.' [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html), accessed 11 September 2012.

the second view of Catholicity; and all of the minority who favoured the cultic model also supported the second view of Catholicity, some of them very strongly.

- d) That the models of priesthood and theological stances adopted by individuals can be related to their personality types.

One part of the theory about the influence of personality traits was clearly upheld by the data: that priests who favoured the servant leader model of priesthood would be more likely to have higher scores on Openness and Agreeableness and lower scores on Conscientiousness and Neuroticism than those who leaned towards the cultic model of priesthood. The evidence in relation to the first and second views of Catholicity was weaker: there were some correlations between Openness and strong support for some statements of the first view of Catholicity and between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness and weaker support for some statements of that view; also in line with my expectations was a negative correlation between Agreeableness and one of the statements of the second view of Catholicity. There were, however, two correlations which appeared to contradict this hypothesis.

- e) That the best experience of those priests belonging to religious congregations who serve in parishes in the Archdiocese involves factors (including a complex sense of identity) which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres and that it may be possible to replicate some of these factors in a way which is appropriate and beneficial to the diocesan priests.

The sample of religious priests in the study was too small for statistical conclusions to be drawn, but the comments of both religious and secular priests in the interviews and focus groups indicated that there are factors in the best experience of religious priests serving in parishes which make parish ministry less stressful for them than for their diocesan confreres. In contrast to the reported experience of the religious priests, there was strong evidence that most of the diocesan priests felt keenly a lack of clarity about their charism and mission, a lack of structures for support and accountability and a lack of close relationships with the bishops, though a small minority would not wish for more structures for support and accountability or closer relationships with the bishops. There was evidence that many of the diocesan priests felt a lack of confidence,

experience and expertise in collaborative ministry, though there were some notable exceptions to this. Whilst recognising the benefits of community life in principle, most of the diocesan priests in the sample would prefer (some of them quite strongly) to continue living alone, but a significant number would be keen to see more elements of communal living introduced into their lifestyle. There was considerable agreement with the view that a more complex sense of identity, rather than a total identification of oneself with the role of parish priest, would tend to mitigate the stress associated with parish ministry. The UK study carried out in 1996 by Loudon and Francis<sup>374</sup> and the 2001 American study by Hoge and Wenger<sup>375</sup> report the views of religious and secular priests separately on a number of issues and both offer some support for this hypothesis. Loudon and Francis reported that 46% of diocesan respondents felt their workload was excessive, compared with 30% of religious and that 37% of diocesan respondents said they often felt lonely and isolated, compared with 23% of religious.<sup>376</sup> Hoge and Wenger report that 52% of religious and 26% of diocesan priests said they found satisfaction in ‘the wellbeing that comes from living the common life with like-minded priests’<sup>377</sup> and that diocesan priests were significantly more likely to be concerned about policies on living arrangements and the clarification and standardisation of salaries.<sup>378</sup> Hoge and Wenger also report that the religious priests were significantly less likely to agree that ordination confers on the priest a new status or permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church:<sup>379</sup> apart from its relevance to the discussion about ontological change, this finding would tend to support the view that religious priests are less likely to be focused on their identity as priests and more likely to engage positively in collaborative ministry with lay colleagues.

In addition to the evidence directly related to these five theories, the study identified some serious concerns felt by considerable numbers of the participating priests, which can be summarised under three headings: concerns about workload; concerns about change in society and the Church’s response; and concerns about the experience of the presbyterate in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

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<sup>374</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*.

<sup>375</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*.

<sup>376</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, p.202.

<sup>377</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.201.

<sup>378</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.206-7.

<sup>379</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, p.215.

## Concerns about workload

The concern expressed most frequently was the perceived increase in the amount of work each priest is expected to do, especially when serving multiple parishes or combining parish ministry with other responsibilities. This was frequently linked to the falling number and increasing age of the priests serving in the diocese, and to the observation that, although the number of people regularly attending Sunday Mass has fallen in line with the decline in the number of priests, the expectations of those who no longer attend Mass have not diminished accordingly, especially in relation to baptisms, first communions and funerals. Concern was also raised that the workload is unevenly and unfairly distributed (the wide variation in numbers of funerals per priest was cited as an example of this inequality) and this was related to concerns about the deployment, management and supervision of priests which will be discussed below. There were frequent comments that the present pattern of priestly ministry will not be sustainable for much longer and concerns were often voiced about the effect that the increased workload is already having on the health and wellbeing of the priests.

Ronald Knott, drawing on work by Couturier<sup>380</sup> and a 2001 document of the US Bishops' Conference,<sup>381</sup> has argued that there is a link between the divisions within presbyterates and the anxieties about increasing workloads and changing conditions:

There are many reasons why dedicated and well-motivated members of a group turn their frustrations on one another. Confusion about one's identity is only one of them ... changes in work and service, especially if unforeseen and ill prepared for, will produce anxiety in the community which the group will try to manage by primitive processes of scapegoating and projection. ... While members of the group actually agree more than they disagree, these skirmishes serve as containers for the group's anxiety. They become chronic defense mechanisms when group members fail to recognize the true source of their anxiety: how difficult work has become and how uneasy they feel when they are unsure about their effectiveness ... These divisions lead to diminished effectiveness that undermines the utilization of valuable human resources needed to address pressing issues ... These divisions create loneliness especially for our newest priests, the biggest factor in so many leaving in their first five years ... Finally, divisions can shift the focus of priests from a wide-ranging

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<sup>380</sup> Couturier, D., 'At Odds with Ourselves: Polarization and the Learning Cultures of Priesthood', *Seminary Journal* Winter (2003), pp.64-65.

<sup>381</sup> USCCB, *The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001), pp.97-98.

diocesan perspective to a narrow, localized emphasis on one's own parish with a resultant parochialism.<sup>382</sup>

### **Concerns about change in society and the Church's response**

Decline in religious practice, breakdown of family and community life and erosion of moral values were frequently mentioned as causes of concern, and were often linked to expressions of guilt, frustration or helplessness at the perceived lack of effective responses to the changing situation by priests themselves or by the Church at large. Those who leaned towards the cultic model of priesthood were more likely to blame these changes on a perceived failure in religious instruction, a watering down of the faith and a lack of practising Catholic teachers. Those who leaned towards the servant leader model were more likely to attribute them to broader social and cultural trends and to frame their concerns in terms of sadness at what people are missing and at the Church's failure to engage with contemporary culture. Some expressed concern that the combination of increased workloads, changes in the pattern of daily life and moves toward merging smaller parish communities into larger ones, was preventing the use of pastoral strategies which had proved effective in the past, such as systematic visiting of homes and sustained engagement with schools. Others, more notably those favouring the servant leader model, lamented the fact that the pressure of administrative and sacramental duties was reducing the amount of time and energy they could give to engaging with issues of social justice and community involvement. The small minority of priests who spoke of continuing involvement in such activities (e.g. credit unions, unemployment initiatives, recycling and community regeneration projects) all inclined towards the servant leader model.

### **Concerns about the experience of the presbyterate in the Archdiocese of Liverpool**

Many of the priests spoke of the joy and satisfaction they experienced in ministry and of the support they received from fellow priests, co-workers, parishioners, friends and family members. Some made positive comments about the bishops both as individuals and in relation to the care and support they provide in times of difficulty. A number spoke of the benefits of the current provision of residential retreats and inservice training courses. Alongside these positive comments, however, there were frequent references to a lack of unity and direction amongst the presbyterate, to perceived failures in the management and supervision of priests and to the absence of an organised system for support and

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<sup>382</sup> Knott, 'Intentional Presbyterates'.

accountability. The majority of priests appeared to share some or all of these concerns whilst a minority, though not disputing this analysis, declared that they were happy with the freedom they experienced in the current situation and would not welcome closer supervision or support.

Those who expressed concern about a lack of unity amongst the presbyterate tended to agree that the divisions related to different models of priesthood and found their clearest expression in differing attitudes to the celebration of the liturgy and to the conditions for admission to the sacraments. Those favouring the cultic model would tend to adhere strictly to the rules for liturgical celebrations whereas those inclining to the servant leader model would tend to allow more flexibility and greater scope for creativity. In dealing with families requesting sacraments, the instincts of those inclining towards the cultic model would tend to be: to insist that they come to Mass, say prayers, and carry out Catholic practices (because worship is what matters); to teach them the commandments and the doctrines (because orthodoxy is important); and only to give the sacraments to those who comply with these requirements (because strict hierarchy is valued). The approach of those favouring the servant leader would more likely be: to invite, welcome and accompany all, especially the weak, disorganised and dysfunctional; to engage them in reflection on their experience, affirming them and encouraging them to discover God's presence and action in their lives; to seek to engage them in activities which would strengthen their family life and make a difference in the community; and to involve all the community in this ministry of befriending and hospitality.

The concerns about a lack of clarity and direction with regard to priestly ministry and diocesan strategy were sometimes related to anxieties about the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process.<sup>383</sup> Some were concerned that the differences between priests described above would make the expected collaboration within pastoral areas difficult or impossible. Many regarded the vision behind *Leaving Safe Harbours* as sound but doubted whether the resources and the commitment needed to implement it would be forthcoming. Some applauded the idea of leaving each pastoral area to devise its own plan, whilst others noted that some pastoral areas were simply ignoring the process. Some agreed with the need to reduce the number of expensive buildings being maintained and to combine smaller

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<sup>383</sup> See Appendices 2 and 3.



communities into larger, more vibrant and viable units, but others feared the destruction of existing communities. Perhaps most fundamentally, some regarded the whole process as simply managing decline and argued that a more proactive approach could produce growth.

The fact that many of the priests found it difficult or impossible to answer the first question in the interviews, about the words, models or images they would use to describe their priesthood, indicates a real need to encourage greater reflection amongst the priests, some of whom appear to be simply getting on with meeting the immediate needs presented to them rather than thinking strategically about how they may be called to serve the mission of the Church in this part of the world and at this particular time.

The concern about divisions among the presbyterate suggests a need to encourage greater dialogue and openness between priests.

There is also clearly a need for better structures of accountability and support. Evelyn Whitehead<sup>384</sup> argued as long ago as 1992 that three factors were making this need more urgent. In the face of diverse understandings of priesthood, the priest needs to articulate his own sense of what his priesthood means and what his ministerial responsibilities are, lest he be simply a victim of other people's demands. Increased collaboration in ministry - teamwork, effective co-operation, shared decision making - raise questions of leadership and authority and require a priest to clarify, with and for his ministry colleagues, the precise scope of his own work and how this service connects with the vocations and ministries of others in the community of faith. Where there is a call for the purification of priesthood, the shape of a renewed priesthood will emerge, in part, from the witness of priests today telling the story of their own vocation. In the same chapter Whitehead quotes James Gill as having written: 'I know of no better way to help priests grow professionally than to provide them with a competent supervisor or mentor who will evaluate with them their potential, their performance, and the effectiveness of their work.'<sup>385</sup>

## Recommendations

This section will review the recommendations made in the Hoge-Wenger study. It will then make some practical recommendations specific to the Archdiocese of Liverpool (but with

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<sup>384</sup> Whitehead, E. E. , 'Accountability in Priesthood', in *Being a Priest Today*, ed. D. J. Goergen (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1992).

<sup>385</sup> Whitehead, 'Accountability in Priesthood'.

relevance elsewhere) in response to some of the concerns expressed by the priests about workload, clarity of mission and diocesan strategy, sense of identity, and structures for management and support.

The main study by Hoge and Wenger invited the American Catholic priests participating to make recommendations to seminaries and to bishops.<sup>386</sup>

The recommendations to seminaries from the priests in that study focused on better formation in the area of spirituality and prayer and on practical preparation for parish life. Although the issue of seminary formation was not a major focus of this present study, those priests who made comments about their formation raised concerns in both of those areas. This was in partial contrast to the experience reported in the Loudon-Francis study of Catholic priests in England and Wales, where the respondents said the seminaries had prepared them better for the liturgical and spiritual aspects of ministry than for its practical aspects.<sup>387</sup>

The encouragement of prayer and the use of spiritual directors also featured in the recommendations to bishops in the Hoge-Wenger study, but was preceded in order of priority by four other recommendations: to separate work space from living space; to combat loneliness by promoting priestly fraternity, especially in living situations; to provide clear guidelines for healthy limit-setting by priests; and to increase financial and moral support for hiring lay staff.<sup>388</sup>

Some similar recommendations had already been made in Hoolaghan's less well known study, in 1991, of Catholic, Methodist and Lutheran clergy in the United States:

First, a professional climate in which clergy are encouraged to apply for assignments thereby creating opportunities for clergy to be involved in the development of their career. Second, healthier levels of autonomy can be generated by replacing priests' stipends with a salary in keeping with their job responsibilities and on which they are able to assume financial responsibility for themselves. Third, presenting clergy with the opportunity to choose accommodations other than the parish rectory. Fourth, encouraging the ongoing

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<sup>386</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.135-45.

<sup>387</sup> Loudon, *The Naked Parish Priest*, pp.197-200.

<sup>388</sup> Hoge and Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, pp.138-43.

personal and professional growth of clergy through seminars, workshops, therapy etc.<sup>389</sup>

Dean Hoge also conducted two smaller studies<sup>390</sup> researching the experience of recently ordained priests in the USA, including some who had resigned active ministry, in which the participants were again invited to make recommendations. Both of these studies repeated the recommendations to seminaries for better formation in the area of spirituality and prayer and on practical preparation for parish life, with additional recommendations about psychological counselling and greater openness in relation to sexuality, celibacy and sexual orientation. Their recommendations to bishops and religious orders included a strong plea from almost all the resigned priests to allow married men to serve in priestly ministry. The rest of their recommendations were: to give more attention to the newly ordained (bishops and senior priests having more contact with them; sponsoring specific gatherings for them); to assign new priests a mentor and assign them to work under a good pastor; and to encourage support programmes and gatherings of priests where they can share their experiences.

Many of these recommendations resonate with the needs highlighted by the present study but some of them may be specific to the concerns of priests in the United States. Having considered these recommendations alongside the data in the present study I will propose recommendations under the headings of the three principal areas of concern raised by this sample of priests working in the parishes of the Liverpool Archdiocese.

### **Recommendations relating to workload**

The increase in the workload of priests, and the fact that, whatever happens to the number of ordinations in the short term, the workload will continue to increase dramatically in the foreseeable future, should be addressed by a number of measures.

1. Continue the work of vocations promotion and the search for suitable candidates for the priesthood, including making known the support of the majority of participants in this study for the ordination to the priesthood of married men and the support of a significant minority for the ordination of women.

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<sup>389</sup> Hoolaghan, Martin, 'The Rate and Distribution of Certain Personality Characteristics in Christian Male Clergy: A Comparative Study' (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Loyola College in Maryland, 1991).

<sup>390</sup> Hoge, *The First Five Years*; Hoge, *Five to Nine Years*.

2. Accelerate the process of structural reorganisation of the diocese, in line with the *Leaving Safe Harbours* plan, in such a way that: the expectations of priestly service are adjusted; the numbers of liturgical services, administrative centres and buildings for which priests are responsible are reduced; and funds generated by the lease or sale of redundant buildings are invested in the employment of lay workers, both pastoral and administrative.
3. Encourage the involvement of laypeople in ministry and administration, including increasing the number of lay pastoral workers employed in pastoral areas.
4. Build on the existing system of ongoing formation for priests to provide specific formation in skills for collaborative ministry, including training in the recruitment, motivation, management and retention of volunteers and in the processes of collaborative decision making.
5. Improve the systems of support and accountability for priests, including clear guidelines as to what is expected of them.

### **Recommendations relating to change in society and the Church's response**

Many of the changes discussed by the participants in the study are beyond the control of individual priests or diocesan authorities, but choices can be made about differing responses to the changing situation. I would identify the following as positive responses.

6. Encourage the engagement of parish communities (and not simply the clergy), in collaboration with other churches and local agencies, in initiatives which address the needs of local communities (e.g. credit unions, debt advice services, foodbanks, drug and crime prevention and rehabilitation, parenting skills, youth work, environmental improvement projects).
7. Encourage initiatives (involving lay workers) in catechesis and evangelisation, including the use of new media and social networks.
8. Encourage the visiting of homes by trained volunteers.

9. Learn from the example of those parishes which still have large vibrant congregations to be more welcoming and more focused on providing liturgies that reflect the current concerns of all the parishioners, especially those who are young, poor or marginalised.
10. Promote a culture amongst priests which places a high value on the quality of preaching, for instance by introducing the process of mutual support and critique undertaken by the late Bishop Untener in Michigan.<sup>391</sup>

### **Recommendations relating to the experience of the presbyterate in this diocese**

The concerns raised under this heading about support and management of priests have been addressed by some of the recommendations made above in relation to workload. Some of the remaining concerns could be addressed by the following measures.

11. Encourage dialogue and reflection among priests about what is most important in priestly ministry, focusing on what unites rather than what divides.
12. Begin a process of shared reflection among clergy and laity about the priorities for the mission of the diocese, so that a diocesan mission statement can be agreed and owned.
13. Encourage a variety of different arrangements for the living accommodation of priests: the preferences of individual priests vary according to personality and experience but financial savings and benefits to the wellbeing of those who prefer not to live alone could be gained by creative experimentation.
14. Explore ways of reducing the remaining inequalities in remuneration and living standards of priests.

### **Progress towards implementing some of the recommendations**

Two specific initiatives have already begun the process of proposing changes in the light of this research project.

In June 2011, I was invited to facilitate a day-long session of the Archbishop's Council, focusing on ecclesiological and strategic issues which had emerged in the implementation of the *Leaving Safe Harbours* project. I had the opportunity to share information gained

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<sup>391</sup> Untener, K., *Preaching Better: Practical Suggestions for Homilists* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

during the research, including the concerns raised by priests. Topics raised during the discussion included the relationship between local planning and central decisions, the criteria for keeping or closing parishes and the basis for deploying priests. Several of the factors mentioned above were recognised: that the present policy relies on pastoral areas volunteering to present development plans; that priests' workloads are not evenly distributed; that asking priests to provide liturgical services to multiple parishes risks reducing their ministry to a simply cultic model of priesthood and limiting the scope for the servant leader model to which most of our priests feel called; that we have no system of support or appraisal to help priests to set priorities and to know when they are doing a good job; that very few parishes have effective pastoral councils, which makes lay involvement in decision-making difficult both at parish level and at pastoral area level; and that, as a local church, we are less engaged with social and community issues than we were twenty years ago, but the current economic climate demands a stronger response to the needs of the poor. The discussion resulted in a more proactive approach to the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process, with the Archbishop naming the pastoral areas to be in the next 'wave' to present their plans for working together rather than waiting for them to volunteer, with support for those pastoral areas which are being encouraged to move forward being a consideration in the deployment of priests, and with reports from specific pastoral areas on their development plans becoming a regular feature at meetings of the Pastoral Area Leaders and of the Council of Priests.

The issue of support for priests emerged again at the meeting in January 2012 of the Pastoral Area Leaders (by then reverting to their previous title of Deans) after which, with the support of the pastoral area of which I am Dean, I presented five specific proposals in this area to the Council of Priests in March 2012, which were referred to local clergy team discussions in preparation for being brought back to the Council in November 2012:

- i. The appointment of a Vicar for Clergy, whose responsibilities would include pastoral care of the active clergy.
- ii. The establishment of an appointments board.
- iii. The appointment of individual diocesan mentors for seminarians (in addition to their seminary-based supervisors), who will begin the mentoring relationship at the start of

the long parish placement and will continue to act as mentors during the diaconal period and during the first five years of priesthood.

- iv. The re-introduction into the visitation process of a formal interview between the visiting bishop and each priest.
- v. The revival of the confidential self-appraisal process which was developed in the 1990s by the Council of Priests,<sup>392</sup> or an equivalent process.<sup>393</sup>

Two further refinements would enhance the effectiveness of these proposals (if adopted): the provision of training for the mentors and the opportunity for all the priests to elect the Vicar for Clergy and at least some members of the appointments board.

Three recent developments in the Archdiocese are likely to contribute positively to the changes envisaged by the recommendations. Firstly, the introduction of a Family Catechesis approach to the sacraments of initiation should, if implemented wholeheartedly, increase the amount and quality of formation offered to parishioners at all stages of family life and enhance the Church's engagement with them, including those who do not currently attend Mass. Secondly, the first official commissioning in July 2012 of Lay Funeral Ministers to preside at funeral rites in the absence of a priest or deacon, or where the priest responsible for the funeral judges it pastorally desirable, is a significant step towards easing the workload of priests and encouraging the involvement of laypeople in ministry. Thirdly, in August 2012 the Archbishop announced that three priests and a lay woman would assist the five newly ordained priests, with two offering advice in pastoral matters, one in spirituality and one in ongoing academic development.

### **Avenues for further research**

This study has produced some clear results which add to the body of knowledge about Catholic priests in general and this local sample of priests in particular. Whilst there is

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<sup>392</sup>Priests, Liverpool Archdiocesan Council of, *Developing My Priestly Ministry*, (Liverpool: Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002); Priests, Liverpool Archdiocesan Council of, *Supporting Your Priest*, (Liverpool: Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002).

<sup>393</sup> The *Leaving Safe Harbours* implementation document (Appendix 3) refers to the appraisal scheme and to a one-to-one pastoral review with each of the priests in each pastoral area moving into the transition phase of the process, but the one-to-one reviews were not undertaken and the appraisal scheme had been discontinued before the *Leaving Safe Harbours* process began.

strong evidence for some of its conclusions, some of its hypotheses warrant further investigation.

It was noted in Chapter 4, in relation to the small survey undertaken in this project, that, in general, data with a small number of respondents will not show any results unless the variables being studied have a powerful effect (see p.243). Since I obtained a number of significant correlations from this very small data set, a replication of the study with a large number of respondents would be a fruitful line of inquiry for future research.

The limitations of the instrument used for determining the first and second views of Catholicity (see p.182 and p.207) has been recognised above. A search through the archive indices for *Concilium*<sup>394</sup> and *Communio*<sup>395</sup> has revealed relevant articles by Rahner and von Balthasar, and others associated with the general direction of their respective approaches, in nineteen issues of *Concilium* and thirteen of *Communio*, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s: a study of these could contribute to the development of a more accurate definition of the two views of Catholicity and a better instrument for measuring commitment to them.

In view of these factors, a fruitful avenue for further research would be a large scale survey, similar to the one that was part of the initial research plan for this project, at least of all the diocesan and religious priests serving in or retired from parish ministry in the Liverpool Archdiocese and preferably of some other dioceses, to provide comparative data. This survey should include the fuller version of the NEO personality inventory (the NEO PI-R), an improved instrument for assessing the first and second views of Catholicity and the instruments for assessing levels of stress and satisfaction in ministry used in Dr Brendan Geary's survey of permanent deacons,<sup>396</sup> i.e. Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin and Lewis' revised version of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM)<sup>397</sup> and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS), which was devised by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle<sup>398</sup>. This would enable comparison with the diaconate study and others, including the follow-up to the Hoge-Wenger study, published after this thesis was substantially completed, which has

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<sup>394</sup> Founded in 1965 by a group of theologians including Rahner.

<sup>395</sup> Founded in 1972 by a group of theologians including von Balthasar.

<sup>396</sup> Geary, 'Emotional Exhaustion and Satisfaction in Permanent Deacons'.

<sup>397</sup> Francis, 'Assessing Emotional Exhaustion among Australian Clergy'.

<sup>398</sup> Francis, 'Happy but Exhausted?'.



a strong focus on satisfaction in ministry.<sup>399</sup> If a suitable instrument to measure dogmatism can be found, this could also be included (see p.237).

The survey could be followed by in-depth interviews with a smaller number of priests in order to explore further the complexity of approaches to ontology, hierarchy and theology which this study has highlighted.

### **Beyond polarisation: getting behind the labels**

This study has focused on two models of priesthood and two views of Catholicity. These are offered in the spirit in which Dulles offered his models of church<sup>400</sup> and Bevens his models of contextual theology:<sup>401</sup> not as exclusive, comprehensive and distinct types but as tools or lenses to help us understand complex realities by focusing on particular features of those realities.

The common thread is the relationship posited between priest and people in the two models of priesthood and between church and world in the two views of Catholicity. The servant leader model emphasises that the priest is one of the baptised and that the official priesthood serves the priesthood of all the baptised, whilst the cultic model stresses the distinct and separate nature of the ordained priesthood. In Rahner's terms, the official priesthood in the church is subservient both to Christ and to the universal priesthood.<sup>402</sup> In Balthasar's terms, there is an opposition between the one sent and those to whom he is sent.<sup>403</sup> Both of these models, and not just the cultic, can include the belief that being consecrated for the official priesthood has an ontological effect on the person ordained. The servant leader model will tend to see this effect, with Rahner, in the fact that ordination for the service of Christ and of the universal priesthood makes demands upon the whole person and in a new way.<sup>404</sup> The cultic model will emphasise, with Balthasar, that this ontological effect sets the ordained person apart from the rest of the baptised.

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<sup>399</sup> Gautier, *Same Call, Different Men*.

<sup>400</sup> Dulles, Avery, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 2002).

<sup>401</sup> Bevens, Stephen, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Revised and Expanded ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

<sup>402</sup> Rahner, Karl, 'Priestly Existence', in *The Theology of the Spiritual Life, Theological Investigations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967), pp.236-62.

<sup>403</sup> Balthasar, 'The Priest of the New Covenant', pp.353-81.

<sup>404</sup> This idea is developed by Murray (see p.101) in describing the distinctiveness of ordained ministry as 'the authenticated, visible, public witness to and sacramental performance of the ministry of Christ in the entire

The first view of Catholicity emphasises both the ubiquitous presence of God's grace in all creation and every person and the embeddedness of individual Christians and the whole Church within human society. The second view stresses the mission of the individual Christian and the whole Church to confront the evil which is present in human society and to convert people to Christ. Each position, if taken to extremes, can lead (as noted by a 2006 enquiry into Catholic initiatives in evangelisation and renewal) to dysfunctional attitudes to whatever is not 'the Church', 'either through an uncritical over-identification with all things or through a severe separation and lack of dialogue'.<sup>405</sup>

This study has also explored possible connections between these models of priesthood and views of Catholicity and personality types, discovering that the servant leader model of priesthood and strong support for the first view of Catholicity have some slight correlations with the traits described as Openness and Agreeableness whilst the cultic view of priesthood and weaker support for the first view of Catholicity have some slight correlations with the traits described as Neuroticism and Conscientiousness.

It has been heartening to discover that, far from the presbyterate being divided into two camps, one embracing the servant leader model of priesthood and the first view of Catholicity whilst the other inclines to the cultic model of priesthood and the second view of Catholicity, the priests in this sample take up a range of positions on each spectrum. Perhaps the most surprising discovery was that all the priests in the sample supported the first view of Catholicity to some degree, and that the majority also expressed some agreement with the second view. Although the differences of emphasis are evident in the findings that those favouring the servant leader model tended to support the first view of Catholicity more strongly and those most committed to that model tended not to support the second view at all, whilst those leaning most strongly towards the cultic model were more likely to support the second view of Catholicity and to be less supportive of the first view, the broad underlying agreement provides a firm basis from which to move forward as a presbyterate in a spirit of mutual support and respect.

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Spirit-filled, charism-endowed Church in such a fashion as defines the vocation and being of the ordained before God.' Murray, 'Integrated Theology of Ministry', p.48.

<sup>405</sup> Sweeney, J., Watkins, C., Knights, P. and Bhatti, D., *Going Forth: An Enquiry into Evangelisation & Renewal in the Roman Catholic Church in England & Wales*, (Cambridge: Von Hügel Institute and Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, 2006), p.23.

There were two sadder discoveries. The first, and less surprising, was that a large number of priests felt over-worked and under-supported, a concern I have attempted to address in the recommendations above. The second was that some of the priests appeared to have reflected very little on the theology behind their practice, with a considerable number being unable to provide words, models or images to describe their priestly ministry.

Since theology is the study of God, it requires us to ask what understanding of God motivates our actions as priests and what image of God may be communicated to others by our actions. Do we believe that God is for us or against us? Do we answer that question differently when we take 'us' to mean 'us priests', 'us Catholics', 'us practising Catholics', 'us Christians' or 'us human beings'?

An example of the need for such reflection might be found in Peter McGrail's observation of the effect, in several Liverpool parishes, of requiring parents to bring their child to a certain number of Sunday Masses as a condition of receiving first communion:

A consistent picture has emerged across the various sites in which such attendance has been imposed. A very small number of parents refuse to engage with the process and effectively withdraw their child from the first communion programme. The majority bring their children week by week until the first communion day, and then cease to practise.<sup>406</sup>

This makes clear that the practical outcome of compulsion tends to be the opposite of what is hoped for by well-intentioned priests and catechists, but the question remains, what message about God do those families take from this experience?

My own convictions incline towards the servant leader model of priesthood and the first view of Catholicity. That basic orientation has not changed during the course of this study: rather, I am now clearer about the reasons why I hold those views. They are not merely theoretical opinions but convictions arising out of my experience, my formation, my personality and my spirituality. They are consistent with my understanding of God as encountered in the exercise of my priestly ministry. At the same time I have come to appreciate more fully the limitations of my understanding and the different but equally firm convictions of others and to see greater possibilities for mutual respect and dialogue. I am hopeful that this project will inspire and provoke other priests to explore more deeply their

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<sup>406</sup> McGrail, Peter, 'Display and Division: Congregational Conflict among Roman Catholics', in *Congregational Studies in the UK*, ed. M. Guest, Tusting, K. and Woodhead, L. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp.95-96.

own understanding of God and its implications for the way they carry out their priestly ministry. Such reflection can help to ensure that our practice becomes more consistent with our presentation of the Gospel, more transparently communicative of our understanding of the nature of God. Without such reflection, we risk repeating failed strategies and alienating many who are genuinely seeking God.

## Appendix 1: Research Grant Application

### Application to Derwent Charitable Consultancy for grant to support research into emerging patterns of ministry in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

This application concerns three related research projects which together will contribute to a more holistic view of lay, priestly and diaconal ministry.

1. D Min (Durham University) research project by Rev. Michael Fitzsimons (student at Ushaw College, to be ordained priest for Liverpool Archdiocese in June 2006), on emerging patterns of lay ministry within the RC Archdiocese of Liverpool, due for completion in 2009.
2. D Min<sup>407</sup> (Durham University) research project by Rev. Chris Fallon (Director of St. Bede's Institute at Ushaw and priest of Liverpool Archdiocese) on perceptions of identity, role and mission among ordained ministers in the Archdiocese of Liverpool, due for completion in 2010.
3. Research study exploring emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry of all permanent deacons in England, Wales and Scotland, by Brendan Geary, F.M.S., Ph.D (Director of Human Formation at Ushaw College) for Diploma in Psychology (Newcastle University), due for completion in 2007.

The national survey of deacons undertaken by Brendan Geary will provide demographic, psychological and theological data for the two doctoral studies into lay and ordained ministry in Liverpool. Initial findings from all three studies will form part of the data to be presented at the Ushaw Colloquium on Ministry planned for January 2008. There is a plan to publish the papers from that Colloquium and the research outcomes will include articles in other publications.

The application is supported by the Archbishop of Liverpool, the Rector of Ushaw and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Durham University. The Archdiocese will provide the salary and living expenses (part-time for three years each) for M. Fitzsimons and C. Fallon and half of their academic fees, and will oversee the administration of the funds. Ushaw will provide the salary and living expenses (part-time during 2006-7) for C. Fallon and free accommodation for M. Fitzsimons and C. Fallon as necessary for the duration of the research. Durham's Department of Theology and Religion will provide the academic oversight of the two doctoral research projects.

#### Approximate Costs (detailed breakdown in table below)

Working Expenses for the Diaconate Survey	3,000
Working Expenses for the two D Min projects	17,000
50% contribution to Academic Fees for the two D Min projects	<u>8,000</u>

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<sup>407</sup> I initially applied to study for the DMin but was advised to enrol for the PhD programme instead.

Total request

£28,000

Correspondence to Rev. Chris Fallon, Ushaw College, Durham DH7 9RH, tel. 0191 373 8534, email [chris.fallon@ushaw.ac.uk](mailto:chris.fallon@ushaw.ac.uk)

Payment, if application is successful, to Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Development, Archdiocese of Liverpool, LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA, tel. 0151 522 1020.

<b>RESEARCH INTO EMERGING PATTERNS OF MINISTRY</b>	
<b>BREAKDOWN OF COSTS</b>	
<b>Working Expenses for the Diaconate Survey</b> <b>Printing:</b> To be met by School of Biology, University of Newcastle. <b>Postage:</b> 800 x 68p (approx); Paid return: 1600 x 68p (approx) (Deacons and their wives separately); Reminders 800 x 23p. <b>£1,816</b> <b>Data Entry:</b> Two weeks x Two qualified assistants x £300 = <b>£1,200</b> <b>Books:</b> <b>£180</b>	<b>£3,196</b>
<b>Estimated Working Expenses for MF's D Min project</b> <b>Focus Group Meeting Costs</b> (Room Hire and Lunch Costs at LACE (£277x4) Travel for Participants (£150x4) <b>£1,708</b> <b>Transcribing Costs:</b> Focus Group (3 hours discussion = 18 hours transcribing @ £12 = £216x4); Congregational Studies (15 hours discussion= 90 hours transcribing @ £12 = £1,080x3) <b>£4,104</b> <b>Travel</b> (2 x Visits to USA for conference and research) <b>£2,200</b> <b>Books</b> <b>£250</b>	<b>£8,262</b>
<b>Estimated Working Expenses for CF's D Min project</b> <b>Printing and postage of survey:</b> <b>£800</b> <b>Data Entry:</b> 1weeks x 1 qualified assistant <b>£300</b> <b>Focus Group Meeting Costs</b> (Room Hire and Lunch Costs at LACE (£277x4); Travel for Participants (£150x4) <b>£1,708</b> <b>Transcribing Costs:</b> Focus Group (3 hours discussion = 18 hours transcribing @ £12 = £216x4); Interviews (20 hours = 120 hours transcribing @ £12) <b>£3,240</b> <b>Contribution to travel</b> for conferences and research <b>£2,200</b> <b>Books</b> <b>£250</b>	<b>£8,498</b>
<b>50% contribution to Academic Fees for the two D Min projects</b>	<b>£8,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,956</b>

## **Appendix 2: *Leaving Safe Harbours* DVD Script**

*Leaving Safe Harbours – The Way Ahead (Script of Archbishop Kelly's DVD)*

### *Chapter 1 Introduction*

My Dear People

When Christ asked St Peter to, 'put out his boat into deep water and pay out his nets for a catch,' Peter must have doubted the wisdom of such a suggestion, especially considering that he and his companions had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Despite this Peter's response to the Lord's request is the pattern for all those who aspire to follow Christ in every age and time: 'If you say so...' Like Peter we must be as courageous in our response to the Lord when he asks of us to pull away from the comfort and security of safe harbours.

Recent pastoral letters and information from your parish priests have explained: two years ago I initiated a period of reflection and enquiry, which became known as 'Leaving Safe Harbours'. This initiative was in response to a request emerging from a meeting of the Deans.

I invited, four different groups over 9 months, to examine the pressing issues of today. Each group included priest, religious, women and men. Working together, through reflection on the Word of God and a careful reading of the signs of our times, they sought to present a coherent response to the challenges we face. In doing so they offered a great service both to our own diocese and, indeed, wider society.

I am happy to say that at the beginning of July 2006, those involved in this initiative were able to present a broad set of proposals to priests, to a wider gathering of the diocesan family, and I gladly endorsed their wholehearted approval. So in September 2006 we were able, as a diocesan family, to embark on a new way forward.

Through this short DVD I will attempt to present you a clear picture of the way ahead and the reasons behind what is envisaged. I will also be inviting your participation and involvement in helping to shape the way things will develop in your own local area. Together we can face the future with confidence and hope, assured of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Provided that we, like Peter, place our trust in the one who calls us to 'pay out our nets for a great catch'.

## *Chapter 2    Why Change is Necessary*

Throughout its history, the Church has always developed rather than stood still – something which reflects the fact that we are, essentially, a pilgrim people. In our days and in our locality there are a number of reasons why managed change is necessary. Some are very obvious while others less so. Consider, for example, the following statistics:

In 1960 the Catholic population of the Diocese was approximately 750,000 people. Of those some 262,000 regularly attended Sunday Mass in 187 churches. At the time there were 461 active priests.

Thirty five years later, in 1995, the Catholic population had declined in number to a figure similar to that we see today – just over 500,000. The number of Catholics who attended Sunday Mass, however, was a proportionally lower figure – about 110,000, although the number of churches had increased to 223. The greatest change, however, was the number of active priests serving the diocese. It had been reduced by well over a half to 215.

By the time we come to 2005, although the overall Catholic population had remained relatively stable – at around 500,000 – the number of those who attended regular Sunday Mass had dropped still further to approximately 67,000. Slightly fewer churches, some 214 were now being served by 180 priests – although not all were available for parish ministry.

Year	Catholic Pop.	Mass Attendance	No. of Churches	No. of active Diocesan Priests
1960	750,000	262,000	187	461
1995	502,945	110,000	223	215
2005	500,000	67,000	214	180

Even a cursory look at these figures is enough to see why many people are concerned, but we have to be careful in our analysis. The obvious reduction in the number of priests is a matter of great concern, but the decline in the numbers of lay people attending Sunday Mass presents us with an even more alarming statistic.

Faced with these realities, how do we respond? What is required, I believe, is not just a restructuring of the diocese but a whole new determination to reach out both to those baptised, confirmed and on one special day first communicants, who now rarely



pray with us, but also to those who do not know our Lord at all. That is what we mean by: evangelisation. The changes must be shaped to increase our readiness for a deeper response to the call from Christ to establish his Father's kingdom of justice, love and peace and to make disciples of all nations, baptising them *in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*' So our Diocesan Mission statement must say:

*"Taking to heart the last words of the Lord Jesus, we will go out into the world to proclaim the Good News to the whole of Creation."*

If we are to take this mission, given by Christ, seriously then some structural adjustments are required in order to make best use of energy and resources. The clustering of parishes in recent years was a move in the right direction but such arrangements are no longer sustainable. It is important to realise that because of the present age profile of the clergy and the relative shortage of vocations, it is likely that by 2015 there will only be 100 active diocesan priests. Compared with years gone by this shows a considerable reduction in priestly numbers, but it is more than sufficient provided our expectation of priestly ministry and service is real and focused not on past demands but on present realities.

What we need is a new way of being a local Catholic community, which not only preserves what is best in our tradition but also holds out the prospect of future development.

Looking at the bigger picture, there was widespread recognition within the four exploratory groups that we have not yet allowed the insights of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, called together by Pope John XXIII in the 1960s to bear fruit. The present situation offers an opportunity to embrace the aspirations and intentions of that Council to renew the Church in response to the Word of God in a rapidly changing scene.

I hope you will be able to see that the changes we are making are designed to:

- + Deepen faith, hope and love
- + Encourage a spirit of collaboration
- + Help us to do better what we are already fruitfully doing.
- + Make better use of resources
- + Be flexible to local needs and situations

So as to accomplish evangelisation.

*Questions:*

*Where do you see the need for change in your own local experience of Church?*

*What would be your greatest hope for any changes that might occur?*

*How can you "accomplish evangelisation?"*

### *Chapter 3    A Theology for Our Times*

Any renewal within the Church must be informed by fidelity to the Word of God, understood with the blessing of two thousands years of wise, holy, women and men. That is, we need a theological basis to carry us forward. I have been greatly encouraged that in the work of Leaving Safe Harbours the theology group began to spell out a vision rooted in all that God has done and is doing for us in his Son by the working of the Holy Spirit, to shape the future of the Diocese. In the near future, through a series of structured meetings, you will all have the opportunity to reflect on this rich, challenging and encouraging understanding of God's ways. But at this point I want to provide you with a brief overview:

#### **Fragmentation and Contemporary Experience**

At the beginning of the twenty first century, one of the dominant experiences is fragmentation. We see this fragmentation most immediately in the political, religious and economic divisions that run through the international community. However, the inroads of a culture of individualism and the pressures of life and work in a consumerist setting mean that at all levels of society, right into the heart of family life, people live disjointed and increasingly isolated lives. Many of us frequently experience within ourselves a lack of focus and integration of the various strands of life. Like the tormented man Our Lord once met: our name is Legion – we are torn and our life does not feel whole and at peace. There is a profound sense that life is lived in unconnected parcels, a sense that there is no strong centre to my life where I am at peace with myself and around which I can establish a way of living that is healthy and wholesome.

#### **The Church as a Sacrament of Unity**

In the days of the Cold War, when the East and West faced each other with the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction by nuclear weapons, Pope John XXIII's Council taught: the Church, at every level, must be a sacrament of unity for the whole human family. She is called to be an effective sign in the midst of society of what it means to live as members of the Body of Christ and to be the primary means by which that communion is realised. This invites us examine carefully the quality of our community life so that we can then sincerely look outwards with the mission to be a model of reconciliation and peace.

In the future our Catholic communities should become more obviously and effectively places where scattered humanity is drawn into unity in the person of Christ, through the activity of the Holy Spirit. In practical terms this implies, both deep and inspiring

liturgy, but also the creation of other forms of engaging with the Word of God and life's joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. One example is small groups gathered for a variety of pastoral purposes, to share, pray, but always under the Word of God. We need to be enriched by thoughtful engagement with the Word of God outside of the Mass. In the new situation I hope for a flowering of all sorts of other spiritual activities designed to help believers and seekers alike grow in love and faith.

### **Our Common Calling**

There is general agreement that, in spite of our aspirations to share our fidelity to our Lord with others, our Catholic parishes easily tend towards becoming inward looking. This is often described as maintenance rather than mission; we maintain what is focussed within the Church family, but forget the task of establishing God's kingdom of justice, love and peace. Pope John Paul II described what is needed in these words:

*"The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring labourers who work in the Lord's vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history."*

(Chapter 17 of Pope John Paul II on the Mission of the Lay Faithful)

In ordinary lives of ordinary people Christ is made present. Like Christ, every baptised Christian is to proclaim the Good News, to worship God and to serve people. Because all are called to worship God we rightly speak of the priesthood of all the baptised; because the Holy Spirit is sent to us that the face of the earth may be renewed we have, all of us, a mission to the world.

In the light of this what is the role of the ordained minister? Listen to what the catechism has to say:

*"While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace – a life of faith, hope, charity, a life according to the Spirit, the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal graces. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted through the sacrament of Holy Orders."* (1547)

## **The Priestly Vocation**

Priests can fear that pastoral areas we are establishing will just multiply demands on them yet the catechism article suggests a new way of thinking. The Bishops with the Priests, as one body, and the deacons are to be seen primarily as those who sustain and release the gifts of each and every one. Priests are called to encourage, to enable, to discern and guide. This does not mean that priests around the Bishop cease to share in the mission of our one Good Shepherd and merely manage and co-ordinate the pastoral activity of the laity. That is not the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed during ordination. We must be ministers of the table of the Lord's word and the Lord's body, to sustain the church as the body of Christ; and that means they must be ministers of unity, because there is one Lord, one baptism, one Body, one Spirit, one Church. As ONE all go out together to serve the Kingdom.

My role as your Bishop is to serve this call to unity. The image of Church as sacrament of Unity has to be made visible by truly being one diocese. At its heart I must accept my vocation always to proclaim, build up and facilitate unity. I must be transparent to the one Lord, the one Good Shepherd, the icon and visible presence of Christ as the one Head; the pallium I wear as Archbishop reminds me to keep us all in communion with the successor of Saint Peter and so with the universal Church.

I am named at each Mass not because I am good and holy, which I am called to be, nor because I need prayer, which I do. It is because no Mass is the mass of this community in isolation: we are always, many parishes, but by receiving the One Body and One Cup, one diocese, one with the whole Church. Especially out of love for our divided world I must build up a positive sense of diocese, with many gifts, but one in Christ. This will be expressed in many ways but there will be a special link between myself and those priests I have invited to become Pastoral Area Leaders. This communion with one another shall also be the clear purpose when Bishop Williams and I visit the pastoral areas and seek to form a deeper sense of the diocesan family. We must recognise and confirm what is happening in each place, but always keep every enterprise, every initiative one with every other sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit: one body, many members: all needed by each other and all in need of each other.

## **A People at the Crossroads**

The proposed move to larger local structures places each Catholic community at a crossroads. The changes envisaged must be a springboard to redress the natural tendency to echo the fragmentation of broader society. The call for each one of us,

Bishops, priests and people, is to have a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the development of the Church and her mission to the wider society.

*Questions:*

*Where do you see signs of fragmentation?*

*How could our local Catholic communities become more attractive and welcoming places?*

*Where is Christ made present in our lives?*

#### *Chapter 4 New Pastoral Areas*

The most obvious change initiated so far is the creation of new geographical units within the Diocese. Each unit we are calling a 'pastoral area'. In September 2006, twenty-four new Pastoral Areas replaced the previous deaneries. Covering approximately 8 present parishes they are all of a similar size with about 20,000 Catholics. The expectation is that in the future each one will be served by one priest to every 5,000 parishioners.

In many places the change from Deanery to Pastoral Area might look nothing more than a change in name. This would be a serious mistake this change points to a whole new set of relationships, attitudes and ways of working.

#### **Teams of Priests**

In the foreseeable future priests will continue to be assigned to particular parishes within the Pastoral Area - with most of their time spent in direct contact with a particular congregation - but the situation requires a new sense of partnership and collaboration between priests. Working as a team, under a Team Leader, they will work out their specific roles and personal responsibilities in the light of local needs and conditions

#### **Lay Collaboration and Involvement**

Another characteristic of the future I envisage is a new sense of collaboration between priests and people. Enshrined in new local structures the whole people of God will act together for the building up of the church in their locality. People from different parishes will learn to collaborate with each other, working together on matters of

mutual concern. Sharing life and faith both with each other and the wider population we will create communities of life-giving conversation and encouragement.

### **Adult Formation**

The deepening of life in Christ for the diocese and increased readiness for evangelisation will only be accomplished through an on-going programme of adult education and formation. Supported by a new Pastoral Formation Team, this will be delivered within each pastoral area.

### **Schools and Colleges**

Catholic schools are vitally important for the renewal of the local church. They are recognised as places of formation and education for our children, often outstanding in what they offer. But they are also the points of contact for many parents, who have, for various reasons, become detached from their religious home, the Parish, and from the source and summit of our Christian identity, the Sunday Mass. These proposals hold out the opportunity of deepening the home-school-parish partnership with the shared development of pastoral initiatives designed to encourage growth in love and faith. I will be encouraging team leaders to work closely with head teachers and chaplains.

### **Ecumenical Partnerships**

In many places throughout the diocese there is a long tradition of ecumenical partnership. As each pastoral area plans its own development strategy, it will be important not to ignore this important aspect of our common life.

### **Implementation**

It is clear that the proper establishment of the pastoral areas will not happen overnight – there is a significant amount of preparation required. The newly established Vicariate for Evangelisation has been given the task of supporting the required changes. I have deliberately given it the name: Evangelisation: nothing has value which is not true to the call: “Go and make disciples.”

Over a period of years each pastoral area will move through three stages called Pastoral Areas in Preparation; Pastoral Areas in Transition and Pastoral Areas in Development.

Let us look briefly at each stage:

### **Pastoral Areas in Preparation**

All our 24 pastoral areas are now pastoral areas in preparation. The main intention during this stage is to enable people in the pastoral area to prepare themselves for the new arrangements and to begin to set up the structures necessary to work in a new way together.

The first stage will take different amounts of time depending on local circumstances. Because of limited human resources at the level of the diocese, it is thought prudent to plan that every year five pastoral areas will move on to the transition stage. Five years from now I hope that every pastoral area will have moved in this direction.

### **Pastoral Areas in Transition**

The central objective during this transition stage is for the Pastoral Area to draw up its own development plan - the implementation of this will only begin when the proposal has been considered by me and others, to make sure it is not at odds with what is happening across the whole diocese. An isolated plan would eventually collapse. We are asking each local area to shape its future but never in isolation from the overall picture and without consideration of our responsibility to the whole Church in this country and elsewhere. You will know the resources that you have, and together with me and others whose role is to keep aware of the whole picture, each local pastoral area will put forward its vision for the future. I am committed to this way of working.

The transition stage may last as long as three years. It is important that this process is not rushed, but thoughtfully and prayerfully undertaken.

### **Pastoral Areas in Development**

In this third stage, the agreed development plan will start to be implemented. This is not the end of the process but the beginning of a new way of thinking, planning, relating and growing.

### **Help and support**

All that is envisaged will undoubtedly require on-going diocesan help and support. This assistance, particularly necessary as the pastoral areas move from one stage to the next, will be provided by:

- The **Vicariate for Evangelisation**
- The **Vicariate for Formation**
- The **Vicariate for Finance and Development**

Though, of course, other diocesan departments and agencies will also offer their own expertise and encouragement.

### **Closing remarks**

As I look now at the process of change we have embarked upon, informed by prayerful reflection and discernment, change in attitudes is our greatest challenge. Many of us are not used to working collaboratively and the journey we have begun may well expose areas of great sensitivity. Mistakes will be made and not all we hope for will be realised without significant personal cost. All I would ask is that we try to be patient with each other, listening carefully and responding gracefully in a spirit of resolved unity and communion one with another. We will go far beyond mere toleration of each other or any forms of compromise.

The place we have reached is not the end – this is a work in progress and there is much that remains to be learned, both from one another and those we encounter in wider society. Nevertheless, we travel together in hope and expectation. The Lord is always with us, as He promised, calling us on to new and greater wonders. **I invite you to work and prayer for the renewal of our diocese so that it may be a more authentic sign of God’s love in our fragmented world and I invite you to play your part locally in making suggestions for the right way forward.**

Please join me in saying this prayer used at every meeting of ‘Leaving Safe Harbours’:

*Holy God, whose presence must be made known in any structures we build and renew,  
establish us as a community of hope,  
never seeking to contain your mystery,  
but willing to be led, by the Holy Spirit, beyond safe harbours  
into new and sacred waters,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### *Questions:*

*What advantage can you see in organising the local Church into Pastoral Areas rather than independent parishes?*

*How can you “shape the way things will develop in your own local area?”*



## **Appendix 3: *Leaving Safe Harbours* Implementation Process**

### Thresholds of Involvement

The following proposals make a clear distinction between three 'types' of Pastoral Area dependent on where they are in the stages of implementation:

**Pastoral Areas in Preparation** – those which are, at present, simply geographical Deaneries modified and renamed. These will continue to operate largely as before but will be invited to attend to some of the attitudinal and structural changes necessary to smooth the process of transition.

**Pastoral Areas in Transition** – those which have been accepted into the formal phase of transition within which time they will receive the direct assistance of the Vicariate for Evangelisation and other diocesan agencies. Initially this will only include the three 'pilot areas', but five more will be added annually until the whole of the diocese is covered.

**Pastoral Areas in Development**- those whose proposals for development have been ratified by the diocese and with whom the new working relationship, envisioned in the LSH proposals, has been established.

How each type might operate is outlined below but these suggestions are somewhat contingent on progress made in the pilot areas to wrestle with the various issues of implementation.

## Pastoral Areas in Preparation

Intention	Elements	Sources of Support
To enable all the priests and deacons to address issues particular to their role and status in the new arrangements.	Identity Individual Circumstances Sharing Ministerial Responsibility Lay Collaboration On-going Formation Living Arrangements for priests	A series of voluntary in-service events designed to address these issues.  A 1-to-1 personal and pastoral review <i>-(amicus clero)</i>
To educate parishioners with regard to the LSH initiative accepted by the Archbishop as the future direction of the diocese as a whole.	The overall concept and the stages of implementation.  The theological underpinning.	DVD from Archbishop Kelly together with suitable documentation.  Theological Reflection Packs designed for use in small conversation groups.  Training in facilitation for small group leaders.
To establish the concept of the pastoral area as an important sub-unit of the diocese in the minds and hearts of the people.	Establishing pastoral area wide communication processes – initiate discussions about spiritual patronage.  Meetings of priests, deacons and lay ministers to share good practice.	The Pastoral Formation Department
To set up consultative structures at the level of the pastoral area in readiness for the preparatory phase.  (The first task of these groups could be to look at their local social context.)	Pastoral Area Working Group Pastoral Area Ministry Team Pastoral Area Clergy Meeting	Vicariate for Evangelisation

## Pastoral Areas in Transition

The Pastoral Areas entering this stage of implementation would receive their new name and spiritual patrons – something established during a specially designed Liturgy. During this transition phase, through various consultative and collaborative structures, it will work out the details of its own proposed way forward within the guidelines given out by the diocese. This would include the following activities and intentions:

<b>Intention</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Sources of Support</b>
To refine the collaborative structures necessary for this transitional phase.	Pastoral Area Working Group Pastoral Area Ministry Team Pastoral Area Clergy Meeting	Vicariate for Evangelisation offering advice and sharing good practice.
To deepen a sense of the Pastoral Area within the constituent parishes.	Priests beginning to say Mass in other parishes within the area – other common activities.	Vicariate for Evangelisation offering advice and sharing good practice.
To undertake specific research into the present resources of the Pastoral Area.	Building Review – including the identification of prime sites for administrative and pastoral work Human Resources Audit Financial Resources Review	Vicariate for Evangelisation  Vicariate for Finance and Development
To devise a proposal for the pastoral development both of the Pastoral Area as a whole and its constituent parishes.	Admin & Communication Provision of Mass and the Sacraments Sacramental Preparation Pastoral Care Education in Faith Spiritual Development Evangelisation and Mission Social Activities Networking with other partners.	Vicariate for Evangelisation acting as a critical friend throughout this process.  Diocesan Departments Pastoral Formation Team  Other Agencies including CASE, Ireneaus, Hope University etc..
To devise a coherent Financial Plan.	Proposing a suitable budget for the implementation of these proposals  Agreeing processes of financial management between the Diocese, the Pastoral Area and the constituent parishes.	Vicariate for Finance and Development

At the end of this transition phase, the proposal would be presented to the Diocese for approval. Once ratified this would be formally celebrated in a liturgy in the presence of the Archbishop.

### **Pastoral Areas in Development**

The overall Pastoral Area Development Plan agreed with the diocese is now put in place with its structural changes, roles and responsibilities, pastoral objectives, financial planning and processes of review.

<b>Intention</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Sources of Support</b>
To implement changes in the use and purpose of any buildings that are required.	Establishment of the sites for administration and pastoral work.	Vicariate for Evangelisation Vicariate for Finance and Development
To bring about any changes in paid employment required under the agreed plan.	Employment issues re lay pastoral workers, administrative and secretarial staff.	Vicariate for Finance and Development. PFT
To set up systems of on-going formation and support for those involved in ministry, both lay and clergy.	1-to-1 and group appraisal for priests, deacons and lay ministers.	VGs, Fr John Smith and the Pastoral Formation Team
To implement the pastoral development objectives – each of which has been proposed in the following areas	Admin & Communication Provision of Mass and the Sacraments Sacramental Preparation Pastoral Care Education in Faith Spiritual Development Evangelisation and Mission Social Activities Networking with other partners.	Diocesan Agencies and Commissions
To renew and invigorate relationships between the Pastoral Area and other partner agencies.	Renewing the Home/School /Parish partnership. Deepening local Ecumenical contacts	Diocesan CED, Schools Dept. and Pastoral Formation Team.
To set up processes of reflection and review.	Encouraging on-going reflection by those involved in any kind of ministry.	Vicariate for Evangelisation

## **Timescales**

At present all the Pastoral Areas are at stage 1 (in preparation).

There are 3 Pilot Areas which are exploring stages 1 and 2 in parallel.

It is envisaged that the timescale for stage 2 could be anything from 12 months to 36 months, depending on the area and its preparedness.

It is hoped that within 10 years all Pastoral Areas would have reached stage 3.

## Appendix 4: Archbishop Kelly's address to Permanent Deacons

# Archdiocese of Liverpool Order of Deacons

Director: Rt Rev Mgr Austin W Hunt

## Information Bulletin

### May 2008

#### QUARTERLY IN-SERVICE MEETING - REPORT

The following are notes of the Address provided by the Archbishop of Liverpool on Sunday 27 April 2008 in the Cathedral. This information is for the diaconal community only. It is not for publication or any form of circulation.

One hundred and twelve deacons and wives attended sung evening prayer in the Cathedral presided over by the Archbishop. After prayer the Archbishop addressed the assembly on how he would like to see the diaconate develop particularly in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

***He opened his address by saying that these thoughts were "work in progress" and not in any way the finished article. In all that is under discussion we should not stop what we are currently doing but discuss and hold conversations so that the final outcome will be beneficial and positive.***

The history of the development of the diaconate, indeed of all ministries that we now know as bishop, priest and deacon, is complex. The Archbishop pointed to the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus as giving us clues as to the roles of what we would regard as ordained ministers.

He attributes:

- The task of writing letters i.e. giving instruction and guidance to whom today we would call **bishops**;
- Those who receive the letter as **priests**;
- Those who implement the guidance in the world and needs of the community as **deacons**.

The Archbishop gave examples of how in today's world deacons would be chairs of schools, leaders in such areas as SVP and UCM. He saw the diaconate ministry as very much an integrated effort of married men and women in a family/community enterprise. He gave examples from his

own diary where at present bishops represent the Church in areas such as these and in political and economic aspects of the life of the country, which might in the future be more fittingly carried out by deacons.

Fundamental to the Archbishop's views is the concept of differentiation as expounded by Fr Bernard Lonergan, SJ. It is important that distinctive tasks, duties and responsibilities are carried out by those who are best suited and appointed. If all tasks and responsibilities are undertaken indiscriminately then all ministries are endangered. He particularly said that if the restored diaconate merely carried out roles that properly belong to priests that would be fatal to the diaconate.

Interestingly, he said that we should be careful of using the word **servant** in describing ministry. Only Christ can truly be said to be a servant in his action of redeeming humanity. If we talk of serving, then eventually who will there be to whom we minister?

In the context of developing the diaconate, the Archbishop referred to "Deus Caritas Est". The Pope speaks of diakonia but doesn't mention the permanent diaconate. Cardinal Cordes, President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, addressed the English bishops on this point and said that Rome was still evaluating the role of the diaconate as between its liturgical and service roles.

And so it is appropriate for us to think about the future roles of permanent deacons. Over the years as the Archbishop has attended our assemblies from Bournemouth onwards and in meeting recently with deacons on retreats and in action, he is wont to emphasise that the Church is not of itself or for itself.

Our whole task is to make present the pure gift of the Risen Christ and to renew the face of the earth. The making present of the Risen Christ is the task of the priest and so under this area comes, for example, Readers, Catechists, Bereavement Counsellors and those involved in Worship. Sunday is therefore the day for the priests. We will not achieve anything until we reclaim Sunday as the Lord's Day. Liturgically the Triduum is the sign for the priest.

The second task, that of renewing the face of the earth, belongs to the deacon. The practice of diaconal ministry should be in areas that affect peoples' lives in the world, for example, the sick, prisoners, schools and those in care homes. His vision is that this is carried out in teams of men and women, indeed families. Attention to the working environment is important. To show the importance of this ministry he would have the ordination to diaconate removed from those aspiring to priesthood. He felt that ordination to the diaconate be of married men and that wives and families, and also work colleagues, be more explicitly integrated into the liturgy.

The day of the deacon is Pentecost – the day of the Spirit who renews the face of the earth – and the day that is followed immediately by Ordinary Time. The deacon should preach on matters that

are vital to his work – not merely on rote. And maybe deacons who are qualified or have a particular knowledge should speak across pastoral areas or the diocese.

And so as a simile with the Trinity we have:

- Bishop – as ICON of the FATHER
- Priest – as ICON of CHRIST
- Deacon – as ICON of the HOLY SPIRIT

The Archbishop offers these views to be debated and fleshed out. He feels we now know each other to explore them in a proper manner. As with all we do, we have to move on from here. He assured us that the diaconate would progress and new entrants were to be sought and discerned.

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In the light of the above, I hope everyone clearly understands the diaconate is running as usual. As the Archbishop said in the first paragraph of the report, he has given us the opportunity of sharing his thoughts as he continues his intriguing reflection.

With best wishes

Austin W Hunt

## **Appendix 5: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form**

### **ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT BY REV. CHRIS FALLON**

*Identity, role and mission in a changing local church:  
a study of perceptions and attitudes among priests  
in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.*

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

*Thank you for being willing to consider participating in this study. This sheet aims to provide you with the information you need in order to decide whether to participate. Please feel free to contact me or either of my supervisors (contact details overleaf) for further clarification.*

#### **Summary**

The Liverpool Archdiocese has been greatly affected by the changes in the Catholic community such as the decline in numbers of people attending Mass regularly and of priests, the rise in the number of deacons and the emergence of lay ministries. The model of a parish priest (with or without assistant priests) ministering to one parish is fast disappearing and a variety of other models is emerging. The current process for revising pastoral structures in Liverpool, entitled 'Leaving Safe Harbours', is recommending the grouping of parishes into 'pastoral areas' looked after by small teams of priests, deacons and lay workers.

In this study, supported by the Archbishop, Ushaw College and the Derwent Charitable Consultancy, I want to explore how these changes are affecting the ways in which priests are coming to understand their identity and role within the new structures and to consider these different understandings in relation to the mission of the local church, the place of the Eucharist in the life of a Catholic community and the relationship between ordained and lay ministry. The work will complement a parallel study by Michael Fitzsimons into the emergence of lay ministries within the archdiocese and will draw on data from a planned national survey of deacons by Brendan Geary FMS. It is being supervised as a Ph D project within Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion and the methodology has been approved by the University of Durham Theology and Religion Ethics Committee.

#### **Personal background**

Since 1978 I have served as a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool in a variety of parish settings (including a short period in charge of two twinned parishes). As Director of the Department of Pastoral Formation (1985-1997), I was involved in diocesan initiatives to promote lay involvement in ministry, to support the mission of the church in this context, to deploy effectively the diminishing resource of clergy and to reorganise the provision of



pastoral ministry through the structures of parish, cluster, pastoral area, deanery and diocese. Since 1997, whilst retaining links with diocesan processes (and particularly with the Leigh deanery, where I live part-time) I have been working at Ushaw College in Durham, initially in the pastoral formation of seminarians and more recently in establishing St. Bede's Institute, providing formation for mission and ministry to lay people, ordinands and clergy from the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian denominations. I have developed a particular interest in emerging patterns of ministry, have held consultations on this topic at Ushaw and have been involved in external work related to it in seven dioceses and with the National Conference of Priests.

## **Structure of the project**

Review of demographic and social history of the Catholic community in England and Wales

Summary of English diocesan strategies to respond to the changing situation

Comparison with models of ordained ministry from elsewhere

Review of major trends in theology of ordained ministry and ecclesiology

Interviews with selected priests and bishops

Survey of priests in the Liverpool diocese

Case study of one pastoral area

Focus group of priests in grouped parishes

Consultation with four clergy inservice training groups

Analysis of data and further study of literature on emergent themes

Conclusions and extrapolation to the wider context

## **Expected Outcomes**

Paper at Ushaw Colloquium on priestly, diaconal and lay ministry, January 2008

Article(s) in journals, e.g., *The Pastoral Review*

Contribution to strategic planning and clergy inservice training in the Archdiocese of Liverpool

## **Your participation**

I will be inviting all the priests of the Archdiocese to participate through a written questionnaire in the first half of 2008, but I am also seeking five other levels of participation.

1. Preparatory Interviews: a sample of the clergy will be interviewed to establish the range of issues and responses in order to construct the survey.
2. Case study: the clergy of one pastoral area will be invited to take part in individual and group interviews at four times between September 2006 and December 2008.
3. Focus group: a group of clergy who already have experience of ministering in multiple parishes will be invited to meet four times between March 2007 and December 2009.

4. Consultations with clergy inservice groups: an opportunity will be given each time one of the clergy inservice groups meets between September 2006 and December 2009 to discuss the current stage of the research.

5. Interviews with priests, deacons and lay people in selected dioceses outside the UK.

## **Recording**

The interviews and group meetings will be recorded and transcribed solely for the purposes of the research and any subsequent publications. The recordings and transcripts will be kept securely in encrypted digital storage. Information in the dissertation and any other presentations or publications will be anonymised except where the role or identity of the individual is integral to the point being made, in which case explicit consent will be sought.

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**UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM  
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION  
DEPARTMENTAL ETHICS COMMITTEE  
RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FORM  
CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:**

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT  
BY REV. CHRIS FALLON

*Identity, role and mission in a changing local church:  
a study of perceptions and attitudes among bishops, priests and deacons  
in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.*

(The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself)

*Please cross out  
as necessary*

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? YES / NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to  
discuss the study? YES / NO

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? YES / NO

Have you received enough information about the study? YES / NO

Who have you spoken to? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof/Rev.....

Do you consent to participate in the study? YES/NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:

\* at any time and

\* without having to give a reason for withdrawing and

\* (if relevant) without affecting your position in the University? YES / NO

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) .....

## Appendix 6: Survey sent to all participants in the study

### ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT

*Please return this 3-page questionnaire in the envelope addressed to*

*Fr. Chris Fallon at St Philomena's Presbytery.*

<b>TABLE 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>		
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Date of Birth</b>		
<b>Place of Birth</b>		
<b>If adult convert, date of reception into Catholic Church</b>		
<b>Seminary(ies) attended</b>		
<b>Date of Ordination</b>		
<b>Diocese or order/congregation</b> <i>If more than one, please list in chronological order</i>		
<b>Ministry setting</b> <i>Please tick any you have worked in for a significant period, whether part-time or full-time</i>		
<b>Parish Ministry</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Teaching or Formation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Chaplaincy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Admin post in diocese or order</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*Tables 2 and 3 are included to help give shape to the comments made in the interviews and group discussions about models of priesthood and theological worldviews and to explore correlations between each person's model of priesthood, theological worldview and personality type.*

*Whilst these brief position statements inevitably lack nuance, some of these phrases have emerged from research elsewhere and it will be helpful, as far as possible, to test their relevance to the priests of our diocese. So please make the choice that is closest to your own position. Your responses in this questionnaire will not replace the subtleties of the more discursive comments you have already made, but will provide a basis for comparison with other research.*

*Please feel free to add comments at the end or on a separate sheet about the adequacy or otherwise of the categories.*

<b>TABLE 2 : MODELS OF PRIESTHOOD</b> (cf. Hoge & Wenger, <i>Evolving Visions of Priesthood, with some additional material</i> )							
<p><i>Please tick one box on each horizontal line, the one that best describes your position in relation to the poles of each area of difference between these models as described in recent US research:</i></p> <p><i>if you identify completely with one of the pole-statements, tick the box nearest to it;</i></p> <p><i>if your view is neutral, tick the box in the middle;</i></p> <p><i>if you lean more to one pole than the other, tick the box to that side of the middle one.</i></p>							
AREAS OF DIFFERENCE	CULTIC MODEL	YOUR OWN POSITION					SERVANT LEADER MODEL
<i>Ontological Status of the Priest</i>	“man set apart”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	pastoral leader
	sees priesthood as a matter of life and being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	sees priesthood as a matter of rôle and function
<i>Attitude Toward the Church Magisterium</i>	values strict hierarchy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	values flexible structure
	values vertical accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	values mutual accountability
<i>Liturgy and Devotions</i>	follows established rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	allows creativity
<i>Theological Perspective</i>	defends “orthodoxy”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	allows for theological differences
	values strict adherence to established expression of faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	values renewal of theological language and understanding
<i>Attitude Toward Celibacy</i>	essential to the priesthood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	optional for the priesthood

**TABLE 3: THEOLOGICAL WORLDVIEWS**

<i>Please tick one box on each horizontal line, expressing your response to each of the statements</i>					
	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>
Grace is at work in every person and situation, even the broken and sinful, and the Church's task is to reveal, celebrate and serve this action of grace					
The world is in crisis and the Church is the ark of salvation					
God's saving work is served by all people of good will					
Explicit Christian witness is essential to God's saving work					
The opening lines of <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> express the heart of the Church's mission: being in close touch with the world and its needs					
<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> is overly optimistic about human nature and culture					
In order to be truly Catholic (found throughout the world) the Church needs to focus not on itself but upon the world it was sent to redeem					
In order to be truly Catholic (teaching the fullness of faith) the Church needs to conform itself more closely to Christ and to confront sin and evil in the world					

*Please feel free to add further comments in the space below or on a separate sheet before returning this 3-page questionnaire in the envelope addressed to  
Fr Chris Fallon at St Philomena's Presbytery.*

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