

2017

Married Catholic Priests: Their Unique Priestly Identity and Potential Catalyst for Change in the U.S. Catholic Church

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Married Catholic Priests: Their Unique Priestly Identity and
Potential Catalyst for Change in the U.S. Catholic Church

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELING OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ST. THOMAS
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By
Kenneth D. Varble

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2017

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

Married Catholic Priests: Their Unique Priestly Identity and
Potential Catalyst for Change in the U.S. Catholic Church

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am thankful to God for His miraculous grace and the strength He has given me to pursue a lifetime of learning. I pray that this dissertation honors Him and all men the Holy Spirit has called to be *in persona Christi* on this earth; our Catholic priests.

I would not have been able to pursue this dream without the love and support of my children, Meredith, Hannah, Sera and John. You truly are God's blessings to me.

To my cohort 22 colleagues; thank you for a tremendous learning experience. Each of you brought your intellectual gifts to our shared experience and through that sharing, I have benefited greatly. Thank you.

To the faculty and staff of the College of Education, Leadership and Counseling I wish to thank you all and specifically my academic advisor, Fr. Jean-Pierre Bongila for your guidance, Dr. Bruce H. Kramer for inspiration, and all departmental faculty who have given to me of their time, knowledge and experience throughout my doctoral journey.

To the faculty and staff of the Department of Catholic Studies; I wish to thank Dr. Robert Kennedy, Dr. John Boyle, Fr. Daniel Griffith, Dr. Paul Wojda, Dr. Gregory Coulter, Fr. Jan Michael Joncas, and Dr. Michael Naughton. Thank you for sharing your immense wisdom about the Catholic Faith. I feel privileged to have sat in each of your classrooms. To Sister Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Endowed Professor for the Social Scientific Study of Religion at The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, thank you for your kind words of encouragement and for sharing your wisdom with me.

A special thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Karen Rogers and my dissertation committee members, Dr. Sarah Noonan and Dr. Massimo Faggioli, for your support and encouragement throughout this process.

Lastly, God's blessings to each and every one of the Catholic Priests who gave of their precious time to a graduate student they had never met, to further the knowledge and study of our Catholic Faith. You have each been an inspiration to me and given me a renewed enthusiasm for the Catholic priesthood. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined the lived experiences of fifteen married, Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic priests who were ordained through either the Pastoral Provision or the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. The purpose of this study was to understand the unique experiences these men share, differentiated from that of their celibate brethren. Data were collected through semi-structured phone interviews. Questions focused on leadership, celibacy, a priest shortage, the abuse crisis, homosexuality and same-sex attraction in the priesthood, priestly identity, the priest/parishioner relationship, alienation, the Pastoral Provision, the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, and the roles and effects that married priests might have on the U.S. Catholic Church. Analysis was crafted through the lens of postmodern American culture and role theory, including frames of Collective Consciousness, Complex Religious Systems, Symbolic Interactionism, and Presentation of Self. Themes that emerged were identity, role and career limitation. The more salient findings of this study are that these men are institutionally disadvantaged due to barriers of identity construction and their prescribed roles within the Church, both of which hinder career development within the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church. Married priests tend to fully respect and admire those men called to the priesthood and who have accepted the vow of celibacy. They often struggle with financial hardships, particular to answering the call to the Catholic priesthood while supporting a spouse and family. This study highlights frustration with their limited roles in the Church and the effects those roles have on their identities and careers. Additionally, this study identifies necessary areas of support for this unique cohort of Catholic priests.

Keywords: married Catholic priests, Pastoral Provision, Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, priestly celibacy, priestly identity.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In July 1980, Pope John Paul II approved a little known and quietly publicized, *Pastoral Provision*, which created a structural pathway for reception of individual and often married, Episcopal priests into full communion with the Catholic Church as ordained Catholic priests. The Pastoral Provision provided these individual priests, who wished for a return to traditional Catholic values, an avenue by which they could convert to Catholicism and then petition the Church for dispensation from the obligation of clerical celibacy and receive Holy Orders as married clergy within the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church. In 2012, the Pastoral Provision helped facilitate the creation of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. The Ordinariate was created to ease the transition of entire congregations of Episcopalians and U.S. Anglicans into the Catholic Church. These congregations sought a return to traditional values of the Catholic Church, due to liberal reforms in their respective churches. The Ordinariate allows for the preservation of some Anglican patrimony in the Catholic Mass as well. The Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter opened a controversial door, however, by which the reception of a small group of married, mostly former Episcopal priests, could be welcomed into the ranks of the normatively celibate, Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic priesthood. Today, there are approximately 125 such married men serving as Roman Catholic priests in the United States (Sullins, 2016).

The focus of this dissertation is on the perspectives of this unique group of married, Latin Rite priests. While much has been written on the identity of Catholic priests and the nature of priestly celibacy, there is a gap in research related to the experience of these unique, married priests and how they would change, or have changed, the culture of the U.S. Catholic Church.

Obligatory celibacy has been practiced in the Latin Rite Catholic priesthood since the mid-sixteenth century; ample time for establishment as a prominent tradition in the Latin Rite Catholic Church. Provisional inclusion of non-celibate, Latin Rite clergy now has a short 36-year history in the Church and perhaps the addition of married clergy has not been particularly visible, beneficial, or deleterious to the social structure of the U.S. Catholic Church, but lingering questions, and a growing interest, continue to surface within Catholic laity, regarding a married priesthood.

Statement of the Problem

Pew research reveals that between 62% and 72% of U.S. Catholics believe priests should be allowed to marry, despite the Church's stance that the priesthood should remain normatively celibate (Pew Research, 2014, p. 4; Pew Research, 2015). This majority percentage of Catholic laity believe that some of the social ills of the Catholic Church might be resolved by allowing a married clergy. Two of these perceived social ills are highly charged and divisive subjects. First, there is a perception of an abnormally high rate of homosexuality, or at least same-sex attraction, in the Catholic priesthood and second, an unusually high rate of pedophilia and sexual abuse committed by Catholic clergy. A third, less divisive perception, is that acceptance of a married clergy might resolve the issue of a priest shortage in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this qualitative research study was to examine the perspectives of married Catholic priests and to better understand how they experience and make meaning of their roles, duties and leadership within the U.S. Catholic Church. A second purpose was to examine how

they perceive their roles and their effect on the collective consciousness, culture and structure of the Church.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the perspectives and how do married Catholic priests experience and make meaning of their roles, duties and leadership provided within the Church and to their parishioners?
- 2) How do married Catholic priests perceive their roles and their effect upon the collective consciousness, culture and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church?

Significance of the Study

The research examined the priestly identity of married clergy to understand the unique challenges faced by this cohort of priests and what impact their unique character and identity may have on the Catholic Church in the United States. This research will partially fill the gap in research on married, Latin Rite Catholic priests and contribute to the body of knowledge in Catholic Studies and Church leadership, as most Catholic parishioners' only connection to Church hierarchy is through their local parish priest. This research may also have implications on the continuance of the Pastoral Provision, the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter and for the future of a married priesthood in the Latin Rite Catholic Church. It also gives voice to the small group of married, Latin Rite clergy in the United States.

Definition of Terms

Alter Christus: Latin, meaning: another Christ. In Roman Catholicism, the priest is not a mere instrument of the Lord, but Christ's priestly image on earth.

Bishopric: In this dissertation used solely to describe the office or rank of a bishop.

Celibate: Abstaining from marriage and sexual relations, typically for religious reasons.

Chastity: Abstaining from extramarital, or from all, sexual intercourse, whether in marriage or not, based on one's state in life. All Catholics, not just priests, are called to live in a state of chastity.

Contenance: The complete refraining from sexual intercourse (in the canonical sense as distinguished from a philosophical sense).

Diaconate: The group of men who hold the office or rank of a deacon of the church.

Diaspora: Typically used to identify the dispersion of Jews beyond Israel, but for this dissertation used to identify the dispersion of Eastern Rite Catholics from their original homelands.

Ecumenism: The principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian churches.

Episcopate: The episcopate is the collective body of all the bishops of the Church. The historical episcopate comprises all the bishops who are in valid apostolic succession.

In Persona Christi: Latin, meaning: In the person of Christ. In Roman Catholicism, the priest acts in the person of Christ in pronouncing the Words of Institution, by which the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes the Blood of Christ.

Pastoral Provision: Established in 1980 by Pope John Paul II, the provision allows for a dispensation, approved on a case-by-case basis, from the practice that a Latin Rite priest be unmarried to allow for the ordination of former Anglican / Episcopalian priests within the Catholic priesthood. The Pastoral Provision also allows diocesan bishops to establish Anglican Use personal parishes for congregations of former Episcopalians. These personal parishes use a liturgy that retains some of the patrimonies of the Anglican liturgy and was a precursor to the establishment of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in 2012.

Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter: Created in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in the United States and Canada is similar in structure to a diocese but has no regional geographic boundary. Mass is celebrated using the patrimony of an Anglican liturgy. Personal Ordinariates are a unification effort by the Catholic Church with groups of Anglicans and Episcopalians in the United States, Canada, England and Australia.

Presbyterate: The priesthood, as the second rank of holy orders above the Diaconate and below the Episcopate.

Rescript: A written answer from a pope to a legal inquiry or petition.

Transubstantiation: The conversion of the substances of the Eucharistic elements; bread and wine, into the body and blood of Christ at consecration, with only the appearances of bread and wine remaining.

Political, Sociological and Theological Terminology

I would like to emphasize that this dissertation is primarily a sociological work, not a theological one. Throughout this dissertation, I use vocabulary from political and sociological realms, such as the terms conservative and liberal, that often have no true complementary meaning in the historical perspective of the Catholic Church, where the closest complementary vocabulary might be traditionalist and reformist. When using such terms, I hope to have provided the necessary context to explain why specific vocabulary was used, to reduce reader confusion between conservatism in the sociological sense and traditionalist in the theological sense, as example. Additionally, converts to Catholicism, which both myself and these married priests are, are often more culturally and politically conservative than are “born and raised” Catholics. This does not, however, necessarily translate to a theological difference between this cohort of married priests and their celibate brethren.

The Interconnectivity of the Anglican and Episcopal Churches in Relation to the Roman Catholic Church

In the simplest of explanations, the Church of England was formed in the sixteenth century when the English Monarchy held a nationalist belief that authority over the church rightly belonged in the hands of the English Monarchy, rather than the Roman Pontiff. The Church of England, known as the Anglican Church, considers itself Catholic and reformed, even today. This break with Rome was primarily a result of a wish for an autonomous national church rather than having distinct theological differences with the Catholic Church. The forming of the Episcopal Church represents another break of sorts. The English prevented the ordination of

American clergy to the Church of England, because they would not take the Oath of Allegiance to the English Crown, thus the Episcopal Church came to be in the newly formed United States.

In the most simplistic terms, the Episcopal Church in the United States, historically, remained essentially faithful to its Anglican traditions and the Anglican Church remained essentially faithful to its Catholic traditions, at least in comparison with other Christian denominations; hence the term *Catholic and reformed*. Faithfulness of tradition is important to this dissertation because the acceptance of married priests from the Anglican and Episcopal churches is predicated on this alignment of essential beliefs. Certain breaks with Catholic traditions in recent years by the Anglican and Episcopal churches, have been the primary cause of some conservative clergy from those traditions to seek reunification with the Catholic Church. There are, however, Lutheran, Methodist, and other Protestant clergy who have been called, accepted, and ordained through the Pastoral Provision as married Catholic priests as well. This very simplistic explanation of hundreds of years of complex history and theological differences is provided in this basic form only as an effort to explain why the Pastoral Provision and Personal Ordinariate have such a large percentage of former Episcopal and Anglican clergy, rather than a more diverse pastoral heritage.

Looking Forward

The following chapter provides a review of the literature as it pertains to topics of a married priesthood, including subjects of celibacy, the sexual abuse crisis, gay priests, a priest shortage, and priestly identity. Chapter 3 details the methodology used, such as the theoretical framework, how participants were selected and data collection procedures. Chapters 4 and 5 provide findings of the research interviews and includes many of the personal quotes from

married priests that express their experiences within the Catholic Church. Chapter 6 provides a theoretical analysis of the findings applying social theory from George Herbert Mead (1934), Herbert Blumer (1969), Erving Goffman (1959 & 1967), Émile Durkheim (2001), and others. Chapter 7 provides a summary of the dissertation conclusions as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two includes a review of extant literature on married priests, celibacy and priestly identity, ending with explanations of social theories supporting analysis of data in Chapter 6. The focus of this dissertation research is the lived experiences of married, Latin Rite Catholic priests and the questions of if and if so, how are married Catholic priests changing the culture and collective consciousness of the U.S. Catholic Church. The purpose of the literature review is to establish a preliminary theoretical framework for my dissertation topic and identify the research conducted on the tenants related to this framework. While much has been written on the role and identity of Catholic priests, as well as the nature of priestly celibacy (which is one definitive difference between celibate and married priests) there is a gap in the research related to how married priests would change or have changed, the culture of the U.S. Catholic Church. The provisional inclusion of married clergy to the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church now has a short 36-year history, following centuries of celibacy as the norm for Latin Rite priests. Research is needed to authenticate whether the inclusion of married priests to the Latin Rite has been particularly visible, beneficial or deleterious to the social structure of the Catholic Church. The following review of literature covers four key content areas surrounding this topic; a) the historical context of clerical celibacy; b) the recent provisional inclusion of married priests in the Latin Rite; c) modern issues with clerical celibacy; and d) priestly identity.

Celibacy: Its History and Modern Issues

The discipline of clerical celibacy is often identified as a major associated characteristic of the identity of a Catholic priest for laity of the Latin Rite Catholic Church. Celibacy refers to

abstention from both marriage and sexual relations. A normative Latin Rite priest is obligated to a vow of celibacy through acceptance of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Canon 277 §1 states:

Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven and therefore are bound to celibacy which is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart and are able to dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and humanity.

Continence, in this context, refers to a complete self-denial from sexual intercourse.

Married, Latin Rite priests, however, are not obliged to celibacy due to their dispensation from the discipline granted by the Holy See. Married priests must observe the rules of chastity within the context of marriage, just as all married Catholics are called to do, but there is some debate regarding their observance of perfect and perpetual continence (McLaughlin, 2010). The debate of whether married priests must observe perfect and perpetual continence is outside the scope of this dissertation, however, and I have seen no official Church document in the research that outlines a requirement to do so. However, priests are obliged to live a celibate life, in perfect and perpetual continence, should they find themselves widowed or divorced, just as any Catholic priest or deacon.

A History of Celibacy and the Catholic Church

Debate has encircled the discipline of celibacy throughout the history of the Catholic Church. Celibacy, while not required of priests in the early Church, was neither the exception nor the rule for clerics (Heid, 2000). This ambiguity of discipline is undisputed from the earliest days of the Church through the Middle Ages. The first appearance of celibacy as obligatory occurred during the Second Lateran Council in the year 1139, as Canon 7, which “did not intend to exclude married men from Holy Orders; it merely declared marriages contracted after the reception of orders to be invalid” (Heid, 2000, p. 14). The obligatory nature of celibacy for the

Catholic priesthood is also evident in the Council of Trent (1521-1545), at which point the Church called for an exclusively unmarried clergy (Heid, 2000). Scholars dispute the nature of priestly celibacy for the earliest clerics of the Church, however. Many consider an absence of Church legislation on the subject of celibacy before the sixteenth century as proof that there was no obligation for priests to remain celibate. Other scholars have suggested that from the earliest days of the Church priests were expected, through tradition of the Church, to live in sexual continence, even if married (Heid, 2000). Hence, there is some debate that married priests today must live in a state of perfect and perpetual continence, rather than just a state of chastity. To my knowledge, however, the Church has not definitively expressed an opinion on the matter.

The Church teaches us that Jesus Christ lived a life of sexual continence, while also suggesting that some of His apostles were married (cf. Mark 1:29-31; I Cor. 9:5; Olson, 2008). Most exegetes believe, and historical stories and letters of the lives of the apostles have suggested, that the apostles lived without their wives while in service to Christ and lived in a state of sexual continence after following Jesus and throughout their apostolic lives after his death and resurrection (Heid, 2000). Of the original 12 Disciples of Christ, plus Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot, and Saint Paul, later named as an Apostle of Christ, only Peter verifiably was married. The Apostle, Philip, is also believed to have been married, but there has been some argument as to this fact. Scripture and early Church writings have been unclear as to whether many of the other Apostles were married or not, although there do exist writings that several were virginal upon their deaths (Cochini, 1981). Regardless of the marital status of the Apostles, the Church has held these men up as examples of chastity and priests who observed perfect continence after accepting the call of Jesus Christ to serve the Church.

Now, as we have seen, if the Churches had not always kept a precise memory of the Twelve's family situations before their being called by Christ, they still had a common certainty that those of the apostles who could have been married had then stopped conjugal practice and observed perfect continence. (Cochini, 1981, p. 437)

While much can be debated regarding the history of celibacy in the Catholic Church, the Church stresses the importance of celibacy as an honored tradition. Pope John Paul II wrote specifically about this issue when speaking to all priests on Holy Thursday 1979 for the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. John Paul stated the following:

The Latin Church has wished, and continues to wish, referring to the example of Christ the Lord Himself, to the apostolic teaching and to the whole Tradition that is proper to her, that all those who receive the sacrament of Orders should embrace this renunciation for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. (John Paul II, 1979, para. 8)

This commentary by John Paul II on the importance of renunciation of marriage for clerics comes just a year before he made an exception to clerical celibacy in the form of the Pastoral Provision. This exception, however, was an ecumenical effort to reunite some parishioners and clergy of the Anglican and Episcopal churches back into full communion with the Catholic Church. The provision highlights the meaningful expression that although the tradition of celibacy is the preferred norm, the Church remains amenable to exceptions that promote the greater good of ecumenism. Clerical celibacy has a muddled, yet significant history, influenced by the societal norms and issues that faced the Church throughout history. For modern society, however, celibacy is regarded much like marriage without divorce; as an eschatological virtue that far exceeds what modern society deems possible (Bleichner, 2004). Perhaps this is the one of the reasons that so many within the Church see clerical celibacy as an unnecessary vestige of history, while the Church, at the same time, holds it up as a virtuous effort worth maintaining.

The Inclusion of Married Priests

The inclusion of married men to the Catholic priesthood has a long and complex history. Since the medieval Great Schism, when the universal Christian Church split between the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) Rite Churches, celibacy has been the predominately normative discipline of the Latin Rite, but more complex in the Eastern Rite. Provided in the following paragraphs is a short discussion of this historical difference and then a discussion on the evolution of the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

Eastern Rite Catholic Priests

No serious discussion about married clergy within the Roman Catholic Church can ignore historical exceptions to the discipline of celibacy. One such exception is that of married clergy within the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches.

Comprising the Roman Catholic Church is both the Latin (Western) Rite Church and the Eastern Rite Churches, of which there are 23. The terms, *Western* and *Eastern*, are historically used to distinguish these churches, but this distinction is more historical than geographical. Historically, Eastern Rite Catholic Churches were located in Eastern Europe, India, North Africa and the Middle East, while Latin Rate Churches were located in the Americas, Western Europe, and North Africa. One should note that these churches were not seen as branches or denominations of a larger body, but were considered to be the embodiment of a particular place, or community, within the one, unique, and whole, Roman Catholic Church. The difference lay in the expression of faith through specific and distinctive liturgical Rites, customs, disciplines, and traditions.

Of importance to this review of literature is that Eastern Rite Catholic Churches, which are in full communion with the Holy See, allow ordination of married men to the priesthood, although clerical celibacy is the norm for the bishopric. It is the practice and rule of ordination in the Eastern Rite that a married priest must be married prior to ordination. Without exception, the Eastern Rite forbids marriage after priestly ordination, as does the Latin Rite, and also forbids married clergy from the episcopate, meaning advancing their career to the level of a bishop of the Church, as does the Latin Rite.

Pope Francis recently lifted a ban, which had been in place for 85 years, that disallowed Eastern Rite bishops from ordaining married men to the priesthood in diaspora, meaning outside their traditional Eastern territories. Pope Francis, by removing this ban in 2014, reaffirmed and restored the tradition of the Eastern Rite Churches to ordain married men to the priesthood in diaspora, meaning they could now ordain married men within the United States (Catholic Church, 2014).

What must be clearly stated for readers of this dissertation is that the tradition of the Catholic Church regarding priestly celibacy is complex, even from its earliest days, with little clearly defined in writing until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, leaving much of the early Church's history open for interpretation as to the "tradition" of clerical celibacy.

Tradition defined by the Eastern Catholic Churches would be one of non-mandatory celibacy, with clerical celibacy as an anomaly outside the Bishopric. Eastern Catholic Christians make up less than 2% of Catholics worldwide, however. For the purposes of this dissertation I contend that the discipline of clerical celibacy in the Apostolic Catholic Church was well established as a virtue, and practiced in some form, far before it was mandated for Latin Rite

priests in the sixteenth century. Furthermore, for the U.S. Catholic Church, given its short 240-year history, tradition is empirically and unquestionably one of Latin Rite clerical celibacy. It is from this perspective that this dissertation focuses entirely on the experiences of U.S. Catholics, and U.S. Catholic priests, who have very little collective experience with any other form of tradition, in the clerical celibacy sense, until the 1980s with the developments surrounding the approval of the Pastoral Provision.

Pastoral Provision Priests

As noted in the introduction to this literature review, in July 1980, Pope John Paul II approved what is known as the Pastoral Provision, which began the process of reconciliation with some members of the Episcopal and Anglican priesthoods. The history of this gateway of reconciliation began in the late 1970s when conservative Episcopal priests, and in some cases their entire congregations, wished for a return to Catholic principles and sent appeals to do so to Catholic leadership. These Episcopal priests made their appeals through Archbishop Jean Jadot, the Apostolic Delegate in Washington and often directly to Cardinal Franjo Šeper, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican (Fichter, 1989). These appeals were eventually routed through the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and approved for a hearing at the Holy See, where each request sought examination and final approval directly from the Holy Father. The Reverend Luther Parker, assistant to Cardinal Bernard Francis Law and a converted Episcopal priest, was the official for this program until March of 1981, when Cardinal Law was appointed an ecclesiastical delegate for the implementation of the Pastoral Provision as Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardo (Fichter, 1989).

The Pastoral Provision process has been kept fairly obscured from the Catholic faithful, primarily because the provision stipulates that married priests be appointed to positions outside the normal care of souls as parish pastors, limiting, somewhat, their close contact with parishioners (Fichter, 1989). A primary reason for the deemphasis of the provision was the delicate ecumenical negotiations taking place between the two churches at the time of the announcement. The Catholic Church may have hoped for a greater number of Episcopal and Anglican clergy returning to the Catholic Church, but only 42 such priests had received Holy Orders within the Catholic Church ten years after the announcement (Fichter, 1989) and thirty years after the Pastoral Provision was approved there had only been about 100 married Catholic priests ordained (Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, 2011). It appears that few U.S. Catholics are even aware that their Church allows married priests.

Priests of The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter

A Personal Ordinariate is an ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Catholic Church that does not cover a geographical boundary, as does a diocese (Kasomo, 2011). An easily understood similar example of an Ordinariate is the Roman Catholic Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. It is headed by a bishop and was established to serve the pastoral care needs of all American Catholics in the service of their nation, wherever they may be stationed, within or without the United States, in peacetime or at war. Therefore, the Military Archdiocese has no geographical boundary as do all other dioceses, and is somewhat then more similar to a Personal Ordinariate, which has a national or multi-national geographic boundary, rather than a local or regional geographic boundary.

The importance of a Personal Ordinariate to the discussion of married priests is that the Church established Personal Ordinariates for groups of Anglicans and Episcopalians who sought to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. The first such Ordinariate, *The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham*, was established in January 2011 for England and Wales. The second Ordinariate, *The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter*, was founded in January 2012, for the United States and Canada (Kasomo, 2011). A third Ordinariate, *The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross*, was established in June 2012, for the Commonwealth of Australia. These Personal Ordinariates created a pathway for the ordination of married, former Episcopal and Anglican priests as Catholic priests in their respective countries. According to their website the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter currently has 43 Roman Catholic parishes and communities across the United States and Canada.

Modernity and Issues of Clerical Celibacy

The Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Franjo Šeper, made it clear in 1980 that publicity regarding the acceptance of married clergy into the Catholic priesthood should be minimized (Fichter, 1989). The Church wished for this minimalization of publicity so as to limit unwanted attention to this provisional change in tradition due to tenuous ecumenical efforts with other Christian faiths. The Church has been consistent in its communications that the inclusion of married priests to the Latin Rite priesthood is a temporary reunification effort with the Anglican Church following the schism of the Reformation and that the tradition of a celibate priesthood is to be the continued discipline of the Latin Rite Church (Fichter, 1989). Clerical celibacy is not dogma of the Church, but it is a central tradition of the Latin Rite faith and is considered a disciplinary norm (Fichter, 1989). Many former Catholic priests, who left the Church to marry, have been refused by the Vatican when petitioning for

reacceptance into the approved folds of the Catholic priesthood through the Pastoral Provision. The Church has made it clear that the Pastoral Provision in no way signals a social movement toward optional celibacy in the Americas or elsewhere in the worldwide, Latin Rite Catholic Church.

The Priest Shortage

One of the most frequently recurring arguments for abandoning the obligatory rule of celibacy in the modern Latin Rite Church has been the need to increase vocations to the priesthood. This is especially true in those countries where priest shortages are most dramatic, such as the United States (Chang, 1998, and Gautier, Perl & Fichter, 2012). It should be noted, however, that there is little evidence that eliminating the requirement of celibacy would increase the numbers of young men who would take on the life of a priest (Galot, 2005). Jean Galot, a renown Christologist, highlighted the recent drastically decreased vocations of Protestant churches, who have married pastors, as proof that celibacy alone is not likely to be a traceable cause of clergy desertion (Galot, 2005). Loneliness is also frequently touted as a reason for clergy desertion. Loneliness is reported as problematic by less than half of all actively ministering Catholic priests sampled in a 2009 survey (Gautier, Perl & Fichter, 2012). In 2001 priest surveys conducted by sociologists Dean Hoge and Jaqueline Wenger, celibacy ranked 6th on a list of the 20 most important problems facing priests; ranked below a) the way authority is exercised in the Church; b) too much work; c) unrealistic demands and expectations of lay people; d) loneliness of priestly life; and e) being expected to respect Church teachings I have difficulty with (Hoge and Wenger, 2003). These data suggest that celibacy is not high on the list of issues facing priests and would have little impact on retaining priests who desert the Church.

A 2002 survey of 1,854 priests, which was administered after the abuse crisis peaked in media coverage, indicated that the top four spontaneous replies to the question “what are the most important problems facing the Roman Catholic Church in the United States today?” were “shortage of priests” (25%), “problems with bishops and hierarchy” (20%), “child abuse by clergy” (18%), and “restoring credibility to priests” (13%) (Hoge & Wenger, 2003, p. 147). Many, including Pope Benedict XVI, believe that a decrease in post-industrial age family size is the principal cause of the decrease in priestly vocations as there have been fewer sons in families who might otherwise look toward a life within the Church and who might be encouraged by family to do so (Garber, 2008).

The priest shortage not only affects individual parishes but a 2002 report suggested that the priest shortage has affected the 1,110 Catholic hospitals and health care facilities, 1,085 residential care facilities, 1,406 Catholic charities, 8,170 Catholic Schools, and 233 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States as well (Schoenherr, 2002). A 1993 Los Angeles Times poll with 2,064 respondents suggested that the reasons Catholic priests leave the priesthood are; (16%) celibacy alone as the issue, (16%) work alone, and (68%) both celibacy and work related issues (Greeley, 2004). Central to the analysis of data from this research project, found later in chapter 6, professor and priest Fr. Jean Galot suggested desertions from the priesthood are more likely to be tied to the loss of priestly identity and a loss of faith in the value of the priesthood than with issues of celibacy (Galot, 2005). Modernity has also brought with it a general apathy toward long-term commitment. One can see this in rising divorce rates and declining marriage rates. One could argue that if society’s understanding of long-term commitment is impaired, so too could the understanding of a long-term commitment to celibacy for the priesthood be impaired (Bleichner, 2004).

The Sexual Abuse Scandal

Another frequently recurring argument against the practice and discipline of priestly celibacy has revolved around the issue of sexual abuse within the priesthood. While the abuses caused by priests are awful and rightly abhorred, it is important to remember that such atrocities are committed in all stages and areas of life, not only within the celibate priesthood, but also in marriage and the single lives of lay men and women as well. Pedophilia and sexual deviance are human deficiencies, not priestly deficiencies. Criminal psychiatrist Hans-Ludwig Kröber indicated that Catholic priests are involved in cases of sexual abuse at below-average rates than other men and argued that men who do not practice celibacy are 36 times more likely to become child abusers (Cattaneo, 2011). Trending data from 2007, 2008 and 2009 suggest that sexual abuse prevalence rates have lingered around 0.4 to 0.5 percent for priests in the United States, with the overall prevalence in society around 1% to 3% (McGlone & Sperry, 2012). Statistics from 1950-2002, when much of the known priestly abuse occurred, suggested that approximately 4% of Catholic priests and deacons were accused of sexual abuse (USCC, 2004). Sexual abuse is a terribly under-reported crime so it is difficult to suggest rates of clerical abuse are higher or lower than its presumed prevalence within society. Very few would argue, however, that the reported instances of sexual abuse in the general population are anywhere near actual levels of abuse.

Taking such a muddled statistical perspective on this phenomenon in no way minimizes the disastrous effects such abuses have had on those involved. Moreover, many have rightly argued that the Church must take additional steps to develop reporting procedures and train current and future priests to understand and identify signs of sexual deviance within their brotherhood (Cattaneo, 2011). Enormous strides, however, have been taken to keep children

safe since the crisis of 2002. According to a 2004 John Jay College of Criminal Justice report, hundreds of thousands of catechists, seminarians and priests have been trained in child safety and protection since 2002 (McGlone & Sperry, 2012; USCC, 2004).

Homosexuality and Same-Sex Attraction

Similarly argued is that clerical celibacy requirements lead to a higher rate of homosexuality within the priestly brotherhood. While evidence does support a rising number of homosexual males in the priesthood, perhaps, more importantly, moral relativism and reductions in the social stigma of homosexuality may be root causes for the reported increases in homosexuality in the general population and thus correspondingly within the Catholic priesthood (Cattaneo, 2011). Thomas McGovern, in his 1998 book entitled *Priestly Celibacy Today*, commented on the modern trouble with relativism. McGovern argued the following:

If all truths are relative – the basic assumption of a pluralist philosophy – then nobody is prepared to articulate the idea of absolute ethical values, either out of lack of conviction or for fear of being ridiculed by the media. It is not surprising that in such a cultural context celibacy as a lifestyle would seem marginal and esoteric, not to mention the idea of considering such an option for oneself (McGovern, 1998, p. 24).

A study conducted in 2002 by the *Los Angeles Times* suggested that the rate of homosexuality within the priesthood, at that time, was about 16%. In that study, 72% of respondents self-identified as heterosexual and celibate. 12% self-identified as heterosexual and not always celibate, while 10% self-identified as homosexual and celibate and 6% self-identified as homosexual and not always celibate (Greeley, 2004). These statistics show not only an issue with homosexuality in the priesthood, but also highlights a significant percentage of priests as not faithful to their vow of celibacy. Without a doubt, celibacy is counter-cultural to the indulgence and radical individualism that is typical of our modern U.S. society (Cozzens, 2006).

While homosexuality and same-sex attraction in the priesthood are areas of concern for the Catholic Church, these are not issues with a definitive link to celibacy, however.

Priestly Identity

Identity denotes the determining characteristics with which one is or ought to be; a fact of being. Pastors of all faiths have vocational identities that includes such obligations as mediator, teacher, shepherd, evangelizer, and servant. The Catholic priest has the unique pastoral character of *alter Christus*; meaning ‘another Christ’ (Paul VI, 1965c; Marmion, 2005). The Catholic priest acts not in his own person, *in persona propria*, but in the person of Christ, *in persona Christi* while performing sacraments of the Church. This Christological dimension is unique to the Catholic faith, because it is dogma of the Catholic faith that Christ acts through the Catholic priest, supremely through the celebration of the Eucharist and the priest’s identity is inextricably linked with this sacrament of the Eucharistic (McGovern, 2010).

Priests, *in persona Christi*, are first and foremost divinely called. Their priestly identity begins, as it did in the case of the Apostles, with a divine call from Christ to serve His Church. Christ called the first twelve by saying “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17, NASB), but the priestly vocation is a divine calling because Christ also said “You did not choose Me, but I chose you” (John 15:16, NASB). This call to priestly vocation is not, therefore, something one can aspire to on one’s own, as is the call to holiness that all the baptized are called to through the common priesthood of the faithful (McGovern, 2010). This sacred character of the priesthood, an indelible sign imprinted on the soul of the priest, which “brings about a genuine change in the personal self,” is an important aspect of priestly identity (Galot, 2005, p.198).

The Catholic priest is also an icon of Christ. The Church often uses a language of representation that the priest is a living image of Jesus Christ; a transparent image of Christ the priest (John Paul II, 1992). Icon is art, but it is most notably liturgical art and as Christ was an icon of the invisible Father, the priest is an icon of the now invisible Son, Jesus Christ. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, Christ imprints His image on the soul of the priest, irrespective of the priest's personal moral qualities (McGovern, 2010).

Negative influences often tend to obscure or blur the clarity of this priestly identity, however (McGovern, 2010). The documents of Vatican II called for Catholic laity to reinvigorate the common priesthood of the faithful by further engaging them in parish administrative activities and evangelization. The hope of re-engaging laity over the past few decades has unintentionally led to a propensity to 'clericalize' the laity and 'laicize' the priesthood to a point where differentiated roles between priest and laity have become blurred (McGovern, 2010). This Post-Vatican II tendency to view the priesthood as from pedestal to participation or from cultic model to servant-leader model has added to the blurring of priesthood identity (Cozzens, 2000). The best example of this is the demystification of the priest during communion. Prior to Vatican II priests and deacons were the only persons to ever touch the consecrated host and laity would be very hesitant to approach the tabernacle. Post-Vatican II Eucharistic ministers approach the tabernacle often and handle the consecrated host in greater numbers than do priests and deacons. The priest may be unconsciously viewed as a less-sacred person because of this change in liturgical tradition; less another Christ, *alter Christus*, and more first among equals, *primus inter pares* (Bleichner, 2004).

The dialectic of priestly identity would be incomplete if the archetypal psychology of the priest/parishioner relationship were not also considered. As Cozzens (2000) defines them,

archetypes are social and cultural patterns ingrained in the collective consciousness. They give universal meaning to fundamental roles within society. Common archetypes include the following: a) teacher/student; b) king/subject; c) doctor/patient; and d) priest/parishioner. A dysfunctional dyad is a cause for problems. Take, for example, the relational dyad of student and teacher. If the dyad is fragmented between student and teacher, a contest of wills may ensue. If the dyad between king and subject is broken the likelihood of an uprising increases. The same might be argued for the dyad between priest and parishioner. For each of these relationships the dyad must include an understanding of mutuality, as well as respectful social distance. The priest, while differentiated from the laity, is also in need of hearing God's word and seeking pastoral care. Laity, in kind, must not overly idealize their priests. Clearly defined social roles are a significant aspect to a healthy relationship. When the priest/parishioner dyad is broken, priestly identity may become ruptured and unhealthy (Cozzens, 2000).

It is through this identity of *alter Christus* that the Church reaffirms the discipline of celibacy for the priesthood. Pope Paul VI, in an encyclical on the celibacy of the priest, commented that the law of celibacy should distinguish the priest's state of life for both the faithful and the world at large (Paul VI, 1967). In the introduction to Raymond Hedin's 2003 book *Married to the Church*, Hedin illustrates how inextricably linked celibacy is to the priesthood when he wrote the following:

Perhaps no group of men is as surrounded by an aura of mystery as are Catholic priests. All most people know is that priests are, or are supposed to be, celibate, that they do the work of the Church, and they are, or are supposed to be, somehow different from the rest of us. (Hedin, 2003, p. xxxv)

This expression of lay understanding of the normative Catholic priesthood is the antecedent condition from which the experience of laity with the Catholic priest must be examined.

Married Catholic Priests

While much of what precedes has identified how married priests have come about in the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church in the last 36 years and identifies issues that potentially shape their world-view, very little has been written on the lived experiences of these men and their families. While some has been written about Catholic priests who have left ministry to marry, and now, as laicized priests, struggle to have their voice heard, little has been written about the married men who now serve in active ministry, with approval of the institutional Church, as married Catholic priests. One book about laicized Catholic priests, entitled *Married Catholic Priests: Their History, Their Journeys, Their Reflections*, by Anthony Kowalski, focused directly on the difficulties Catholic priests often have with issues of celibacy, love for a woman, and marriage. While much of this book was beneficial to the understanding of these men and their journeys, what it respectfully lacked was an in-depth discussion with these men about how they feel, how they were treated, and what they have experienced as a result of their longing for marriage and the Church's refusal to hear their cries for inclusion, after their fall from Grace, so to speak. A phenomenological study of these men, is surely overdue, but in regards to this dissertation, they are no longer actively ministering with approval of the Catholic Church and have not been included in this research study.

Sociologist Ruth Wallace conducted research very similar to this dissertation subject and revealed her findings in a book entitled *They Call Him Pastor: Married Men in Charge of*

Catholic Parishes. This insightful book chronicled the experiences of 10 deacons and 10 laymen as they provided leadership, both administrative and spiritual, for Catholic parishes without resident priests. The book not only highlighted issues of parish leadership, but also delved into the parish experiences of the spouses and children of these married men who administer a Catholic parish without the daily involvement of a Catholic priest. The book also included perspectives from involved parishioners, non-resident priests and bishops. While providing much needed research on a similar, but alternative aspect of Church leadership it did not provide research on actively-ministering married Catholic priests.

A recent book by Reverend D. Paul Sullins entitled *Keeping the Vow: The Untold Story of Married Catholic Priests*, is perhaps the definitive research history to-date of actively ministering married priests in the U.S. Catholic Church. Released in 2016 after the research for this dissertation was completed, it succinctly provided a wealth of knowledge regarding Pastoral Provision priests, but provided no such data for married priests of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. The research, commissioned in 2007 by the Ecclesiastical Delegate for the Pastoral Provision in the United States, covers a vast array of questions regarding the Pastoral Provision and its married priests. Sullins conducted research on 72 active Pastoral Provision priests and their wives, using 3 written surveys and conducting 115 interviews (Sullins, 2016). Results from this research concluded that “virtually all (99 percent of priests and 100 percent of the wives) responded that they had been received well, or moderately well, by laypersons.” (Sullins, 2016, p. 11). Additionally, “almost all (96 percent of the priests and 98 percent of the wives) also reported that they had been well received by other priests” (Sullins, 2016, p. 11). While not particularly surprising that parishioners and priests would be outwardly cordial and well-receiving to these new married priests and their wives, it did raise questions about what

hidden animus might exist regarding the Pastoral Provision and these married priests in the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church. Sullins (2016) provided the following data:

In my 2009 survey of U.S. bishops, over a quarter (27 percent) reported that they have heard objections to the Pastoral Provision from their priests. One in six bishops (17 percent) reported that they do not particularly support the Pastoral Provision, and one in ten (11 percent) believed that the Pastoral Provision should be discontinued. A similar minority (14 percent) of Catholic priests expressed opposition to the Pastoral Provision in Hoge's 2001 survey. A few (8 percent) of the married priests reported having a negative encounter with a priest who disapproved of their status. (p. 11)

This suggests that the outward warm welcome married priests and their wives receive belies the concern that at least a noticeable minority of bishops and priests have with the presence of married priests within the Latin Rite Catholic Church.

Sullins' work also provided insight into the mindset of Pastoral Provision priests when it came to the discipline of celibacy. Sullins (2016) stated the following:

Ironically, given these opinions and their own state in life, the married priests and their wives are about twice as opposed to the ordination of married priests as are celibate priests. About half of both the married priests (54 percent) and the wives (49 percent) opposed regularizing receiving married men in the priesthood, a position held by only a quarter (28 percent) of celibate Catholic priests. (p. 187)

This gives credence to what follows throughout this dissertation that married priests tend to be very conservative, in their lives and in their theology, more so than perhaps their celibate brethren.

Sullins also comprehensively discussed the process of being ordained in the Catholic Church through the Pastoral Provision, the reasons men were converting to Catholicism and the experiences of married priests' wives. He also discussed, in detail, the question of clerical celibacy and if married priests were worse or better than their celibate counterparts, concluding that married priests tended to work more hours each week than their celibate brethren, although

both sets of priests work long hours (Sullins, 2016). Perhaps after some time has passed, as it already has for the Pastoral Provision, similar quantitative and qualitative research will be conducted on the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

Visual Representation of the Research Framework

After a review of the literature on the topics that most affect the daily lives of Catholic Priests and the development of their priestly identity, the following visual representation was developed to describe the theoretical framework that shaped the development of the research questions for this dissertation.

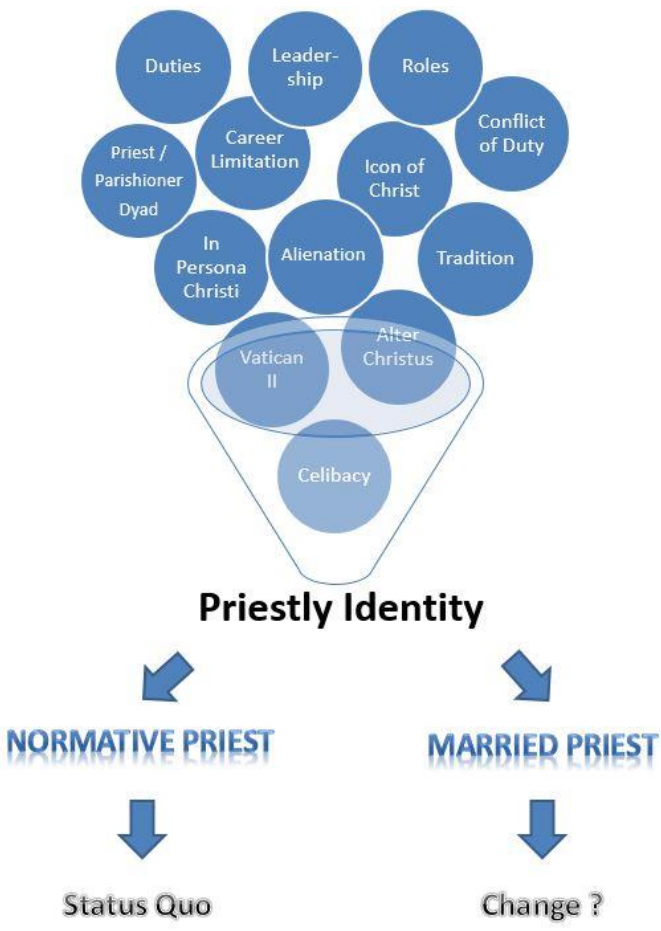


Figure 1: Visual Representation of the Theoretical Framework

As indicated in Figure 1 above, a priest's identity is shaped by many factors, not the least of which is the discipline of celibacy. While analyzing the various factors that have the potential to shape the identity of a Catholic Priest, one can observe that many of these factors might differ, dramatically, for a married priest, in comparison to a celibate priest. For example, feelings of loneliness may be different for a married priest than a celibate priest. Loneliness is not unique to a celibate life, however. Loneliness in marriage can be a real problem as well, but the type of loneliness may be different, and the ways in which a priest tries to alleviate that loneliness may thus be different. Similarly, the time demands for all priests are substantial. A married priest with a child, be that a toddler or a teenager, understands the unique additional demands on his day because of the responsibilities of being a father. The consequences of failing to provide a child sufficient quality time might significantly differ from the consequences of failing to provide sufficient time to a parishioner, or an aging parent or sibling, for example.

Married priests also have career limitations that celibate priests do not have. Roles that married priests serve in the Church can often vary significantly from those of a celibate priest. Potential conflicts of duty with personal responsibilities may vary significantly for married priests in comparison to a celibate priest. It was through this lens that I developed the research questions for this dissertation. These research questions examined the perspectives of married priests, how they experience and make meaning of their roles, duties and leadership provided to the Church and to parishioners, as well as how their unique perspectives might have an effect upon the collective consciousness, culture and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church.

Analytic Literature

This dissertation is a sociological research project. It is not meant to be theological in focus, although there is some theology included for context and reference. Social theory, in general, is a complex amalgamation of diverse methodological frameworks and paradigms to study, interpret and understand social phenomenon. Specific social theories often use hyper-definitional terms (such as competing definitions of role) to study specific aspects of society and social interactions to more fully understand our world, our experiences, our roles and our relationships. Although social theories often compete with one another for intellectual dominance, the vast number of social theories coexist and provide diverse perspectives into understanding specific phenomenon. This study primarily uses identity theory and role theory, both structuralist (focusing on the collective) and interactionist (focusing on the patterning of social interactions), to explain and give meaning to collective and individual experiences of married Catholic priests within the institutional Church.

A pilot study for this research project was conducted in 2012. I interviewed two married Pastoral Provision priests seeking knowledge as to what might be prominent issues for married Catholic clergy. During those interviews, themes emerged from the data that suggested a phenomenology of married Catholic clergy (Father A, personal communication, May 29, 2012; Father B, personal communication, June 7, 2012). Preliminary themes included pre-ordination career uncertainty, post-ordination conflict of duty, worries about celibate priest resentment, career limitations and a looking glass effect, in which priests were worried about how their children might be perceived as anomalistic and peculiar. Using the themes and the experience of those interviews, along with the themes and data that emerged during the actual research study, I identified several social theorists who have impacted the direction and analysis of this

dissertation research. These include George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, Émile Durkheim, Herbert Blumer and others to a lesser degree.

Identity Theory

Identity theory traces its roots to American sociologist and psychologist George Herbert Mead. Mead's framework for identity theory suggested that society shapes the self and the self shapes social behavior (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Society influences the self through shared language, symbolism and meaning, as we engage in social interactions. We must understand the society in which the self is acting because the self emerges from and is reflective of society. Sociologist Sheldon Stryker and colleagues furthered the definitional work of identity suggesting that the self consists of multiple identities organized into a hierarchy of identity and that identities are "internalized role expectations" (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). Stryker has enumerated underlying principles of identity that include the following: a) behavior is dependent upon a named or classified world where the names carry meaning in the form of shared behavioral expectations that grow out of social interaction; b) among the named classes are symbols that are used to designate positions in the social structure; c) persons who act in the context of social structure name one another in the sense of recognizing one another as occupants of positions and come to have expectations for each other's behavior; d) persons acting in the context of social structure also name themselves and create internalized meanings and expectations with regard to their own behavior; and e) that these expectations and meanings form the guiding basis for social behavior and along with the probing interchanges among actors, shape and reshape the content of interaction, as well as the categories, names and meanings that are used (Stryker, 1980; Stets & Burke, 2003). Of greatest importance to this dissertation is that

identities are internalized information and meanings, serving as schema or framework for persons when interpreting experience.

Role Theory

Role theory “deals with the organization of social behavior at both the individual and the collective level” (Turner, 2001, p. 233). Versions of role theory that focus on the collective level are referred to as structural theories, while versions of role theory that focus on the patterning of social interactions among individuals and smaller groups of individuals, are referred to as interactional theories. Throughout this dissertation, I have used both macro-level structural theories and micro-level interactional theories to analyze the data provided in this study.

Macro-Level Structural Role Theories

Collective consciousness and complex religious systems. French sociologist, psychologist and philosopher Émile Durkheim defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions – beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single moral community called a Church” (Durkheim, 2001, p. 46). Durkheim believed that human beings in a society have a collective consciousness, created by norms, beliefs, practices, traditions and values (Durkheim, 2001). If one believes that a collective consciousness does, in fact, exist under certain circumstances, then one could thereby further postulate that such a collective consciousness could exist in a microenvironment such as for Catholics in the United States, given the propensity for geographical and nationalistic differences in norms, beliefs, practices, traditions and values.

Durkheim also suggested that societies are unified through complex religious systems and that modernity may increase the chances of non-religious universalism, essentially causing a decline in religious faith (Durkheim, 2001). Non-religious universalism, in this context, is a term used to identify a worldview of universally applicable principles rather than any belief or dogma of a particular church. Durkheim also noted that complex societies have complex religious systems while less complex societies have less complex religious systems (Durkheim, 2001). No one would argue that the United States is not a complex society, and for the more than one billion Catholics worldwide, the complexities of the Catholic Church extend across vast expanses of the planet and through hundreds of languages and cultures. The collective consciousness of American Catholics is undoubtedly complex and the unifying force of that collective consciousness may very well be diminishing within our society due to the rise of non-religious universalism and secularism.

Role persistence. The idea of role persistence is a meaningful part of role theory that states that there is a “tendency for role structures, once more or less stabilized, to persist in spite of changes in the actors who play the roles” (Turner, 2001, p. 241). In context with the Catholic priesthood, this would mean that when a new priest was added to the diocesan structure, the tendency would be to allocate to this new priest all the roles allocated to other priests within this group of actors in order to maintain the original role structure of the priesthood. This is not always possible in the case of Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests, however, because of the nature of their differentiation.

This theory also states that a polarized group within a role structure may need someone inside the polarized group to play a mediator role within the larger organizational structure. This mediator would act in such a way to lessen potential disruptive tensions through humor, bridge

building, or calming influence. The meaningful expression of this issue, applied in context of the Latin Rite priesthood, would be that a polarized group of priests, in this case married priests, may need someone within that group to provide leadership, through calming influence or bridge building, to ease tensions between themselves and the larger group of traditional celibate priests.

Role allocation. Role allocation is “the attachment of individuals and categories of individuals in particular roles” (Turner, 2001, p. 242). For most of history, roles have been *ascribed*, such as those of male/female, white/black, or youth/elder, but in recent history participants can also *achieve* status in a society. This expression of role theory also distinguishes the difference between role incumbents, those normative to a particular role, and relevant alters, those who are not normative to a particular role. In context to this dissertation, role incumbents to the Catholic priesthood are normatively celibate and any married priest would be considered a relevant alter, a term used by Durkheim to denote one who is not normative to a particular role. Roles are evaluated by those interacting with the actor and role validation may be necessary for those who do not fit the stereotypical role expectations. Some Latin Rite traditionalists may be unwilling to attribute the role of Catholic priest to a married man, regardless of whether that priest can perform the role with sufficient adequacy and role conflict may then become an issue for those actors.

Micro-Level Interactional Role Theories

Symbolic interaction theory. Symbolic interactionism is a distinctive approach to the study of human behavior with its intellectual foundations created by the likes of respected sociologists George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley, John Dewey and others. The term symbolic interactionism was coined by Herbert Blumer, a student of George Herbert Mead, and

whose methodological approach to the subject more fully developed the ideas of his teacher.

The theory has three simple premises and they are as follows:

1) “that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;”

2) “that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows;”

3) “that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

The theory suggests that human beings act in their everyday lives based on these premises and that they act individually, collectively, or on behalf of, or representative of, some organization or group (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism is the study of both symbol and interaction in human behavior. Symbol, refers to any type of “social object (e.g., a physical object, a gesture or a word) that stands in place of, or represents, something else” (Given, 2008b, p. 848). Symbolic interactionism is comprised of not only symbols but the interaction that subsequently takes place with those symbols in the everyday lives of human beings. “Interaction highlights the significance of interpersonal communication in transmitting the meaning of symbols” (Given, 2008b, p. 848).

Presentation of self. Sociologist Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is a seminal work on social interaction that presents the social theory that when an individual comes into contact with other people, that individual will use the setting, their appearance and manner in an attempt to control the impression that others might make of him or her. In response and like kind, the person the individual is interacting with attempts the same process as they are

both trying to process information about each other (Goffman, 1959). Goffman views this interactive social process as a theatrical performance of sorts, called dramaturgy.

Goffman's theory suggests that when a person's role is not fulfilled successfully, the interaction becomes unbalanced, creating what Goffman would have described as a 'social distance'. Goffman argued that when ritual elements in social interactions are strained the expressible fabric of the interaction might thereby be strained (Goffman, 1967). In context of this dissertation, married priests and their spouses interact with parishioners in specific ways to control the impression that others have of them, in relation to the impression they have of the normative priesthood, so as to not disrupt the priest/parishioner dyad.

Literature Review Summary

A review of related literature provided a foundation from which this study was conducted. The research revealed a gap in research in regard to married clergy within the Latin Rite Catholic Church and highlighted the need for phenomenological research to provide context for the cohort of married clergy that have been introduced into the U.S. Catholic priesthood. The timeliness of this research, which has an unintended focus on Ordinariate priests, follows recent research by Sullins (2016) into the Pastoral Provision and the married priests who have come into the U.S. Catholic Church through that pathway. The social theory perspectives of Erving Goffman, Émile Durkheim, Herbert Blumer and George Herbert Mead set the conceptual framework from which to analyze the data from this cohort of married priests and helped frame the development of drawn conclusions and implications which follow in chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 3 details the methodology of this dissertation research.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

Social inquiry is a process in which researchers ask questions, examine historical and current social issues, gather quantitative and qualitative information, examine experiences, piece together backgrounds and explore values, ideas, and perspectives. Data collected from social inquiry is analyzed and interpreted to understand perspectives and to make sense of the ways in which people respond to certain situations, participate in social activities and make decisions. Qualitative research attempts to gain an understanding of specific phenomenon through deep inquiry and then provide understanding through descriptive reflection. The methodological design for this research was primarily a social constructivist phenomenological study and with any qualitative research study, the aim was to create understanding from information as it presented itself and through analysis of the data. Qualitative research was used in this study because of the value it provides in examining the lived experiences of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2013). Two qualitative research approaches were applied throughout this study: phenomenology and social constructivism.

Phenomenology

This research study is phenomenological in its study of married Catholic priests ordained through the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. “A phenomenological study describes the common meaning of several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). It is my assumption that the lived experiences of married priests differ from the lived experiences of celibate Latin Rite priests and while the generalizable priestly identity of the celibate Catholic priest may be known, the literature does not yet support a shared identity of the small cohort of married Latin Rite

Catholic priests. The purpose of this type of study is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon that these individuals share (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Through phenomenological reduction, I will identify the essence of identity for married Latin Rite Catholic priests, clustering the data around themes that describe the subtle textures of the experience that these men share and do not share with each other, and with the celibate priesthood.

Social Constructivism

“In social constructivism individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). Social construction is defined as “A phrase used to refer to how we think about society and various aspects of it are not fixed or essential, but rather are produced by social interaction and exist in people’s minds” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 275). This research study has attempted to develop the complex subjective meanings of the participants lived experiences as married priests through the lens of the Catholic Church’s social and historical context. The subjective meanings of what it is to be a Catholic priest are not imprinted upon the newly ordained, but are formed through interaction with others as well as the historical and cultural norms that operate in their lives (Creswell, 2013). My intent is to make sense of and interpret the meaning that others (as well as the married priests themselves) have of a married priesthood.

Data Collection

This research project included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 15 married Catholic priests with a minimum of one year of pastoral experience post-ordination within the Catholic Church. A heterogeneous group in phenomenological studies is identified as being as small as 3-4 individuals to 10-15 individuals (Creswell, 2013, p. 78). I set the minimum number

of research participants for this study at 15 based on this definition and achieved data saturation at, or prior to, that level of participation.

Internal Review Board (IRB) Approval

Before contacting potential study participants, I secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this research from the University of St. Thomas (UST). Appendix C indicates the initial IRB approval date as February 09, 2015 and Appendix D indicates a one-year extension from February 08, 2016 to February 08, 2017. All interviews for this research study were conducted between March 25th and July 29th, 2015. All participants in this study were over 18 years of age. UST levels of IRB approval include Exempt, Expedited and Full. This research study was approved using the full approval method, in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 - Protection of Human Research Subjects.

Participant Selection and Initial Contact

Married priests were identified, primarily through online research for news articles regarding the ordination of a married priest. This identification process was possible because of the rarity and local newsworthiness of such ordinations, especially for priests ordained through the Pastoral Provision. Ordinariate study participants were primarily identified through an Ordinariate parish listing available from the Office of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter's website. Further research within each Ordinariate parish's website provided contact information for priests who were likely married. At no time was the Office of the Pastoral Provision or the Office of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter contacted directly for assistance in identifying married clergy. Following IRB approval and identification of potential

participants, I sent e-mail inquiries to 35 potential participants requesting their informed participation in the study. This Letter to Participants is provided as Appendix A.

Of the 35 potential participants initially contacted, 18 agreed to participate in this study. Three of those priests did not participate, due to scheduling or travel conflicts within the timeframe I wanted to complete research interviews. Of the remaining 17 priests, two priests respectfully declined to participate, four indicated they were celibate and therefore not eligible to participate, and 11 did not respond to requests for participation. I collected contact information for 11 additional potential research participants, but they were never contacted because the study field of 15 participants had already been met.

Once I identified respondents who were willing to participate and who met criteria for the study, I sent out introductory e-mails requesting a date and time for the interview that best worked with their schedule. I also requested an address to send the consent form, Appendix B. I mailed each participant the consent form via UPS, with instructions to sign, date and return the form in a provided postage pre-paid envelope prior to their interview date. All 15 interviews were conducted during the workday, Monday through Friday. I did not conduct any interviews after normal, daytime working hours or on weekends.

Data Collection Procedures

Face-to-face interviews were not economically feasible with participants located throughout the United States, and as such, I conducted all 15 interviews via telephone. Participants were not provided research questions in advance, although I provided a general description of the type of questions to be asked in the initial “Letter to Participants” (Appendix A).

Interviews were digitally recorded using a Sony ICD-PX720 Digital Voice Recorder and additional interview notes were hand written during interviews. All interviews took place between March 25th and July 29th, 2015. At the beginning of each interview, but prior to recording, I read a prepared script briefly describing the study and reaffirming receipt and understanding of the confidentiality elements of the consent form. All participants agreed to digital recording for transcription purposes. Immediately after each interview, I transferred the digital interview file from the Sony ICD-PX720 Digital Voice Recorder to my research laptop. Digital voice recordings were uniquely identified by the pseudonym for each participant and then uploaded to an online transcription service using my official University of St. Thomas (UST) e-mail account. All digitally recorded interviews were professionally transcribed by Verbal Ink, a professional transcription service that provided confidentiality as part of their business service. Completed transcriptions were returned to me via e-mail to my UST e-mail account. All data from participant interviews were stored solely on my password-protected laptop, kept in my home office. No follow-up interviews were deemed necessary, and as such, I conducted no follow-up interviews. I provided participants an opportunity, via e-mail, to member check their specific transcriptions. Eight priests requested a copy of their transcripts, but only two returned transcriptions with edits. Three priests declined the offer to member check their transcriptions and four priests did not reply to the offer.

Interview Instrumentation

Semi-structured interview questions included basic personal information, including that of their spouse and any children, as well as a history of previous pastoral work outside of the Catholic Church. Interview questions then focused on the call to Holy Orders and the process of conversion and ordination, followed by questions related to the execution of duties, the

constraints of time and the priests' interpretation of the nature of relations and interactions with their spouse, children, superiors, laity and other stakeholders. Other questions focused on their meaning of priestly identity and how marriage and children might affect their priestly identity. Observer comments generated during interviews were hand-written on note sheets or typed directly into a Microsoft Word file during interviews to document key observations. Additional prepared questions explored both the lived experiences of this unique cohort of married priests, as well as their thoughts and comments on the modern priesthood, given their experiences outside of and within, the Catholic priesthood. Follow-up questions, if any, were based solely on responses of individual participants. At the end of prepared questions for each interview, I asked participants if they had anything more they would like to add to the conversation and this often precipitated responses on issues that were not addressed in the interview questions or expounded on ideas or topics they had previously addressed. Additional data from these responses confirmed the value of asking open-ended questions and allowing the interview to deviate from the planned, semi-structured questionnaire, at times. At the close of each interview, participants were thanked for their time and willingness to participate in the study. Participants genuinely seemed grateful for the opportunity to talk about their lives and experiences and expressed great interest in the further study of issues affecting the Catholic priesthood.

Geography of Research Participants

In the course of this research study I interviewed fifteen married priests from various states across the country, with a majority of those participants (13) located in states in the Southwest and on the North/South East Coast of the United States. I interviewed only two participants from the Midwest. The Northwest and West Coast were noticeably absent from this research study due to the geographical proximity of most married priests. Although the Personal

Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter includes a geographic responsibility of Canada, no priests were contacted or participated in this study from outside the United States. Specific locations, even U.S. states, are not provided for individual research subjects because married priests are relatively rare; so much so, that even mentioning the state they reside in might easily breach confidentiality.

Recent research by Sullins indicated that “about half of all married priests live in Texas, with the highest concentration focused in the Dallas-Fort Worth area” (Sullins, 2016, p. 9). There are several reasons for the geographical convergence of married, Latin Rite priests. In the earliest years of the Pastoral Provision, the approval process was relatively unclear, and many diocesan bishops were seemingly unwilling, or at least hesitant, to sponsor a Pastoral Provision priest. For some bishops, it may have been an unwillingness to introduce a foreign practice into their normatively celibate diocese, for others it may have simply been seen as a distraction from their perceived mission. Sullins goes on to explain that while bishops have repeatedly expressed support and appreciation for married priests, only a small percentage of them have ordained a married priest within their diocese (Sullins, 2016).

Those bishops friendly to the purpose and mission of the Pastoral Provision who were willing to take on the financial, social and administrative challenges of a married priest and their families, most likely drew candidates to their dioceses in those early years when few married priests were ordained. Bishops in proximity to those pioneering bishops who worked through early obstacles to the process may have been more willing to sponsor a Pastoral Provision priest as well, given their more easily obtained advice on the process from close colleagues. These challenges may explain why small groups of married priests exist in some dioceses, specifically on the East Coast, and not others. More recently, in 2009, the Congregation for the Doctrine of

the Faith (CDF) limited the number of married priests in a diocese to two (Sullins, 2016). A large percentage of married priests in active ministry today, however, have been ordained through the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, headquartered in Houston, Texas, rather than through local dioceses using the Pastoral Provision. This headquarters explains the convergence of a significant percentage of married priests in the state of Texas, particularly the geographic area of the city of Houston.

Interview Statistics

Interviews resulted in more than 12 hours of recorded data, with the shortest interview lasting just under 17 minutes and the longest lasting nearly 1 hour and 8 minutes. The mean interview length was 49 minutes. The length of individual interviews was primarily a result of how talkative an interviewee was and whether he chose to answer or “pass” on specific questions. Seldom were participants unwilling to discuss specific topics, but those that had the shortest interview lengths were typically those who were reluctant to discuss sensitive topics. Father 08, for example, provided shorter responses in comparison to all other study participants and declined to answer, or gave a very short, limited response, to half or more of the research questions.

I conducted all interviews via telephone at a time and date of the participants' choice. Given the demands on a priests' time in today's world, I was immensely grateful for the time and attention participants gave to this research. I had not previously met or talked with any of the research participants prior to their acceptance into the study. Research participants were not given the research questions in advance so their comments provided throughout the following chapters were entirely off the cuff. While this occasionally created difficult to follow answers, one very short interview and a few seemingly less than thoughtful responses, I was impressed

with the level of theological knowledge and articulate responses to unrehearsed questions from the research participants. I often finished interviews feeling justifiably proud of the men who chose and have been chosen, to be Catholic Priests.

Data Analysis Procedures

I accomplished analysis of transcribed interview data using line-by-line coding procedures as proposed by sociologist Kathy Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006). Data collected from all interviews were also imported into the qualitative research software program, NVivo (Version 10), for analysis. The software tool allowed for coding, annotating, retrieving and reviewing textual interview data. I used both methods as a means of limiting concerns about qualitative data analysis software overemphasizing coding and illusions that interpretive work can be proceduralized by software. The dual-method of analysis reduced the potential for researcher bias. Participant responses were respected and honored whether they were congruent with recurring themes from other participants or not, and dissenting opinions are highlighted when appropriate.

Coding within NVivo qualitative data analysis software began with the importation of individual interview transcriptions as sources of data. Each source (transcription) was identified as Father 01, Father 02, etc. I created nodes for each particular interview topic, 27 in total, to facilitate the collection of quotes specific to each research question. I gleaned pertinent quotes in this manner throughout the first reading of the entire data set and specific references and quotes pertaining to those topics were electronically “dropped” into the appropriate node. After this initial read-through, a more concentrated analysis of each individual transcript was accomplished with the objective to code quotes clustered around themes that emerged from the data not

specific to individual interview questions. I also conducted a third analysis of the data set to glean overarching themes from the entirety of the interview data from all 15 study participants. I used themes developed from specific topics in the analysis of those topics, while I used themes developed from the entire data set in the analysis of the data as a whole.

I also accomplished manual, line-by-line, coding using the transcriptions from each participant interview using Microsoft Word. I created a specific code for each potential identifiable theme and then used the comment tab feature in Microsoft Word to mark them for later compilation and analysis. Quotes, ideas, comments and experiences that generated only one or two similarly coded theme were disregarded as not generalizable to the entire group, but were maintained as possible opposing viewpoints. I hand-coded additional reflections and observations from interview field notes used during the interview process for each participant in the same manner. The number of codes generated by each question varied from 2 to 15. Less provocative questions, such as thoughts on priestly independence from the state, generated only two codes, while more provocative questions, such as those about celibacy and alienation generated as many as 15 codes. Highly provocative subject matter, such as the issue regarding homosexuality and same-sex attraction in the priesthood, limited some responses and as such, reduced the number of codes that emerged. In this example the following five codes emerged: a) not unique; b) not correlated; c) call to chastity; d) don't ask / don't tell; and e) and screening. Each question and topic generated its unique set of codes and the aggregate data-set also generated three primary codes. The themes were as follows: a) humility, b) gratefulness; and c) conservatism. The numbers of priests who touched on these themes were 13, 11 and 14, respectively. The number of quotes associated with these three themes were 37, 34 and 45, respectively. For comparison purposes, I only coded four quotes from three priests as

“Liberalism” in the entire data set. The themes of humility, gratefulness and conservatism were elemental to the increased understanding of specific themes that emerged from the data of any topic-specific research question.

Data Saturation

Qualitative researchers collect and analyze data to explain or make meaning of a phenomenon of interest. Data are collected until they reach a point called the data saturation point; a point when the researcher is no longer gaining new information from study participants on their given research questions. The SAGE *Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* defines data saturation as “the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges with respect to the newly constructed theory.” (Given, 2008a, p. 195). Qualitative researchers, unlike quantitative researchers, analyze their data throughout the research study, rather than waiting until the end of the research project and therefore can conclude when this data saturation point has been achieved. During this research, I continued to interview participants until data saturation occurred for the specific research questions developed prior to the start of interviews. I felt that data saturation occurred somewhere between interview 12 and 13, except in the case of an additional question regarding financial challenges for married priests, which was not an original data point included in interview questions at the start of this research study. I further explain this lack of data saturation on the question of economic challenges in the recommendations for future research at the end of the dissertation.

Validity

Validity refers to the “correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106). Validation strives to reduce

and eliminate inaccuracies in information and analysis. Several validity strategies were employed in this research study, including thick description, triangulation and member checking, to ensure the accuracy of the interpreted data. Research notes and personal experiences from 2 pilot study interviews, although not included in this study, were also used as references to assess credibility and transferability of statements made by participants throughout this study.

The priestly vocation comes with its own unique vocabulary, as do many vocations, and as such, professionally transcribed interviews often contained misunderstood or misinterpreted vocabulary specific to theology or the priesthood. I offered participants a chance to “member check” their respective transcribed interview, but only two participants chose to do. Using my own knowledge of theology, Church history and the priesthood I feel confident that I have brought clarification to misinterpreted words or phrases in each transcribed interview. I did so by first reviewing the original digital voice recording and secondly, applying that knowledge to those interviews where the priest declined to member check their specific transcription and the recording was acoustically unclear.

Thick Description

Qualitative researchers are justifiably concerned with developing rich descriptions and detail of their subjects’ social world to allow for accurate interpretation and a depth that includes context. Thick description is a method that seeks to explain not only human behavior but its context as well. The term originated in the 1970s with researchers Gilbert Ryle and Clifford Geertz, each influencing the meaning. Today, the popularized use of the term in qualitative research is broadly extended to mean “any kind of description that is reasonably detailed” (Bazeley, 2014, p. 376). Interview transcriptions in this study ranged from 8 to 23 pages of

detailed responses to specific questions. Respondents were encouraged to speak in depth about their experiences both before and following their ordination within the Catholic Church. Thick description in this research study also included interpreting interview data using both historical and modern context of the Roman Catholic Church.

Triangulation

“Among qualitative researchers, triangulation is frequently used to strengthen research through the combining of multiple methods, measures, researchers, theories, and perspectives” (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012, p. 248). Data triangulation was achieved throughout this research study by the use of multiple subjects, or data sources, as well as fact - checking specific content with historical documents of the Catholic Church. I compared accounts of individual experiences with multiple study participants to substantiate the validity of descriptions and theories proposed by married Catholic priests. Theory triangulation synthesized Mead and Blumer’s symbolic interaction theory (1934 & 1969), Goffman’s presentation of self theory (1959 & 1967) and Durkheim’s collective consciousness theory (2001) and related data directly within these theoretical frameworks. The research included as many perspectives as possible, by interviewing priests with varying ages and lengths of ministry. Secondary sources, many of which I used in the literature review for this study, were also used to validate findings.

Researcher Bias

Research bias occurs when a researcher unconsciously affects the data or results of a study due to subjective influence based on their personal biases. Research bias can occur at any stage of the research process and quality researchers take considerable care to reduce bias as much as possible (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). For full disclosure, I am a practicing Catholic

with a Master's degree in Catholic Studies from a Catholic university. I am also a convert to Catholicism, coming from a predominately non-denominational Christian background. A researcher's own identity and voice are integral to the analysis of any qualitative research topic (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In an effort to reduce bias, I developed interview questions with the help and review of colleagues who were asked to read, review and reduce researcher bias within the interview questionnaire. Interviews were semi-structured, however and I engaged in active listening to understand the experiences and perspectives of each participant separate from my own experiences and perspectives. Active listening also allowed each interviewee to guide the conversation in various directions of their own. Digital recording and professional transcriptions were used to ensure that all responses were accurately recorded without bias from the researcher. In analysis of the data, I used two data analysis methods, a line-by-line manual coding technique and a software analysis method, to reduce the chance of researcher bias using only one method. Throughout the analysis, I also utilized my own unique experiences, perspectives and expertise to develop themes and pull depth from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Ethics and Confidentiality

Ethics and confidentiality are both of prime importance in qualitative research such as this. I informed research participants of the purpose of the research, the expected duration and procedures. I also advised participants of their right to decline participation, their right to withdraw from the research once it had started and apprised them of any anticipated consequences of doing so. I also informed participants of possible foreseeable factors that might have influenced their willingness to participate, such as potential risks of unintentional breaches of confidentiality, discomfort from sensitive questioning, or other adverse effects. I informed participants regarding confidentiality, the limits of confidentiality and the approved procedures

for any sharing, archiving and disposal of all research data. Participants were informed that the only incentive for participation in this research project would be a copy of the published dissertation mailed to their current address, following final approval of the dissertation by the University of St. Thomas. Participants were provided a contact name and phone number for my dissertation chair, as well as a phone number for the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas in case they had any questions regarding the research project or my performance of duties. I was the only person who knew and had access to the names and locations of each participant. Participant names, organizations and locations were never printed to assure confidentiality. I used pseudonyms for all participants, organizations and places that could result in specific identification throughout this dissertation. No one had access to the digital interview data other than myself and the professional transcriptionist. All audio recordings, research data and hand-written notes were stored in my home office under lock. All audio recordings, data and hand-written notes will be destroyed seven years after final approval and publication of this dissertation.

Background and Assignment

To maintain confidentiality of these priests, I am providing a limited glimpse of their current assignments and background. I interviewed 15 married priests for this research project, 13 of which were ordained and hold pastoral positions within the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. The remaining two priests were diocesan priests ordained through the Pastoral Provision. I interviewed two additional Pastoral Provision priests in 2012 for a pilot study to this research project, helping shape the direction of this dissertation and giving insight into what questions might be pertinent to married priests. The priests from the pilot study were

not included in the final research interviews, but are referenced in this dissertation as Father A and Father B for reference.

Pastoral Provision priests work directly within the normative regional diocese framework of the U.S. Catholic Church. The Personal Ordinariate was developed to operate on a national level, rather than a regional scale. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter is in fact multi-national, having jurisdictional responsibility for not only the United States, but also Canada. As indicated earlier, the Ordinariate is structurally more similar to the Archdiocese for the Military Services, which operates on a worldwide basis, than a local diocese. Ordinariate priests, who hold pastoral positions within the Ordinariate itself, often additionally hold administrative or pastoral positions within their local diocese. These positions, with titles such as Chaplain, School Administrator, Assistant Pastor or Parochial Vicar, provide supplemental income for an Ordinariate priest. The Ordinariate priests' need for additional work is primarily due to the financial challenges unique to Ordinariate priests, who often do not have incomes from their Ordinariate parishes to support a family, in comparison to the income a diocese affords Pastoral Provision and normative, celibate priests. These financial obstacles are touched on throughout this dissertation, but formal commentary on this subject is discussed in Chapter 7, recommendations for further research.

All 15 participants of this study were either Anglican/Episcopal priests before their conversion to Catholicism. The average length of their marriages was 30 years. All 15 participants in this study, in addition to being married, had children. Eleven of those priests had children who were grown and no longer living in their homes and of those 11 with grown children, five had grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Of particular importance to this dissertation is that the remaining four priests in this study had small children still living in their

homes. I will discuss the effects of priests having small children in their homes in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4, which follows, includes the findings of interview data collected as to the lived experiences of married Catholic priests and an analysis of much of what they have provided in context with each other, parishioners, celibate priests, and with the history and teachings of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER FOUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

Career, Leadership, Relationship and Identity

Early in this study, themes emerged from the interview data which centered primarily around identity, role and career. Conservatism, gratefulness and humility emerged as factors in all three themes. As a cohort, married priests self-identify as very conservative; more so, they believe, than their celibate brethren. Conservative, in the context of data from this dissertation, is sometimes sociological and political, but is primarily related to adherence to canon law in regards to issues such as celibacy, abortion, women priests and openly gay clergy, etc. When asked about this conservatism, Father 08 laughed and commented: “I think it would be kind of hard to find someone more conservative than me.” Within the research data, 13 of 15 priests had quotes directly tied to conservative thoughts or ideas, meaning holding traditional positions as it relates to Canon Law. Father 10 spoke directly about the conservatism of Pope Benedict XVI, who created the Ordinariates, as well as the conservatism of married priests within the Ordinariate. He explained the following:

Conservatives are the ones that brought the Ordinariate into the Church. It's a funny thing. Benedict XVI, obviously a very conservative pope, is the one that created the Ordinariate, and he created it because he loved that high Anglican liturgy. He loved the fact that those who were leaving the Episcopal Church, because it was too liberal for them, could find a home in the Roman Catholic Church. [He loved that] it would bring a conservative influx [into the Catholic Church]. Any Ordinariate priest is a conservative with regards to the Rite of Canon Law, and so on.... The married priests that are in the Ordinariate are all conservative.

There would be little dispute that Pope Benedict XVI was a conservative pontiff. The development of the Ordinariates, with their dispensations for married priests, might be perceived,

initially, as a liberal concession to the majority of lay U.S. Catholics who approve of a married priesthood. Further examination of the ecumenical intent of the creation of the Ordinariates would suggest a continuation of Benedict's conservative theology, however.

I initially experienced sociological conservatism as difficulty in finding married priests who were even willing to talk openly about their unique status within the Catholic Church. Of the 31 priests contacted who did not indicate they were celibate and ineligible for the research study, 42% of those either directly declined or did not reply at all to requests for participation. More indicative of theological conservatism were responses to interview questions spanning all aspects of theology, leadership and their unique status within the U.S. Catholic Church. Father 07 expressed this conservatism in relation to the generalized priesthood. He stated the following:

It's kind of an irony; most of us who've come into the Ordinariate are very conservative, probably even more conservative than most Catholic priests. Certainly in an area like [East Coast City]. I always say that a lot of Catholic priests tend to be more liberal than I am. Maybe a more conservative bishop would be glad to have someone who actually does believe, and practice, and proclaim, the fullness of the Catholic faith, or thinks questions around morality; contraception, homosexuality, but also theological issues.

This quote illustrates not only the theological conservatism that married priests profess, but also highlights an issue some married priests may encounter with acceptance. A married priest, particularly within context of the Pastoral Provision, may feel welcomed, or not welcomed, based on the liberalism or conservatism of their presiding bishop, as well as the liberalism or conservatism of the celibate priests within their circle of professional encounter. Father 12 appears to agree with Father 07's comments above, that the conservatism of Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests may be one of the more elemental reasons that they are accepted in the Church, despite their nonconformity with established norms. Father 12 stated the following:

Yeah, I mean, I think it's that whole difference in the diocese of being different. Because you're one among many in a diocese who are not married, and in the Ordinariate, almost everybody now is married.... I know some of our Ordinariate members serve in the diocese, and in fact, in this diocese, they're sought after, because we're known as conservative in our theology, and so, many parishes and schools seek Ordinariate clergy because of that.

This sentiment of conservatism, along with impressions of humility and gratefulness, were expressed not only in terms of acceptance by the established Church, but also manifested itself throughout reflections on their unique experiences, as will be highlighted throughout this dissertation.

Career Limitations

One distinctive condition of being a married priest within the organizational structure of the Catholic Church is career limitation. Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests are career limited in similar, but also unique ways.

In similar fashion, both Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests are career limited by rule, working spouses, children and financial obstacles. The Church has expressly forbidden married priests, regardless of their position within the Pastoral Provision or the Ordinariate, from being appointed as a bishop of the Church (Sullins, 2016; Father 11). Four priests, Fathers 06, 09, 11 and 14, discussed their exclusion from the Bishopric. Father 06, showing some gratefulness for his acceptance to the Catholic priesthood stated; "I can't be a bishop in the Catholic Church because I'm married. I'm perfectly happy with that. I'm perfectly fine with that. I totally understand that" (Father 06). Father 09, showing some humility in regard to his unique position commented; "I don't aspire to be a bishop or anything like that. That's the only limitation I have" (Father 09). Career aspirations are obviously different for all priests, just as they are for men and women in other vocations, but for married priests the limitation is known

before they accept ordination in the U.S. Catholic Church. Like Father 09 above, Father 11 discussed his lack of aspiration for promotion the bishopric. Father 11 stated the following:

I can imagine that I wouldn't ever be considered as bishop material if I were a celibate priest, and the fact that I'm married prevents me from being considered for that I would consider a mercy rather than a limitation.

Other similarities in career limitations for married priests exist as a result of their spouses and children, the stability that they require and the financial obligations that accompany them.

Father 01 explained the following:

My career would definitely [be] impeded by the fact that my wife works at a very high-level kind of job and she is not someone who would, or will, move readily. Nor am I interested in moving. In order to... go up the ladder... or move within the career strata of the Catholic Church, [a] man has to be willing to move and to take assignments that demand more of his time and attention; to show qualifications and abilities. I'm not willing to do that.

This notion of family stability was also expressed by Father 14 regarding an inability to accept missionary work. Whereas a celibate priest might consider a missionary opportunity positively, at least less burdensome, a married priest would have practical difficulties accepting such an opportunity. He stated the following:

So, there will be opportunities that would come up [where the bishop would say] "Hey, we want somebody to lead this, we can lead a three-month mission effort...go do that." [And I would have to say] "No, I can't go do that because I have a family to take care of." So, there are things I can't do as a practical priest.

The stability required of a home-life with a working spouse and school-age children severely limits the acceptability of missionary work. Reverend D. Paul Sullins eloquently addressed this issue in his newly released book entitled *Keeping the Vow: The Untold Story of Married Catholic Priests*. Sullins stated, "Things are inevitably more complicated for families,

which are more rooted in the community and require greater stability. The clergy wife is an asset in many ways, but this is not one of them” (Sullins, 2016, p. 190).

As outlined in the comments above, the addition of children to a marriage only adds to this need for stability and makes it difficult for a married priest to answer the call of a bishop to rotate parishes, for example, let alone embark on a lengthy mission trip. Uprooting a spouse and child to rotate parishes within a diocese is ostensibly a greater obstacle for a Pastoral Provision priest than for an Ordinariate priest, but financial concerns play a role for both regarding assignment. Father 15, an Ordinariate priest noted the following: “There are numerous priestly and ministerial expressions that I am, [or] would be, very interested in [doing] that do not bring the type of income and support that’s needed in a family” (Father 15).

Age was also a factor for both cohorts of married priests in commentary regarding career limitations. Both Ordinariate and Pastoral Provision priests typically enter the Roman Catholic Church with years, if not decades, of pastoral experience within their former churches. Fathers 01, 04, 09 and 12 commented directly that their ages make them less inclined to view any Vatican imposed career limitation as a negative on their priestly career. Father 04, for example, expressed gratefulness for the opportunities he had been given. He stated: “If I were 20 years younger, perhaps, but at this point, I’m incredibly happy with what I’m being permitted to do within the life of the Church” (Father 04). Father 12, when asked about career limitation noted that for Ordinariate priests, beyond age, the small number of Ordinariate parishes in the United States is also limiting. He noted the following:

Well, you know, because of my age, I’m not the best candidate for that question. If you looked at clergy who are young and married, they’re going to generally be in the Ordinariate, and in the Ordinariate their future is limited more by the number of parishes than by their marital state. For those in the Pastoral Provision, my overall impression,

again, which is limited, but my overall impression is yes, probably their future is limited by being married.

Pastoral Provision priests experience at least one career limitation that does not exist for Ordinariate priests. Not outlined in the 1980 Pastoral Provision itself, but expressed by Vatican officials six months later, in 1981, is that Pastoral Provision priests are not permitted to serve in *cura ordinaria animarum* (in the ordinary care of souls) as parish pastors (Sullins, 2016). This rule has seemingly been skirted in some dioceses with priest shortages by withholding the title of Parish Pastor from a Pastoral Provision priest while still allowing the priest to perform the same duties (Father A, personal communication, May 29, 2012; Father B, personal communication, June 7, 2012). In such cases, the priest may be officially titled as an Associate Pastor, or Parish Administrator, for example, where no Parish Pastor is present. Confusing to lay Catholics is that regardless of the priests' title, the priest performs all the same functions as would a normative, celibate Parish Pastor. Father 01, a Pastoral Provision diocesan priest, articulated this issue in the following:

Being a pastor is not an option. However, it is possible to be an administrator of a parish. An administrator would effectively function the same, in a practical way, but not have the same standing of a pastor. But from a parishioner standpoint, you probably couldn't tell the difference.

For Ordinariate priests, pastoring a parish of Anglican / Episcopalian converts is the norm, however. The Pastoral Provision limitation on pastoring a parish does not exist for Ordinariate priests, as highlighted by the comments of Ordinariate priest, Father 11, regarding his career limitations; "It's in the Ordinariate Care of Souls [that] I can be a pastor of a parish" (Father 11). Father 04, a Pastoral Provision priest, also commented directly about this difference of pastorship for Ordinariate and Pastoral Provision priests. He stated the following:

I certainly came into the Pastoral Provision understanding that I would not serve as a pastor in a congregation, that the Pastoral Provision was very clear that we would not have care of souls in that respect. I know that some of my ordinary brethren, because the Ordinariate has brought in full congregations, are serving as pastors.

Father 02 confirmed this issue. He stated the following:

We could be more effective if we were given more room to move. We can't recruit, either. We're not supposed to do anything that would be a solicitation of other Catholics, especially those disaffected. Meaning those that are tired of the new liturgy, particularly, and who don't like it, [who] would like to have something other than the Novus Ordo. I think the Roman Rite is a very good Rite [however]. I like it. I use it more than I do the Ordinariate Rite.

The inability to essentially "market" the Ordinariate Mass certainly limits the ability of Ordinariate priests to grow their faith communities.

Gratefulness is a sub-theme that consistently emerged from interview data in this research study. Thirty-four times during the interviews of these 15 priests the theme of gratefulness appeared. Vatican rules, marital status, age, spouses, children and financial obligations all limit the married priests' ability to climb the hierarchical career ladder within the Church, but married priests remain grateful for the opportunity to administer to the Catholic faithful. Eleven research participants expressed their gratefulness to be a part of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Priesthood. Despite career limitations Father 06 said the following:

I know that there are some dioceses that don't want any married priests. I understand that as well. I respect that decision. I also know that there are positions that would never be open to me as a married priest. I understand that too. I am absolutely comfortable, and I mean this with all my heart; I thank God, every day. I get up and thank God that I'm a Catholic even though there are, yes, some limitations; but they're of necessity at this point in time.

Acceptance of career limitations and gratefulness for the gift of ordination approved individually by the Holy Father was further expressed by Father 13. He revealed the following:

I view what the Holy Father did in granting me a rescript and dispensation from celibacy [as] an amazing gift, but it's... a gift that I had to accept with eyes wide open... that there are things that I just have a limitation in my ability to carry out and I have to accept that willingly.

Father 13 continued and expressed the idea that the Latin Rite Catholic Church, while administratively capable of handling a small number of married priests, is not systemically ordered or structured to do so. He said the following:

One priest said to me years ago, when I was first considering the priesthood through the Pastoral Provision, he said; "You just need to know that the Catholic Church is not built for married priests," and I think that's one of the things that is very obvious.

It is obvious that these men have willingly accepted certain career limitations as a consequence of the gift of their ordination within the U.S. Catholic Church. They have done so with a sincere gratefulness for the opportunity to continue their pastoral ministry, started outside the Catholic priesthood, but which is essential to their personal and priestly identities.

Leadership Skills

Without question, when a man puts on a clerical collar, he is perceived differently in society. The collar is an easily recognizable symbol of the priesthood and this outward symbol to society comes with an expectation of leadership. In this context, I asked each participant the following questions: "Are leadership skills an important part of your role within the Catholic Church? And "Which of your priestly roles and duties require your best leadership skills?" The leadership perspective of individual priests in this study was largely associated with their specific daily duties. For example, Father 01, a Pastoral Provision priest, feels that his leadership is restrained by working under a celibate diocesan pastor; held at arms-length from providing

experienced guidance acquired over decades of pastoral and administrative leadership. He communicated his feelings in the following:

You know, the truth is, in my position, there really is not a call for leadership skills. I have quite a few leadership skills, but it just isn't asked for, either at the diocesan level, the hierarchical level if you will, nor at the parochial level, because the pastor is in charge of everything and they hold that very tightly. They don't delegate, and they don't elaborate or share very much.

The previous quote illustrates how the Pastoral Provision limitation on parish pastoring limits the ability of some priests to provide experienced leadership to a parish community while working under another priest. This is especially discouraging when there are parish communities in need of a resident priest.

For one Ordinariate priest, who pastors an Ordinariate parish, requisite leadership was seemingly more typical of his celibate brethren who serve in the same capacity of parish pastor. Father 03 noted the following: "Well, I'm actually the pastor of a congregation, ...that position encompasses multi-faceted leadership skills, so just in my position in the Church, just by [its] nature, is a leadership position" (Father 03). This quote illustrates the inherent ownership of the term "leader" when this pastoral leadership authority and title is vested to him. A Pastoral Provision priest, limited in his capacity to pastor a parish, may feel hindered from this ownership as a leader outside the sacramental role. Father 13, for example, highlighted this point of leadership importance beyond the sacramental role when he stated the following:

I would say that probably most of the non-sacramental roles, in particular, requires forms of leadership in order to carry out the ministry; particularly an understanding of working with volunteers... A lot of it is leadership by influence. A pastor leads from the front of the flock, and he asks them to follow him rather than being a cowboy riding at the rear of the herd if you know what I mean.

If Pastoral Provision priests are denied the title of Parish Pastor, thereby denying them the same standing and responsibility of a celibate Parish Pastor, might this negatively affect Catholic laity perception of a married priest as something less than a celibate priest? Perhaps that is the intention of Vatican officials, but this seems arbitrarily inconsistent with the allowances for married Eastern Rite priests.

Leadership has its particularities for married priests as well. A diocese may be apprehensive to support a married priest if that same diocese has previously encountered a negative experience with a married priest. The relative rarity of a Pastoral Provision priest has the potential to cause the mistakes of one married priest inappropriately transferable to all married priests, similar to how the abuse crisis, statistically committed by a small percentage of priests, has been inappropriately transferred to all Catholic priests. Bishops and other church leaders may withhold leadership opportunities, consciously or unconsciously, from married priests because of the actions of those who have come before them. Father O2, an Ordinariate priest, recounts his need for diplomatic leadership skills within one diocese in light of a previously poor experience with a Pastoral Provision priest in the following:

I am finding leadership skills, particularly diplomatic skills, are important. I had to make contact in an Archdiocese that was not thrilled with the historic record of Pastoral Provision priests. There were difficulties in the longest Pastoral Provision priest presence in the Archdiocese. I had to use the skills of diplomacy in order to make some headway in a diocese that was not sure they wanted yet one more married Catholic priest.

This quote illustrates how the normative priesthood views and treats this cohort of married men differently. A normative celibate priest, one of tens of thousands in the United States, would more likely be judged by his peers on his specific merits. A married priest, part of

a very small group in the United States, is likely initially judged not only on his particular merits, but on the merits of experiences with other married priests as well.

An Ordinariate priest often requires entrepreneurship skills that leaders within the diocesan structure do not require. The Ordinariate is still in its infancy in the extensive history of the Catholic Church and an Ordinariate parish does not receive much, if any, financial support from their local diocese or the greater institutional Church. Ordinariate parishes are often very small congregations, sharing the space of an established diocesan parish, with little or no financial support outside their very small community of attendees. Ordinariate priests' salaries must come from their small congregations, sometimes dozens of families, rather than the hundreds or thousands of families often supporting a local diocesan parish. Using a business analogy, this requires all but a few Ordinariate priests who pastor 2-3 large Ordinariate parishes to provide leadership for their parishes as if it were a start-up business, rather than an on-going enterprise. Father 11 commented on this leadership anomaly in the following:

We Ordinariate communities are starting from absolute scratch and trying to build something with very little support behind us. It's not like there's somebody hanging around writing checks to help us get things going or any of that structure to lean on. So it's very much a question of... encouraging and leading people and learning how to delegate, which is difficult... I would say just getting this thing up and running requires some leadership skills.

Clearly, married priests have unique leadership challenges in comparison to their celibate brethren, due to their marital status and limitations set forth by Church hierarchy in their parish leadership lives. Pastoral Provision priests, specifically, may be finding their leadership roles diminished by their particular pastoral or administrative responsibilities. Ordinariate priests may be finding their leadership challenges often influenced by their roles and responsibilities as entrepreneur priests in small Ordinariate parishes.

The Priest / Parishioner Dyad

Prior to this research, I was curious if there was a difference in how Catholic laity might observe, interpret and perceive a married priest, as compared to a normative, celibate priest and how then, the priest/parishioner dyad, (a socially significant relationship) might differ. Specifically, I wondered if parishioners might seek out a married priest for confession or marital counseling in the hopes that a married priest might better understand the challenges of marriage. To gain a better understanding of this unique situation for married priests, I asked participants the following questions: “Do you feel that your priest/parishioner dyad differs from that of a normative, celibate priest? And if so, how?” Father 04 explained how having a married priest in a faith community might simply offer a different perspective in the following:

I think, quite frankly, that having a married priest in the parish offers a different kind of opportunity for relationship. I know that I often have people who will come to me and say “we really want to talk to you because [you’re a married priest].” They think I have a deeper understanding of marriage, family issues, etcetera, etcetera. So yes, I think at one level I find there’s a different relationship simply because of background and experience.

Father 06 intelligently noted that it was not necessarily a better understanding of married life and family, but perhaps a sensitivity. He quipped; “I wouldn’t call it a better understanding of married life and family life...but probably a sensitivity that is going to be honed a little differently because I live it” (Father 06).

While agreeing that their marital status offers a different perspective for the priest/parishioner dyad, four priests in this study suggested that parishioners placed too much emphasis on a perceived superior ability to counsel marriage and family issues than their celibate brethren. Father 02, for example, said the following:

I think people, once they know you are married, they see you differently. And I think we carry a different set of abilities because of marriage into relating to those who are in...the same struggle of marriage and family life. So, we're given more credibility, maybe more than we're due, but we are given credibility, and I think there is a thought, in error, perhaps, but the thought that a celibate priest can't know what marriage is about. He doesn't have a family.

Father 03 confirms this viewpoint from a pastoral perspective. He stated that while it may be comforting for a parishioner, it may not be significantly important from a pastoral sense.

He said the following:

There are a lot of the faithful who do think that it's a little bit easier to talk to a priest who can empathize with family problems if that is an area of comfort for them. That is a positive, [but] I think it's a perception that really doesn't bear out as things would progress in any given pastoral situation.

A great example illustrating the error of this perception that a celibate priest isn't as capable of counseling someone on marriage and family matters was given by Father 07. He asserted the following:

This has been an experience I've had a lot in [the] years I've been a Catholic Priest. [Parishioners] will seek me out because I am married, feeling that I can counsel them in a way that they feel more comfortable, or that maybe I can understand or identify with them more because I am married. I'm not sure that's actually true... [I can counsel] someone who is a drug addict [even though] I haven't been a drug addict. [It] doesn't mean I can't be of some assistance and counsel to them.

Father 07 illuminates the truth that a celibate priest does not need to experience marriage in order to provide sound counsel for those who are married. The kaleidoscopically alternative perspective of a celibate priest might just be the panacea for what ails the parishioners' relationship. Father 12 agreed with this assessment that while a married priest might provide a different perspective through their experience of marriage and family life, it does not diminish

the life experiences of celibate priests and their ability to provide practical and spiritual guidance as well. He articulated the following:

It may be simply my own presumption, and I may be wrong about it, but I do feel that, for instance in confession, when people are talking to me about the binds of marriage, much of what we've discussed, I've been there and have experienced [that]. And I'm not saying that experiential knowledge is absolutely requisite to the function of priest or confessor... It is helpful, and I believe that parishioners get a sense of that. That is... they know that you know what it's like to be in their shoes, in some of those situations. [But] again... I don't want to be presumptuous and say that a celibate priest doesn't know that. His life experience may well compensate for that.

There were also comments specifically about the relationship between priest and parishioner in the Ordinariate because of the smaller numbers of parishioners an Ordinariate priest administers to, in contrast to a typical diocesan priest. Father 08 wrote the following:

I'm not really sure it's because of the marriage part, but because our parishes tend to be a lot smaller. There really is more of a connection between individual parishioners. It's much easier for me [to connect] with a hundred people than it is for somebody that's got a parish of a thousand families. So, I would say the size of the parish has more to do with it than being married or unmarried.

Additionally, one might expect there to be a significant difference in pastoring style between an Anglican or Episcopal priest and a normative Catholic priest. Father 11 noted that, perhaps, while this might be a generalization, it was just as likely to be the individual priests' introversion or extroversion that makes this connection with parishioners. He said the following:

You know I suppose it must, but I would think that those would be in fairly superficial ways. For instance, [in] one of the situations in which I currently work... I hear that a lot from parishioners but that's because the celibate priest is an intensely private, introverted person, and now that I'm around they see me as the warm, fuzzy one. But that's just my comparison there. There are plenty of celibate priests who are very warm, extroverted people, and I have left an entire parish of Episcopalians behind who thought I was old, and aloof, and private, and introverted... so, you know, I think it largely varies from person-to-person.

Anecdotally, Father 13 talked about the differences in the priest/parishioner dyad in conjunction with having a spouse; how parishioners view his needs and how he and his wife express their marriage in different settings. In referencing his perceived needs, he wrote the following:

There's a difference in terms of how people view what they need to do for you [as a married man]. For example, there are a number of families who have the priest over for dinner... motivated by the fact that "our priest needs a good home-cooked meal," or "our priest needs this because he doesn't have that." Whereas a married priest, basically, I get a home-cooked meal. I have a home life that is in some ways very similar to the people that I'm with. That being said, a lot of social activities; the fellowship activities with people, involves them needing to invite my wife as well as me, and that's very positive in some ways and very – I won't say negative, but very different from the celibate priesthood....

Referencing how he and his wife express their marriage publicly, Father 13 commented on the need to moderate the marital relationship in public spaces. He said the following:

Within the Church itself, one of the things that my wife and I consciously do is that we have to kind of moderate how we express our relationship as husband and wife around the Church because it does become a bit of a stumbling block [for] people. I think I'm much more sensitive to this in my diocesan parish than I am in my Ordinariate parish, where people are more used to a married priesthood, and I may be a little bit more cautious than some of the other married priests regarding this. For example, if I'm at one of our parish events, I don't hold hands with my wife. We sit together. It's not like we ignore each other and pretend that [we're] not married, but at the same time, we both recognize the fact that I'm there within the parish structure as a priest, and as a pastor of the flock.

Father 15 deftly noted that his identity as a priest and therefore his relationship with parishioners, may be different from that of a celibate priest in terms of him being perceived less as a priest, and more of a husband and father, under certain circumstances. He stated the following:

There are more social opportunities for my parishioners to see me outside of a normal priestly role than my celibate brother. Because of that, there's more negotiation of

ongoing priestly identity, and many of my friends and parishioners will negotiate [that by] how far away we [are] from the Church. It gives an indication of where we [are] on the spectrum of identity and deference.

In this last example, Father 15's priest/parishioner dyad is not only negotiable under certain circumstances based on a perceived or real distance from the structural parish, but is also undoubtedly impacted by his attire and who he is with, such as a spouse or child. More on this subject will be discussed later in the analysis of data using Symbolic Interaction Theory in Chapter 6.

The Sacraments of Holy Marriage and Holy Orders

The sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Holy Orders are both essential components of the Catholic faith. As sacraments, the two seemingly hold unique and distinct pathways to sanctification; one pathway for those called to the priesthood and another pathway for those called to marriage. Married priests are uniquely blessed by receiving the graces of both sacraments.

A major premise of this dissertation, however is that the discipline of celibacy, sociologically, places the normatively celibate Catholic priest on a pedestal of sanctification, because modern-day Latin Rite laity have come to see celibacy as essential to the consecrated life; a holier pathway than marriage. A form of clericalism exists that holds clerical celibacy (whether perceived or a real socialized division between clergy and laity) and thus the sacrament of Holy Orders, is in higher regard than the sacrament of marriage. Clericalism, in this form, is defined as a culture where we hold the priesthood in high regards, which grants clerics a position of authority and power over us. This may be a defining cause of the sexual abuse crisis cover-up and will be discussed later in this chapter. Throughout history this form of clericalism has been

promulgated by the Church, albeit confusingly. St. Thomas Aquinas promulgated that virginity is preferable to conjugal continence (Aquinas, 1954). Pope Pius XII promulgated the excellence and superiority of virginity and of celibacy over the married state (Pius XII, 1954), and John Paul II recognized the objective superiority of the consecrated life (John Paul II, 1996 & John Paul II, 2006). Such words and expressions of superiority illustrate the complexities from which laity and clergy alike, must interpret the words of popes and saints in understanding the differences between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Holy Orders. Father 13 summarized this complex issue into an uncomplicated one quickly. He quipped; “Without the priesthood, we wouldn't have the sacraments. Without the sacrament of marriage, we wouldn't have Catholics” (Father 13).

Very few Catholics experience both the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Holy Orders in their lifetime. While the sacrament of marriage should not be considered a lesser sacrament, there is a special understanding of the sacrament of Holy Orders as eternal, not just of this earth, as marriage is and as such, is given special consideration. In this context, each participant was offered the following question; “Is there is a difference of importance between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of holy orders.” Three priests answered the question in the context of a sacrament. Father 08 succinctly noted:

I don't think any sacrament is more significant than another. I mean there are obviously two that are necessary for salvation, Baptism, and Holy Eucharist. But other than that, I would say no, that they're all of equal status.

Continuing the theme of Sacrament, Father 11 expressed this issue as the fulfillment of God's call to each of us specifically, either to the sacrament of marriage or to the sacrament of Holy Orders. He stated the following:

I think that through the Sacrament of Holy Orders all the other sacraments are made available to us, although even that would have to be qualified in some important ways. But on the other hand, through marriage, family is created, and the family is the first Church, the domestic Church, and [is] the first place that children learn of the Grace of God. So, then I wouldn't want to set one above the other, and in any case for any individual what matters is what his or her call is, and who that call comes from. So even if ...we were to construct some kind of schema that Holy Orders was somehow more important, if you're not called in the Holy Orders that doesn't matter. God calls you to marriage and faithfully entering that call is the important thing.

Father 12 continues the thoughts of Father 11 by noting that fulfilling God's call is the fulfillment of His will. He said the following:

I think both those sacraments establish an eradicable part of one's identity, and unless one is living out those roles as stipulated by Scripture in the Church, then one is not doing God's will, as he would be calling me. So, I think the role of husband shares a lot with the role of priest, in its wider perspectives. So, while they're different, I don't think one less important than the other.

Three priests answered this question in the context of vocation, rather than as sacrament.

Father 04 noted the following:

I think both are making a commitment. [In marriage] a life-long commitment to the person of [a] spouse. [In Holy Orders] a life-long commitment to the person of Jesus Christ and then service to his Church. Again, I think both have a vocational responsibility attached to them. For me personally, my vocation as a husband is enhanced by my role as a clergyman and vice-versa.

Father 06 affirmed this notion of vocation. He stated the following:

The similarity is that they're both a vocation. A vocation is a pathway that God gives us...an instrument that God ...gifts us with. It's a gifting in which we are given the opportunity to become more holy by pursuing and perfecting that vocation. That's true of marriage, and that's true of the priesthood. They're similar also in terms [that] a priest is... wedded to the Church. [A priest] gives his life for the community just as in marriage, a man gives his life for his wife [and] a wife gives her life for her husband. It's a mutual giving of one's self. The priesthood is very similar in that.

Father 14 further commented in the following way:

Marriage is a vocation and priesthood [is] a vocation, and being a married man is to take seriously God's command to go forth and be fruitful and multiply. To be a priest is to take up God's vocation to stand in his place and offer the sacraments.

Anecdotally, Father 05 expressed the similarities of intimacy between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Holy Orders, as well as the similarities of being the father of a child and being the father of a spiritual community of persons. He noted the following:

What's funny about it is you can find a tremendous amount of similarities in that role. But you know the difference is that sometimes marriage is incredibly personable. It is in your face intimate where in a way the priestly role is intimate but it's almost as if you have to be still and know that God is God. And that is in a way how it's intimate, but at the same time you know as a father you [have to] sometimes get your hands dirty and take your children out of the mud and things of that nature and as a priest, you [have to] do the same.

Regardless of the context with which these men discussed the sacraments of marriage and Holy Orders, without fail, they all placed a theological significance on each sacrament and felt that there was not a hierarchy of sacraments. Father 07 succinctly illustrated this theme by saying; "I think that's probably not a healthy way to look at the sacraments in some kind of a hierarchical fashion' (Father 07).

Married Diocesan vs. Married Ordinariate Priests

Married priests have indicated a perception that they are more conservative than their celibate brethren, but is there a perceived or real difference between a married diocesan priest, ordained through the Pastoral Provision and a married Ordinariate priest ordained through the Personal Ordinariate? To gain a deeper understanding of this possibility participants were each asked "What differences do you feel exist between a married diocesan priest and a married Ordinariate priest?" Shared insights collected primarily in the context of acceptance, loneliness, conservatism, demands on time and financial challenges.

Acceptance was a focus for two priests, one Pastoral Provision priest and one Ordinariate priest, to highlight the similarities of their unique status and the obstacles to acceptance that married priests have regardless of path to ordination.

For Father 01, a Pastoral Provision priest, the issue of parishioner acceptance simply came down to giving the laity a reverent mass. He stated the following:

What I find in the Catholic Church is that people, particularly if you're subbing for Mass, are desirous of a reverent mass. That's all they want. They want Christ present in the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the wine. They want his real presence in that sacrament. If it's a wedding, they want Christ's real presence in the wedding. If it's a funeral, the same. If it's praying the Rosary, they don't care; they just want reverence. And they will tell you that. They've told me that, over and over again, no matter where I go, and I've been to seven or eight different parishes doing this, that or the other.

Father 02, an Ordinariate priest, focused on acceptance by the normative, diocesan clergy and hierarchy of the Church as a point of similarity for married priests. He noted the following:

The only difference, the only struggle, would be if the hierarchy doesn't accept you. It's that simple. If the hierarchy, and we have this in various places, doesn't want a married priesthood; Ordinariate, Pastoral Provision, it's very antagonistic. They just won't deal with you.

Married diocesan and married Ordinariate priests both struggle at times with feelings of isolation from the normative priesthood. Those Ordinariate priests who serve near the headquarters of The Office of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in Houston, Texas experience a buffer from acceptance issues with the diocesan structure of the Church. At that particular location, congregated Ordinariate priests often work in relative isolation from diocesan priests, at least in comparison to their married brethren from the Pastoral Provision as well as Ordinariate priests who are serving in other states. Due to their proximity to each other, Ordinariate priests located at or near the headquarters are afforded more pastoral and social

interaction with their married counterparts. This proximity somewhat limits acceptance issues for those Ordinariate priests. Father 05 illuminated the buffer that the headquarters provides for some Ordinariate priests when he stated the following:

Being in the Ordinariate I would find that being a [married] diocesan priest could be lonely. But of course, diocesan priests go through loneliness as well, even in celibacy, but the Ordinariate, we have our own little community as it were. There are a lot of guys that are out there on their own in the Ordinariate that are not a part of a diocese but part of the Ordinariate, [however], and that's tough, and we've had some that have burned out because of that.

Ordinariate priests who do not serve in proximity to the headquarters in Houston, as well as Pastoral Provision priests, are more likely to experience isolation from the normative priesthood if their local diocese does not reach out and embrace them, as we hope they would.

Ordinariate priests can feel a real disconnection to their satellite Ordinariate brethren, as I like to call those who are not in proximity to the headquarters in Houston and vice versa. Ordinariate priests might also assume that their married Pastoral Provision brethren have a built-in support system within the diocesan structures, when perhaps they feel the same disconnection between pastoral provision married brethren. Father 07 expressed this very thought in the following:

I know one difference in the Ordinariate is, I feel disconnected from my own community of Ordinariate priests who are scattered all over the country. We don't see each other except maybe once or twice a year. There's an annual retreat; maybe some other occasion that might bring the clergy together. We have very limited contact with other ordinary of the Ordinariate, so it's hard to seek out counsel and advice if you're struggling with Ordinariate issues. That's been hard; feeling pretty isolated as an Ordinariate priest, whereas [I] assume a diocesan priest; well, he's got a diocese, a bishop, a staff, a whole support system that unfortunately we really don't have.

Father 13 focused his response on possible differences for married diocesan and married Ordinariate priests as a difference on the demands of time. He perceived a significant difference

in work hours that a diocesan Pastoral Provision priest would be subjected to in comparison to an Ordinariate priest. He said the following:

Probably the most dramatic difference is in the demand on your time. Most Ordinariate parishes, from what I can gather, if you have 100 people, you're really blessed. You may have 100 at Mass, or you may have 200 at mass, but really... [how many people are in] your core community? We only have a handful of parishes across the country, Our Lady of Walsingham being probably the largest and then we have Christ the King in Towson, Maryland, and a few others, where you actually have a viable parish, but again, you're talking only a few hundred people rather than 3,000 families; so a very different cadence of life and a very different style of ministry.

Father 08 discussed this idea earlier in the analysis of the priest/parishioner dyad. He also referenced an ability to connect with a hundred people in an Ordinariate parish as compared to a normative or Pastoral Provision priest in a diocesan parish of a thousand families.

Father 15 chose to highlight the financial obstacles an Ordinariate priest encounters in relation to a Pastoral Provision priest working within the normative diocesan structure. He commented the following:

Well, I think a married diocesan [priest] fits within the broader Presbyterate in a distinct way. In this diocese, there's been a track record of Pastoral Provision priests since the provision was implemented by [John Paul II]. The difference is the Ordinariate does not have stable assignments, does not provide sustenance, is a bit of a missionary society more than a stable diocesan community. I think that those begin to flag some of the distinctions. I work very closely with the diocese and with the bishop here, but as an Ordinariate priest. It's a different model of life and ministry.

Anecdotally, Father 04 spoke rather frankly about the difference between a Pastoral Provision position and an Ordinariate position within the institutional Church. He stated he following:

The reason I did not go into the Ordinariate was I felt that with making the transition into the Catholic Church I truly wanted to be part of the Catholic Church and not... I don't even quite know how to put it except that I'll use the term very advisory, I didn't [want

to] be a part of an Anglican ghetto within the wider Catholic Church. I really wanted the opportunity to live and function within the Catholic Church as it is.

Data retrieved on the differences between married diocesan and married Ordinariate priests suggests that more research should be conducted in this area. Further qualitative research should consider small group settings, where married diocesan priests and married Ordinariate priests are able to interact with one another, share stories and experience from those stories the unique differences of each other's priestly life within the Church. Research provided in this study suggests that there has not been sufficient interaction and communication between these two groups of married priests to generate sufficient data for a substantive analysis of each other's unique perspectives and experiences within the U.S. Catholic Church.

Priestly Identity

Priestly identity is foremost marked by participation in the priesthood of Christ, yet we often fail to fully understand or appreciate the fullness of this identity and how it distinguishes a man of God from the rest of us. The priest is mediator between God and mankind. God became man through His son to become a mediator between God the Father and mankind. The priest is that physical representation of Christ the mediator on earth. In the 1992 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II spoke directly about priestly identity calling the priest a "living and transparent image of Christ the priest" (John Paul II, 1992, §12).

The archetype of the Catholic priest is a man; holy, patient and kind, who serves God relentlessly through service to his flock as shepherd, servant, evangelizer and teacher; inextricably linked with the Eucharist. When preparing research questions for this study I realized that many of the specific questions about the experiences of married priests, as well as questions regarding modern issues of the Church, all required some context within this idea of

priestly identity. I began to question whether a married priest might consider his priestly identity differently than a celibate priest or the Church's ideal of the priestly identity because of the dispensation from celibacy, which is inextricably linked to the example of Christ. In this context, participants were each asked the following question: "What does the idea of priestly identity mean to you?"

Four priests eloquently acknowledged and linked their priestly identity to the Eucharist.

Father 01 stated the following:

Essentially a priestly identity has to do with the sacrament, with celebrating Mass; with bringing the body, the precious body and blood of Christ to the people through the Eucharist and confession; of reconnecting the penitent back into the sanctifying grace of the Church. Of being a man of prayer. Of being one who is able to hear, through a devout life, what God is inspiring or calling. [He] speaks to [us] through the different ways that we are inspired and then communicating that inspiration, or that knowledge, understanding, to the people.

Father 11 furthered the sacramental notion of priestly identity as Father 01 did above, by the following words:

I guess what it means to me is to be an altered precipice among God's people and to work with the particular gifts that God has given to me and to serve his people and to love them as Christ loved the Church. And of course, there are all of the priestly sacramental functions that go along with that but in terms of identity that is the way I try to think of it.

Father 01 and Father 11, through their beautiful words above, have expressed their priestly identity as inextricably intertwined with the Eucharist. Father 15, furthered that commentary with gratefulness and humility, by expressing this as a tremendous gift. He stated the following:

Well, what it means to me, it's the greatest gift of my life, the opportunity to engage with communities of people and help pave the road to God, to be present for the sacraments, to be a mediating presence in the world, and to call the world to a greater understanding of

human flourishing that we find in Christ.

By the words of institution, the priest acts in the person of Christ during the Sacramental Rite of the Eucharist. The priest is “a living transparent image of Christ the Priest” (McGovern, 2002, p. 78). Father 02 commented on the importance of being this transparent image of Christ the priest in every place and every time on this earth. He stated the following:

It means a lot because it's the face of Christ. So, the phrase that we use is, persona Christi. We are the persons, all of us, in Christ, the persons of Christ, but the priesthood particularly is upfront, because that's the calling. And so we're upfront with the faith, and we're upfront outside. No matter where I am, I am a priest, and it's very important for me to be mindful of that. I can't just be a priest on Sunday. I'm a priest all the time, no matter what. It's very important to me. It's a guard. Because having that in mind, then I'm always aware. Behave yourself according to Christ. Behave. Don't be doing or thinking outside of Christ, and when you do start to, stop it, and get back to Christ. I think that's the Holy Spirit, of course, guiding, leading, and pushing.

Father 10 succinctly illustrates for us the meaning of the quotes above. He stated, “Essentially, it's this: I am an icon of Christ in the community. At Mass, I bring people to Jesus and Jesus to the people. In a nutshell, that's what I look at myself being, an icon of Christ” (Father 10). For Fathers 03, 04, 05, 06 and 08, as shown below, it is the pastoral ministry; in service to others, that marks their priestly identity. Father 03 stated the following:

Priestly identity means a man, his heart completely focused upon the Church and on the people of God. I mean that's what a priest [is]. He is an under-shepherd of Christ, attentive to the flock. So, the identity must be objectively and practically entrenched in that concept of being available for the Church and being a protector of God's flock.

Father 04, who has decades of leadership experience both sacramentally and pastorally, highlights that his priestly identity is inexplicably intertwined with both the sacramental function of being a priest, as well as the teaching ministries of being a priest. He stated the following:

It means several things. Number one, it means, and I made a decision very early in my life that the Lord had called me to a servant role in the life of the Church, and that part of that servant role has responsibility; leadership in the liturgical body. I had a responsibility to be a person of prayer and deep in my own intimacy with Christ. I think it also meant that I have a responsibility, and do have a responsibility, to continue to deepen my knowledge of Christ and so that I'm an adequate teacher of the faith in bringing others to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. I find my priestly identity, quite frankly, very much tied up in both sacramental and teaching ministries at this point in my vocation, and I think that's developed over the course now of about 40 years.

Father 05, like Father 04 above, warmly expressed a similar understanding of priestly identity as both sacramental and pastoral. He stated the following:

Priestly identity is being blessed with being the conduit of grace in which we are able to give Jesus Christ to the people. And it's also to lead the people to Jesus Christ, their savior. The identity of a pastor in that role of shepherd can mean the flock going out after those who are fallen and in the community, ... being a loving father that when somebody comes back you know killing the fatted calf and putting a ring on and giving them the finest robe. So, in a sense the priestly identity is sacramental – a fatherly role acted out through the sacrament.

Father 06 continued the theme of priestly identity as both sacramental and pastoral, using the illustration of the Good Shepherd, an illustration also recently used by Pope Francis in a homily from St. Peter's Square on June 03, 2016. Pope Francis said the following:

A shepherd after the heart of God has a heart sufficiently free to set aside his own concerns. He does not live by calculating his gains or how long he has worked: he is not an accountant of the Spirit, but a Good Samaritan who seeks out those in need. (Francis, 2016, para. 10).

Father 06, a year previous, just prior to Good Shepherd Sunday, the 4th Sunday of Easter, stated the following:

I believe that it's a vocation and calling in which a man is being called to allow his life to be configured to Christ and especially to be configured in Christ as Christ is shepherd; Good Shepherd... This coming Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday. I think that there is a special calling to align one's life with the Shepherd, the Priest, and to represent the Priest to the world. That vocation is one of spiritual maturity, holiness of life, prayer life, administration of the sacraments. In other words, configuring one's life so that one is not

duplicitous. In other words, a priest is becoming more and more Christ-like as he ages and matures in the faith as a priest so that there is a one and the same with Christ as it's manifested, as that vocation is manifested to the Church and to the world. There [you] go. There's some pretty severe theology right there.

Fathers 07, 13 and 14 expressed their priestly identity as ontological; a metaphysical nature of their existence; as *raison d'être*. Father 07 expressed this as a calling that pre-dated his mental capacity to understand it. He stated the following:

Having had a sense of call to the priesthood as a little boy, I always feel that, first of all, it's a vocation that God has given me. I think in a real way you might say sort of quoting Jeremiah "before my mother's womb." It's the only thing I ever really wanted to do and be. In some ways becoming a Catholic priest was logical, and a fulfillment, a kind of completion, of that, particularly in the Catholic Church the priestly ministry is not only seen as a vocation but as a sacrament. [In] one sense it's woven into who I am, in the way I think God made me, and then secondly, obviously, I believe in the Catholic understanding of the priesthood; that it really is an ontological sacrament and that there is ... a part of God's grace that has filled you with a priestly union of Christ in his priesthood in a kind of special way. In that sense, it's a real center point [of] identity being wrapped up in the priesthood and in identification with Christ's priesthood.

Father 13 continued the discussion of priestly identity as ontological. He stated following:

I think priestly identity for me deals with the fact that there is an ontological change that goes on inside where I realize that I have been set apart for sacred use. That being said, my priestly identity comes from the fact that I have a certain responsibility before God and in full view of the Church to live a life that is honoring and glorifying to God, a life of holiness, a life of grace, and at the same time, recognizing that my priestly identity also does not preclude the fact that even though I'm a shepherd, I'm also one of the sheep, and I have human needs just like everybody else. My priestly identity is one where I recognize that much of what I do for other people I do, not because of the fact that I have anything in and of myself to give, but because I'm able to give of the Grace that God has placed in me, particularly in the sacraments. My priestly identity also calls me to set apart my mind and my heart to pray to learn the things of God and to live a life of holiness as well as a life of intellectual formation where I'm able to be used to proclaim the Word of God and to proclaim faithfully the teachings of the Church to people. My priestly identity does not involve whether or not I have my black shirt on with a collar but that I will always live my life, whether in clerics or not, to the honor and glory of God.

Speaking as Father 13 did above, Father 14 noted that his priestly identity has nothing to do with the clerics that he wears as a priest, but an ontological change within his soul that separates him from others that might be hard for others to understand. He commented the following:

It means that being a priest is not a job, it's who I am, and you're ordained, ... changed on an ontological level and you're a priest all the time and... that's good. It means you're always there. I can always absolve some of your sins. So, if I happen to be in a place when somebody is dying I can help them, no matter what. It also means that I set an example wherever I go... whether I have my collar on or not, I'm still a priest... It doesn't make a difference where I am [or] what I'm wearing. I hear "Hey Father, how are you?" wherever I go and that's something that I expected going in and that [is] hard to understand until you live it; what it's like to always be something else, but there is no other way to be.

Interestingly, during data collection from all 15 priests on the meaning of priestly identity, only once was the sacrament of marriage mentioned. Father 09 mentioned marriage in the context of a calling that forms the person as husband and father in further explanation of the calling to Holy Orders as forming the person as a priest. Other than this one reference, one could read the entirety of the data transcriptions regarding priestly identity and not differentiate these men from their celibate brethren. For these men, their priestly identity is Eucharistic, Sacramental, Pastoral and Ontological.

Responses to Criticisms

Many lay Catholics remain unaware of the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. For those who are keenly aware, passions can run deep, both for and against, the idea of a married priesthood or dispensation from the discipline of celibacy for the few. Criticisms often surround these few topics: fairness to celibate priests, the unknown effects and unintended consequences of marital strife and potential divorce of a

married priest on a parish community, child and spouse issues of familial relations to a Catholic priest and notions of an undivided heart. To better understand the unique, but shared experiences of married priests, I posed questions, both common and uncommon, to critiques of a married priesthood.

Married to the Church

One common critique against a married priesthood is that celibate priests are often said to be married to the Church. One can argue that a definitive reason for a celibate priesthood in the Latin Rite, which makes up approximately 99% of all Catholics worldwide (Roberson, 2010), is that as Christ is the bridegroom of the Church, so should the Catholic priest be a mirror image of that devotion to the Church. The priest acts, in Catholic doctrine, *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ) during the Eucharist, for example. For many lay Catholics, the symbolism of the Catholic priest as Christ on earth mirrors the symbolism of Christ as the bridegroom of the Church in Ephesians: 5:25-27 (New American Bible, Revised Edition) “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her” (Ephesians: 5:25-27 (New American Bible, Revised Edition). The Catholic Church teaches and believes that at the second coming of Christ the Church will be united with Christ, as her bridegroom for all eternity.

In this context, each participant was posed the question “How would you respond to criticisms that a married priest is not married to the Church?” The range of responses on this subject made it difficult to categorize them into cohesive groups of responses. Father 03 was the only respondent who agreed with the premise of the argument. He stated; “I would have to agree with that statement. A little bit about my background, just to qualify how I'm [going to] approach all your questions; I am a vociferous opponent of a married priesthood” (Father 03).

Father 05 also gave praise to the rule of celibacy while laying the gift of his exemption at the feet of the Church. He stated the following:

I very much so believe that the norm should be celibacy, and I enjoy the exception, [but] that exception should not be the norm. The exception was created because the highest law of canon law is the salvation of souls. My wife, even when we were coming out of the Episcopal Church said, “You're [going to] put your dossier in but you agree with clerical celibacy?” And I said, “I do, but at the same time the Church is allowing me this opportunity. I would love to leave it in the Church's hands.” If she [the Church] doesn't want me to be a priest, then I know I don't have a calling. And to my great surprise, she wanted me to be a priest.

Father 15 perhaps had the most succinct defense to the criticism offering the alternative discipline of the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches as example. He stated the following:

I haven't heard the criticism. I would probably respond to it by inquiring of the person what's motivating the particular criticism or question. I might also add that the Catholic Church has, and continues to this day, in the Eastern Rites, a theology that includes and allows married men to exercise priestly office.

While these three quotes show the range of responses to this notion of a priest as married to the Church, others had much more to say on the practicalities of having taken two vows that, while not inherently in conflict with each other, may at times cause conflict. In this vein, Father 01 likened the married priesthood to the diaconate and a balance that must be sustained in both marriage and vocation when he stated the following.

My response would be that I have the vow. The marriage vow preceded this, and that has a certain precedent and responsibility that must be honored. So, the two have to be kept in balance, and that is something that the bishop understood..., or he wouldn't have ordained me; [he] understands...the two being tethered. So, in that sense, it [can be] likened to the deacon instead of a married priest. You have both vows to honor.

The institutional Church must have recognized this potential for conflict and must have considered the issue during discernment and approval of the Pastoral Provision and the Personal

Ordinariate, especially in light of the alternative tradition in the Eastern Rite Churches. Father 07 continued a theme of balance by noting a parallelism with the married priesthood of the Episcopal Church, as well as a comparison with Catholic laity, who must also strive to foster a closeness to God while maintaining a family and career. He said the following:

I haven't had that question directly, but I guess we're polygamists [laughs] having two wives. Certainly, from a psychological and emotional point of view, it would be fair to say. That was always one of the challenges of being a married priest as an Episcopal priest; obviously the Church is a demanding mistress at times and always challenged the balance, in a healthy way, your duties as a priest and your relationship with the Church and your duties as a husband and your relationship with your wife and family. Although I know enough of other professions that probably most professionals have that challenge, whether it's a doctor or a lawyer or businessmen. [The challenge is] finding a healthy balance between your professional and vocational life... and your responsibility and life as a husband and a father.

Father 04 highlighted the practicality, because of age and familial status as an empty-nester, of being just as available, if not more so, than his celibate brethren. He stated: "I've only had one person raise that with me in almost seven years and my response is that, I find myself as available, if not more available, for pastoral emergencies than I find some of my celibate brethren" (Father 04). Father 09 argued that while there are practicalities of having a family, he and other married priests, have the same responsibilities as celibate priests and trusts that God will limit those conflicts. He stated the following:

Well, apart from the vow of celibacy we take all the same promises that all the other priests take. So, we've made the same commitments, we just trust that God will prevent there from being an irreducible conflict between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Holy Orders. Certainly, family responsibilities are family responsibilities, and so the practicalities are different.

Father 02 suggested that while both sacraments have a place, God must come first, not only in the priestly life but the lives of all believers. He commented the following:

I felt the same way as an Episcopal priest as I do now as a Catholic priest, that is to say, I am first with God, called by our Lord, and guided by the Holy Spirit to be an ambassador; a priest, for the Church. And I am also living in the sacrament of marriage. I am married to the Church, and I am married in the sacrament of holy matrimony to a woman. Both of those have a place. I would say that we're always, all of us, related to our Father in Heaven first, no matter what our station in life is. And that does not displace holy matrimony by any means.

Father 06 commented on the difficulties of being a married man and father, as a Catholic priest, but placed this in the context of sanctification. He stated the following:

I think that's true. My first vocation is a married man. I see it as a complementary vocation and one that's not easy. That is to say; I've been married the entire time I've been an ordained man, both [as an] Episcopal priest and now [as] a Catholic priest. Being a married priest is not easy, but the upside of it is that I see it as a complementary vocation. The priesthood is a vocation which leads to sanctification. Marriage is a vocation that leads to sanctification. That's part of the purpose of marriage. That works complementarily with the other vocation. In my case, I only speak for me, I need both vocations so to speak, but I am also prepared to, as we signed documents before we were ordained as Catholic priests, that if something happens to my wife, Heaven forbid, then I will be a celibate priest.

Humbly, Father 11 illuminated the practicality of the challenge of providing an uninterrupted transition between family obligations and priestly obligations, as a hardship that he must manage to the best of his given abilities, as do we all and ultimately lay what remains at the feet of God for His mercy. He stated the following:

I live in the constant tension between my family... and all of the things that need to be done the way the priesthood is currently configured, and I'm not able to get myself in the segue as many of my celibate brothers are, and many of whom actually do. And so the way I would respond to that is to recognize the truth that's behind it and then to say that God literally has called me to both a family and to the priesthood, and I have to figure out every day how to honor those callings and serve the Lord in both of them as best I can and then leave the rest to him.

Father 10 responded to this criticism with simple gratefulness and a proposition that the sacrament of marriage for a priest may provide a differing insight, beautifully complimenting his marriage to the Church, in relation to his celibate brethren. He stated the following:

All I can say is this; marriage is a gift and celibacy is a gift. I'm a very different priest from the non-married, celibate priests. I realize that. They realize that I'm very different because of that. I look at it more from an angle of gifting. It's the gift of marriage and all that involves, which helps me in a way to be married to the Church differently than the celibate is; differently in the sense that having a wife... opens up for me, I think, a different kind of insight into marriage to the Church than a celibate priest. On the other hand, I think the celibate priest has insights into the marriage of Christ, and to the priest and the Church, in a different way.

Father 13 offered a defense to the criticism of married priests not being married to the Church, with a discussion of the coexistence that must transpire between the ontological priestly marriage to the Church and the sacramental marriage to a spouse. He stated the following:

That is a really tough question if you take marriage between a man and a woman and the marriage of the priest to the Church and you make it equivalent. For me personally, what I have to do is understand that my priesthood and my marriage have to basically coexist and the hardest thing is not allowing one to influence the other but to live them both out faithfully. I think there is an ontological shift in the individual when he is ordained to the priesthood that does, I think, in fact, allow him to operate as a priest, that he is in fact married to the Church, but at the same time, he sees himself married still to his wife sacramentally, understanding that they are separate sacraments. In other words, a priest does not go through holy matrimony in his marriage to his Church. Both have to be expressed faithfully and at the same time be able to coexist... not a blended way, but just a coexistence together.

Lastly, Father 14 touched on a criticism related to priestly marriage that escaped my preparatory development of research questions; laity concern with a married priests' ability to maintain the confidentiality of the confessional within the sacrament of marriage. He stated the following:

You know I've heard the expression that a married priest couldn't possibly give as much time or couldn't possibly keep secrecy because everything [is] shared in a marriage; and

there is a truth to the time issue. I do have obligations that other priests don't have. It's harder [for me] to pick up and move than it is for other priests... The comment about... keep[ing] secrecy of the sealed confession is one of those comments that [you] always hear second-hand. No one has the guts to say it to my face. But... doctors, psychiatrists, and lawyers do it. It's kind of... an unfounded accusation that doesn't really hold up when you think about it rationally. I think it's more of an emotional response by people.

The criticism of a married priest not being married to the Church in the same manner, or with the same intensity, as a celibate priest, while intellectually interesting, seems to discount that celibate priests have families; parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, who require their time and attention as well. Ontologically, married and celibate priests both have sacramentally and eternally, entwined their souls with the Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church. One could argue, however, that a wife and particularly children, increases the responsibilities and distractions a man has, to assure their wellbeing. These ideas may be more suited to the criticism of an undivided heart, however, which is explained in the next few paragraphs.

An Undivided Heart

One criticism of a married priesthood that married priests are probably more familiar with is related to a commonly misrepresented paragraph of the Catechism regarding the discipline of celibacy; calling priests to consecrate themselves with an *undivided heart*. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states the following:

1579: All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain *celibate* "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."⁷⁰ Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to "the affairs of the Lord,"⁷¹ they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to the service of which the Church's minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.⁷² (Catholic Church, 1997, p. 395)

This catechism mention of an undivided heart has biblical reference to 1 Corinthians 7:32-35, where St. Paul eloquently wrote the following:

³² I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. ³³ But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, ³⁴ and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. ³⁵ I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction. (1 Cor. 7:32-35, NABRE)

John Paul II mentions an undivided heart on three occasions in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* in 1996. The Synod, which is a gathering of bishops from across the globe, occurred in October 1994 and focused entirely on the consecrated life of religious persons and their role in the Church and the world. He first commented on the idea of an undivided heart in the very introduction of the document. He stated the following:

In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father's call and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ in order to devote themselves to him with an "undivided" heart [emphasis added] (cf. 1 Cor. 7:34). Like the Apostles, they too have left everything behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves, as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of the Church shine forth, and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society. (John Paul II, 1996, para. 1)

John Paul, later in the same document, links the idea of an undivided heart with the Holy Trinity and the evangelical counsels, which include poverty, chastity and obedience (CCC, 915). He stated the following:

²¹ The deepest meaning of the evangelical counsels is revealed when they are viewed in relation to the Holy Trinity, the source of holiness. They are in fact an expression of the love of the Son for the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. By practicing the evangelical counsels, the consecrated person lives with particular intensity the Trinitarian and Christological dimension which marks the whole of Christian life. The chastity of celibates and virgins as a manifestation of dedication to God with an undivided heart [emphasis added] (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34) is a reflection of the infinite love which links the

three Divine Persons in the mysterious depths of the life of the Trinity, the love to which the Incarnate Word bears witness even to the point of giving his life, the love "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5), which evokes a response of total love for God and the brethren. (John Paul II, 1996, para. 21)

John Paul continues, much later in *Vita Consecrata*, with commentary on the obvious necessity of devotion in the consecrated life. He stated the following:

This is the perennially valid response to the question which many people, even in good faith, are asking about the relevance of the consecrated life: Could one not invest one's life in a more efficient and reasonable way for the betterment of society? This is how Jesus replies: "Let her alone!" Those who have been given the priceless gift of following the Lord Jesus more closely consider it obvious that he can and must be loved with an undivided heart [emphasis added], that one can devote to him one's whole life and not merely certain actions or occasional moments or activities. The precious ointment poured out as a pure act of love and thus transcending all "utilitarian" considerations is a sign of unbounded generosity as expressed in a life spent in loving and serving the Lord in order to devote oneself to his person and his Mystical Body. From such a life "poured out" without reserve there spreads a fragrance which fills the whole house. The house of God, the Church, today no less than in the past is adorned and enriched by the presence of the consecrated life. (John Paul II, 1996, para. 115)

Celibate priests obviously have families as well. Aging parents, siblings, nieces and nephews all hold special places in a celibate priests' life and they demand and deserve time and attention. Father 12 defended this point by stating "the presupposition that an undivided heart means that you have absolutely no other obligations but priesthood, I don't think is true even of celibate priests" (Father 12). While an aging parent or terminally ill sibling, for example, may force dramatic life changes for even a celibate priest, a spouse and children seemingly do bring with them a level of responsibility that a celibate priest most often does not have to concern himself with, at least on a daily basis. In this context, a concern of laity is that a married priest would not be able to devote his time, attention and his "undivided heart" to the Lord and his Church as a celibate priest could. In this vein, participants were asked the following questions: "How would you respond to criticisms that a married priest, with a spouse and perhaps children,

inhibits the priestly identity of having an undivided heart and how do you choose between conflicting obligations to your family and to the children of God?"

Fathers 04, 07, 12 and 13 were quick to point out that celibate priests have family responsibilities as well. Father 04 opined said the following:

That's an excellent question. I think, number one, I don't know of many of my celibate clergy friends who don't also have family obligations and responsibilities. It may not be through a spouse and child, but often it's aging parents, or siblings, or nieces and nephews. And I think that in my own ministry across the course of the years that I've spent in the Episcopal Church and now, my spouse especially, because my children are grown and gone, understands that my vocational responsibilities often have to take precedent over our family desires, and there are times when I simply have to make the decision that my call as a priest has to take primary place in my daily activities.

Father 07, pointing out that a priests' personal health and growth could be construed as a division of heart, similarly remarked with the following:

Everybody has to struggle, whether you're celibate or married, of having not so much divided loyalty, but your primary loyalty is to God. Living that loyalty out in the different parts of your life, including your responsibility to yourself and your own personal health and growth as well... Even a celibate priest still has family and parents and siblings and friends and hopefully other interests besides church that balance out a life, rather than seeing it as a life of division; of a full life that has many parts to it that you're living out your love for God in and through.

Congruously, Father 13 commented on the perception that a celibate priest is somehow a familial island unto himself because laity often do not see a celibate priest with his family as a course of his vocation. He stated the following:

Well, I think that the same could be said for a celibate priest in terms of his responsibility say to his mother or to his father. I know many [married] priests who have elderly mothers that they're still caring for, so is that... a divided heart as well? That being said, I've seen the same happen with celibate priests... with an ailing mother, an ailing father, [or] other members of the family. They may be celibate, but they're not isolated. They're not totally removed or cut off from other family obligations and other responsibilities that they might have.

Other priests, like Fathers 02, 06, 10 and 15, talked at length about negotiation in familial matters and the need for balance in their lives, whether that be as a celibate priest or as a married priest. Father 15, for example, stated that “The answer to that is no more, and no less, than very carefully, exercising a balance of recognizing that both sacraments have claim upon my life, and both of them have claim upon my life active in each day” (Father 15). Continuing the theme that there is a necessity for balance Father 02 stated the following:

I would respond by saying that's not true. However, I would concede that there is a balancing act that is, in fact, more challenging [for a married priest] than [for] a priest without a family.... So, I concede that it does become a very challenging thing to be a husband along with being a pastor of a group of people who demand your time and your energy. [It] doesn't divide the heart, however. [It] doesn't divide the attention, because, in the end, you have to give the attention to the work that you're doing first. When it interferes with a family function, unless the family need is an emergency, church is what I have to do first. That has happened. Sometimes it's OK, because there's no fuss, and other times it's not, and it does draw a fuss. But you learn to live with it. I believe that it's quite possible to function as a husband, father, grandfather, and priest; but you negotiate, and sometimes that negotiation is not pleasant.

Speaking specifically about married priests being able to manage the marital and familial duties of husband and father, as well as how to effectively manage the sacramental, administrative and pastoral duties of a Catholic priest, Father 06 stated the following:

That's a very difficult area and one that I work with all the time in terms of my ministry. It takes a special marriage, and coupling the ministry of a priest with the ministry of marriage is, as I said before... not easy, but it's doable. One has to practice a discipline of what I call balance and humility. I do believe, because I've been doing it, and we have men that do it rather well, that it's possible to be a solid Catholic priest and to carry on the responsibilities of marriage.

Warmly, Fathers 01 and 15 discussed the abundance and expansion of love that allows the Catholic priest to be a faithful servant to the Church, the Catholic faithful, and a family.

Father 01 commented the following:

I'd have to say that there is, in fact, a divided heart. That in fact, I have affections for both. I would liken it to having children..., that your love is not limited because you have

two children. With the first child one has a great deal of love for that child and [when] the second one comes along, does that mean that the love for the first one is diminished? No. There is an expansion of love, so in that sense, the criticism that you just mentioned would be one that assumes there's a limitation of love, and if X amount is used in the marriage, then there is X minus some number that's available for the Church, or vice versa. But it isn't that way. It's that love expands so that there is an amount of love for each that is not diminished because there are two. But it's true that there is a limitation for time, because time is finite. But love is not finite.

Father 15 agreed when he stated the following:

I wouldn't accept the premise of the question about having a divided heart. We believe in an abundance of love. We believe that both marriage and Holy Orders show forth the Grace of God in a particular way. It becomes incumbent... upon a married priest to be particularly attentive to the sacrament of Christian marriage because it does tend to take a backseat to the pressing demands of quotidian public and sacramental ministry.

Fathers 03, 08, 13 and 14 talked about their spouses, children, and many other things that are of equal importance. Father 03, for example, affirmed aspects of the criticism. He stated the following:

That's one of the reasons I am an opponent [of a married priesthood]. In my personal case, the only reason that it worked out is because to whom I am married. My wife is a very, very, very independent woman. Low maintenance I guess would be a good contemporary term for that and she understands the depth and the necessities of the priesthood. So, in that understanding, there's never a conflict. That's a very valid criticism, [but] the Church takes priority.

Father 08 dismissed the idea of an undivided heart and similarly commented on the importance of the right spouse. He stated the following:

Personally, I would argue, or ask, how many priests actually have an undivided heart? I know it's a wonderful thing to aspire to, but practically speaking, ... since we're human, and sinners, a pure heart is kind of a rare thing to come across. Dividing time between the Church family and the personal family is something that many professionals struggle with. I mean doctors and attorneys, and people like that that are often called out at strange hours of the night... So, I would say that the individual probably has to decide how they can best work that [out] on their own and in conjunction with their spouse, so obviously, the choice of a spouse is quite important because that is [important] for the

whole equation.

Father 13 placed the idea of an undivided heart in context with setting priorities. He then went as far as to say that the spouse has priority, scripturally when he stated the following:

Let me try and get my thoughts together. This is really interesting trying to pull it together on the fly. I think that all of us have a heart for family, and all of us have a heart for Christ's Church. Part of it, for the married priesthood, is how do you set your priorities? And I don't know what you're finding with other married priests, but I am a strong and enthusiastic supporter of a celibate priesthood. I believe that what the Church did was a great gift for me, but for it to become the norm I think would be very dangerous. At the same time, I think I bring gifts to my priestly ministry from being married that really do enhance my ministry in the Church, but at the same time, for the pastor of a church, especially built the way that our current Catholic churches are built, like here at (parish name deleted for anonymity), we have 3,000 families.... How do I as a married priest handle that kind of load, that kind of burden? That's where I'm enthusiastically supportive of the celibate priesthood of being the primary expression of priestly ministry and particularly for that of pastoral ministry being the pastor of a local parish. That being said, you have to set priorities based on where is the greatest tug on your time. For example, if I am a married priest, and I have a wife that is ill, at that point I may need to see that as the higher tug on my time and give myself to my wife; where if there is, in fact, a crisis in the Church or somebody at the hospital needs anointing; if there's a death in the parish, those types of things, even though we might argue that the Church at that point might be a lower priority, the priority has nothing to do with where I spend the majority of my time. That's built upon where the greatest burden is and the greatest call. So, I would see myself as needing to make sure that my ministry is covered. Where priorities really come into play is where there is an equal tug on the time. At that point, your higher priority, which according to scripture would be the wife, must take precedence.

Father 14 humbly stated that he often prays and asks for advice on the struggles of competing obligations from other priests and laity and that he makes mistakes, and he learns from them. He commented the following:

I have obligations between my children and my wife, but I love them both, and nobody really questions a parent's love for each other versus their children, even though it's split, and sometimes they're competing. So, I have to sometimes make choices. The real challenge [is] that I can't bi-locate [or] tri-locate as people would like me to be able to do. But I pray for guidance about choosing the right thing, and I think about it often, and I ask for advice when I have questions about what to do. I know when to ask other priests [for advice] ... and when to ask other married men [for advice] ... and I make mistakes,

and I try and learn from them when I do.

The notion of an undivided heart, while an aspiration worthy of respect and admiration, seems nearly impossible, perhaps accomplished by Saints of the Church, if ever accomplished, and seems quite impossible for the human existence given our fall from Grace. Practically speaking, the ideal of an undivided heart seems to be essentially out of reach for even the holiest of human beings. However, worthy is the aspiration that draws us closer to the Lord.

Failures of Obligation

Another criticism of a married priesthood originates from a fear of the unknowns of complicated marriages between married priests' and their spouses. While celibate priests can certainly falter in their obligations to chastity as well, many believe that a married priesthood would create greater opportunity for scandal, including marital infidelity and divorce, that might be unrecoverable, in a ministerial sense, to those befitting the priestly office. In this context, I asked participants the question: "When one fails in their obligations of chastity within the sacrament of marriage they are forgiven and welcomed back into communion with the Church. Do you feel that the same should be the case for married and celibate priests?"

Nine of the 15 priests in this study responded specifically about the scandal such instances of misbehavior could bring upon the Church, and noted how difficult it might be to function thereafter, pastorally. Father 02 reflected specifically on adultery and the potential for the laicization of scandalous priests, as well as recognized the difficulty with allowing a priest to continue in ministry following scandal. He said the following:

It's a very interesting reflection, because, in the Church, adultery is not a reason for divorce. If one carried that truth to a married priesthood and said, well, adultery is not a reason for divorce, then priests, too, would live under that truth. But I do believe

scandalous behavior requires a discipline. Divorce could not take away your ordination. It is forever. However, the Church may laicize, which is not done very often these days, but if you scandalize the community, then the discipline has to be severe. And what would that be? It would be up to the local bishop but under a universal canon and norm, [an] Archbishop, probably. The scandal that right now I think of is abuse, for example, then you are given to the law of the land. But in marriage, it wouldn't be an arrest-able offense, although it would be a scandal. I would be inclined, if I was a bishop or an archbishop, if an affair scandalized the community that community should be assured that the Church is not going to put up with that, and therefore, ergo, somehow that priest would be disciplined in a fair but effective way. His priesthood would still be valid, but whether he got to exercise the priesthood is the question I cannot answer.

Father 03 discussed the unintended consequences of divorce for married priests, and their ability to provide pastoral care after such a distraction. He stated the following:

That is actually one of the consequences that I bring up, the unintended consequences, in discussions with not only my brother priests but also a lot of laypeople. The Church has a lot of authority over the priest, and they have the authority that the Church has over any layperson, over the wife. And that whole thing is borne out practically. I mean just within the past couple years some wives all of a sudden, for whatever reason, don't think it's a neat thing to be married to a priest anymore and have separated. When that happens, it negates the effectiveness of a priest, particularly is a pastoral sense. If a priest has an administrative role, if they're a chaplain in a hospital or something it might not be that big of a deal, but [he might] become ineffective in parish ministry because... people being who they are, there's always the question, well, why did she leave? So it really negates his effectiveness of being the holy leader that he's supposed to be. The scriptures tell us; how can a man run the Church of God when he can't even run his own household? And if it's something as rudimentary and as basic as keeping the marriage relationship together, then I believe that scripture applies. Then the question is raised if he wasn't even able to keep his marriage together, how can the Church expect them to keep a flock together?

The comments provided by Father 03 above highlight a general sense of the unknowns for lay Catholics and perhaps, priests and Church leadership as well, of what the future might hold for the integration of married priests within the broader Latin Rite priesthood. Father 04, assures us that it is possible for a married priest, in certain circumstances, to recover from scandal. He also warns, that it might be very difficult to do in a Catholic context, in a healthy way, until disciplines have been developed to guide that process. He said the following:

What I saw and witnessed in the Episcopal Church was that it was often possible, [after] a period of recovery, after a period of discipline, and under certain circumstances in which grace ministry might be restrictive in the future. I think at this point it would be very difficult within the Catholic context for any of us who are married, were we to have an infidelity or relationship that took us outside the bounds of our marriage vows, for that to be a recoverable issue. I'm just not sure that we have worked out yet the disciplines within, having a married clergy, that would allow that to take place in a healthy way.

If the Church were to develop such disciplines, as Father 04 indicated above, there are the experiences of the Episcopal Church to look at for guidance, and I expect there are very similar experiences from the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches as well. Father 07, below, commented on this similarity with the Episcopal Church and the difficulty, borne out in many marriages that are failing, of maintaining focus on vocation when things are falling apart. He stated the following:

It depends on what you mean by fail. I do know of cases of divorced priests; some priests who were married and are now divorced... [who] have committed themselves now to a life of celibacy. In that sense, they've begun a new life on the other side of a marriage. There are plenty of priests who've gone through that in the Episcopal Church, and it's a major distraction and challenge to one's priestly work. If things are very bad at home, then it's going to deeply affect, I think, the state of mind and functioning in the rest of your life.

Fathers 01, 06, 08 and 09 chose to focus on the forgiveness and mercy of the Church. Father 08, for example, stated: "I think that the Church is all about forgiveness, so I would hope that forgiveness would be given in that situation" (Father 08). Similarly, Father 09 chose to speak about the difficulty Church leadership might have in making that call. He said the following:

That's perhaps the most difficult question of having married men in the priesthood. It's what you do in a situation like that. Certainly, there should be a period of doing penance where presumably he steps aside from a public ministry for a period, whether that needs to be permanent or not probably depends on the circumstances of the faith. The key is, on the one hand, he loses credibility, but on the other hand, it's a question of forgiveness and redemption. There may be instances where he's a better witness to the forgiveness of the Gospel; in other instances, it would probably give the wrong message and not be good

for the soul.

Father 01 also commented on the need for mercy and forgiveness in instances where priests have failed in their obligation to chastity. He stated the following:

That could definitely affect the kind of assignment they would, or should, be given. But that would presume then that there are sins that are not forgivable. But, with any kind of infidelity, there are consequences. The consequences don't go away, and they can be very severe. If there is a great scandal involved with these things, or any kind of scandal actually, that might prevent him from just effectively living out his priestly identity or priestly vocation, he may not be able to do that in any kind of public way anymore. Those are the consequences of the action. But the forgiveness or the restoration is not something that could be prevented for any of us. But we've got to pay the penalty.

I will discuss the merits of mercy and forgiveness for those celibate priests who have left ministry to marry, in Chapter 5's section titled Reconciliation with Laicized Priests. Instances of non-criminal scandal require discernment by the offending priests' bishop to determine if a particular priest can fulfill his priestly function effectively. If determined that he can function effectively, appropriate discipline, an opportunity for forgiveness and reintegration into the life of ministry should take place. The consequences and distraction that will undoubtedly follow a particular transgression obviously follows that priest, however. Such opportunities for transgression and distraction seem to be a point of contention for a married priesthood in the Latin Rite, but one must remember that such transgressions already occur within the celibate priesthood. Church leadership must determine for themselves if the addition of married priests to the Latin Rite is beneficial or detrimental to the priesthood. They can certainly examine the history and experience of the Eastern Rite married priesthood for particular issues of marital strife that occur and best practices in dealing with those issues.

Child and Spouse Issues

The familial paths these men have taken prior to ordination in the Catholic Church, resulted in all fifteen priests being married and with children. Eleven of the 15 priests interviewed had children who were grown and out of the house, leaving four priests in the study with children of various ages still living at home. For many conservative Catholics, the issue of a married priesthood primarily centers around a fear of the unknown in regards to spouses and children of priests. In this context, participants were asked the following: “What issues, if any, have your spouse, or children, experienced as a result of your ordination as a Catholic priest?” Older priests, with grown children, had very little to say regarding their children. Father 04, for example, stated the following: “Fortunately, my children, none. They are grown and gone. When I came into the Catholic Church, they were already adults with their own lives and vocations” (Father 04). Father 05, who does have small children at home had an amusing story to tell. He said the following:

Children, not as of yet. I mean about the only thing I've had, the (age removed for anonymity) year-old has come home to say, "Now, Dad, tell me about why the other priests that come to my Catholic school aren't married." So, we had that wonderful conversation about celibacy. So, nothing as of yet. I can guarantee here in the future there could be.

Father 09, similarly had a humorous story to share regarding an awkward situation that his child encountered years ago. He said:

The kids... we're generally empty nest, so they're not around here much. They're off on their own. My daughter was in a tutoring group of high school kids and after a while, they got asked what their father did, and she told them he was a priest, and the next time they got together she could tell something was amiss in the session. Finally, it came out that he had concluded that she was illegitimate. They had a good laugh over that and then went off. My answer is generally no; they have not experienced much of the negative stuff.

Father 11 noted how positive the experience has been for his children. He stated: “Well, my children love it. They love it. Love going to Mass with me as the celebrant” (Father 11).

Participants seemed cautious of talking about their children, but as for wives, these priests had much more to say. Interviews with five priests suggested that the Church had a difficult time knowing what to do with their spouses. Expectations about their leadership roles as a “pastor’s wife” within the Anglican and Episcopal Churches may have been clear, but expectations and their leadership roles within Catholic parish communities remain opaque.

Father 01 commented the following:

But my wife, her experience is nobody quite knows what to do with her. They don't know where she fits in or how to interact with her. It's really an unknown quantity. In the Episcopal Church the rector's wife had certain expectations, or at least a certain status within the parish itself, and there was a role that they sort of played, ... but I find in the Catholic Church there is a real a confusion about what to do with her. It isn't that people are unsociable; it's more like they just don't know how to respond.

Father 09 agreed with that assessment. He stated the following:

Well, there are people, bishops for that matter, that don't know what to do with a priests' wife. My wife has encountered that. ...As far as my wife goes, the only negative stuff was some stuff from people that just didn't know what to do with her. There is no animosity or anything; it's just confusion.

Father 12 further discussed the issue of confusion in the Catholic Church regarding the spouse of a married priest, especially at the diocesan level. He said the following:

Well, my wife says they just don't know what to do with wives in the Catholic Church. And I think that's generally true. Everybody wants to be nice, and in the parish, that's mitigated greatly. But you know, in the archdiocese and functions, they're not used to planning for wives, and so they don't quite know what to do with them, which is very reasonable in light of the history. My wife likes it because it means that the expectations on her are very minimal. Whereas, you know, within Protestantism, she was kind of a built-in part of the team, and people had expectations, so that's been a major experience. That doesn't mean people have shut her out. It simply means that nobody thinks about

that and [the Catholic Church doesn't] have a tradition of it.

Father 06 expressed this issue in terms of laity confusion. Married priests are a rarity in the Latin Rite and some parishioners are confused to the point of asking him if he is a “*real priest*.” He noted that this concern from laity has impacted how he and his wife portray their marriage in public in the following statement:

We're careful in how we present each other on a day-to-day basis within the Church. We've been asked to be discreet, too. It's been a good request because we don't want to scandalize the laity, many of which don't understand what this is all about. I'll even have people come up to me, and they'll say “Are you a real priest? How can you be a real priest and you're married?” That [kind of] thing. I'm very patient with that. Part of me at first gets offended, but I've learned how to use that and accept that as an opportunity for teaching and understanding and helping lay people understand this is not about a married priesthood; this is about Church community. We understand that the next generation of priests for the most part in the Ordinariate are [going to] be celibate.

Father 13 expressed this same idea in specific terms of a diocesan parish versus an Ordinariate parish. He stated the following:

I think our wives in particular, and again, we have to address this within the framework of our experience within a diocesan parish because within the Ordinariate realm I would say that a lot of this doesn't take place because the people are used to a married priesthood; but within a diocesan parish, I think that my wife has had to adjust to having a shift in the way that we interact, the way that she even interacts with the parish. She recognizes that she's in a very unique place and that most of the people with whom she is having her walk of faith with have never experienced this before. But what's happened is I think over time, as the parish gets more used to having a married priest, that the wife begins to be a part of her own support system of other women and things like that.

Father 08, an Ordinariate priest, commented that the transition for his wife from the Episcopal Church to the Ordinariate was easier, if not seamless. He said the following:

My wife has gotten used to always... being in the background in crowds. You don't hold hands with Father in public, but that was even as an Episcopal priest. So, she plays a low key. But, again, it's kind of like me with the celibate priest being drawn into [a conversation]. I actually find her being drawn into people wanting to have a conversation

and speaking with her.

Father 14 provided a humorous introduction to his commentary regarding his spouse and then illuminated the change in leadership role that his wife dealt with in transition from a Protestant Church to the Catholic Church. He stated the following:

I think having to write letters to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was pretty strange for her, but most people don't have any personal encounters with the Inquisition [laughter.] So, I mean she's a Catholic laywoman who has dealt with some things other people haven't, and she has this view into the priesthood that other people [don't have]. We have other priests around the house come and visit us and they let their guard down. So, I don't think priests have the same experiences to her that others do. But I think in the Episcopal Church and in most Protestant churches, the minister's wife has a leadership role. As the wife of a Catholic Priest, she does not have a leadership role, and that's fine with her. She was not particularly looking forward to, as an Episcopal priest's wife, being responsible for always baking brownies, and now no one expects that of her. So, I think she might actually appreciate not having to be considered the free labor that is so often the minister's wife.

Father 02 and Father 07 talked openly about the difficulties they experienced with spouses and children in their transition to the Catholic Church. Father 02 expressed the difficulty he's encountered with his spouse, a son and friends.

My wife was Catholic and became an Episcopalian in order to support me in my [career], and she didn't want to come back to the Catholic Church because she found it to be less liturgically meaningful. She thinks the liturgy is diminished. The music is unappealing, and you can't find your way around in the missalette. So, she resisted. My son was, I think, angry. He didn't say so, but we had discussions about Cardinal Bernard Law, for example, who was dismissed to Rome to be in isolation from his Cardinalate in Massachusetts, Boston. He believed that he should have been thrown out of the priesthood for covering up pedophilia and homosexual indiscretions. I was trying to explain to him what the disciplines [are] that the Church uses, but he didn't buy it. He thinks it was, in the vernacular, a bunch of crap. But he also now knows that Protestantism, in the Anglican/Episcopal Churches, pardon me for putting it quite this way, is crap too. The teaching has evolved into nothing, as opposed to following its historic and Biblical truths. So, he's struggling with that now just as I did, over time. So, my son, my wife struggled with my decision. Others, of my friends, cut me off because [they feel] I've turned my back on them, although I didn't. We no longer have the common life of Episcopal life/priesthood. It's understandable in that sense. Other than that, my family is just curious as to why. They've changed from this denomination to that

denomination, but how could I? [It's] accepted now, even [with] a sense of pride and maybe a little desire for their own conversion.

Father 07 similarly discussed the hardship the transition has had on his family, specifically his spouse, who did not convert to Catholicism. He stated the following:

Well, my wife did not become a Catholic, so that was an issue. My becoming a Catholic was an issue; it was something we had some long, hard conversations about... matter of fact part of my dossier to Rome needed to include a letter of support, and she wrote a very rich and quite beautiful letter of support. It's certainly a pain that we share; not having Eucharistic fellowship together anymore. She's still an Anglican; an Episcopalian, and of course I'm now a Catholic. That is a source of pain, not so much conflict, but just the pain that we can't kneel together and receive the Lord together from the Lord's altar. That's been a source of, in a very personal way, [a manner of] experiencing the disunity of the Church. Outside of that, I don't think there have been any.

Study participants seemed hesitant to talk about spouses and children to the extent they were willing to talk about themselves, leaving questions regarding the experiences of these important members of the Catholic community. There certainly seems to be much more to learn from additional research, particularly, from the spouses of these priests, who have walked the path of discernment and transition alongside their husbands. Future research is certainly necessary in this area.

Independence from the State

A loftier contextual argument against a married priesthood is that of independence from the state. Married life and fatherhood introduces both marital and parental responsibilities that make it difficult for a priest to distance himself from the state, should he need to do so during periods of religious-political strife or religious oppression. Not only does married life further invest a priest to the state's economy, but also the state's systems of education and welfare, giving a level of control to the State over the priest and his family, which could be exercised in

times of political strife. In the United States today, this might seem fairly innocuous at first thought, but one only needs to examine Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism, and Hitler's Nazism during World War II, for examples of persecution of the Catholic Church and her clergy. More than two-thousand Catholic priests, for example, were prisoners in what has become known as the "priest block" at the Dachau concentration camp during World War II (Bernard, 2007). In modern context, one can see that there exists today a real possibility of persecution of Christians and particularly clergy, with the rising threat of Islamic extremism throughout the Middle-East, South-East Asia and Africa.

The idea of clergy independence from the State was first constructed in 1828 by German theologian Johann Adam Möhler, in response to a Denkschrift (opinion piece) by two Catholic laymen from the University of Freiburg, Karl Zell and Heinrich Amann, calling for the abolition of mandatory priestly celibacy. Möhler stated that a celibate priesthood provides "unmistakable evidence of the non-unity of Church and State" (Möhler, 2007, p. 86) to those who view the Church as a mere humanist association that regulates the spiritual needs of the citizens of the State. Möhler's (2007) arguments in defense of priestly celibacy aim at the subjugation of revelation to nature, society and the State. Anyone who speaks of clerical celibacy as a mere institutional regulation, in Möhler's (2007) mind, is incapable of recognizing the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

In modern context, the State does not comprehend faithfulness; be that in either the sacrament of marriage or priestly celibacy. In this perspective, participants were asked the question: "Do you feel that having a wife, and perhaps children, in some way, may inhibit your independence from the State?"

Fathers 02 and 05 answered the question in the context of pro-life efforts. Father 02, called attention to efforts by the Holy Father to quell Armenian genocide and stated the following:

My independence from the state is in place. Without concern, I can say what I like as our Holy Father did about genocide with the Armenians. He obviously made his statement based on what he knows of the history, and he made it public to the whole world. Would I as a married priest facing some challenge find myself more likely to be quiet? No. Listened to? Questionable. Certainly limited in audience and in a relatively safe environment. I'm a diplomat more than a crusader. So, for me, it's easier to think carefully about how to address things, and I don't, for example, stand in line with the anti-abortion protesters. Because that's not how I'm made by God. I will pray, and I don't mind being in the background praying. But I've told folks who invite me; I'm not likely to go with you to the clinic. That's not what I do. I have strong opinions and [I] do engage either in homilies or discussions without fear.

Father 05 discussed the issue of independence from the state in very similar pro-life terms in the following:

That's a great question... Let me give you an example [from] Good Friday. We have a pro-life group here... and I was asked to do stations of the cross, pro-life stations of the cross, on [a Planned Parenthood] campus on the sidewalk, and to lead it. About 250 people were there. And I woke up on Good Friday, and I thought to myself, my goodness, I'm [going to] go put myself in harm's way, literally and actually, and I've got children here. And so I see the concern. I see where it's at. And yet I talked to my wife about it and of course, I still got in the car and went down to Planned Parenthood and led stations of the cross, fully knowing that I could have been shot. A whole number of things could have happened to me that day. But I don't see that as any different than, for instance, a lay faithful getting up and doing that. But that's my example to answer that question... And so I pray that if God calls me to something of that nature, he will provide the Grace for me to get through that fully knowing that I'll leave behind my wife and kids. But I also fully know that I leave behind my wife with kids [with] a huge community of people, a family, supporting her.

In contrast, Father 14 commented on the call of all Christians, not just priests, to choose God over the State if it came down to it. He stated the following:

History is replete with married saints and martyrs who chose God over anything else, and

my wife ... I hope she'd choose God over anything else too, especially over the State, and that's the call of all Christians, not just priests.

Fathers 03 and 15 considered the idea of independence from the State of little consequence to their priestly vocation in the modern world. Father 03 stated the following:

I've never really contemplated on being a married priest in relation to the secular world because my focus, as all priests' focus should be, [is] completely on the Church, not the relationship. Let the state do what the state does and let the chips fall where they may as far as that goes. I don't mind it. That's of little or no consequence in the grand scheme of the priesthood, and more as a married priest. I really don't see how that would affect that relationship one way or another.

Father 15 agreed in similar fashion when he stated the following:

Well, that's another interesting question that nobody has ever ... framed up for me in a particular way. No. We live within a leviathan of governmental regulation. Whether we are married with kids or living a celibate life, we're still in the States. I think that having a family inhibits a freedom of movement within society and provides some challenges, but I don't think that there's a particular risk in terms of engagement with the state.

American priests, admittedly, have had few reasons to consider what the discipline of celibacy or priestly marriage might mean to their independence from the State. The antagonism and opposition that can exist between State authority and priestly independence are far more plausible and immediate in those geographic areas where political and religious strife are more prevalent.

A Clear and Plain Sign

Celibacy, while not dogma of the Catholic Church, is a defining discipline in the Latin Rite that clearly distinguishes priest from laity. The vow of celibacy is an act of self-denial which allows for a particular focus on serving God and serving the Catholic faithful. Many Latin Rite Catholics would consider clerical celibacy one of the definitive marks of character and

personality of the Catholic priest, which John Paul II has stated: “must be for others a clear and plain sign and indication” (John Paul II, 1979, p. 7). John Paul goes on to say that “those who call for the secularization of priestly life and applaud its various manifestations will undoubtedly abandon us when we succumb to temptation” (John Paul II, 1979, p. 7).

One could argue, certainly, that John Paul II was not indicating that celibacy was the only aspect of a priestly personality that should be a clear and plain sign and indication for others, but he did stress what differentiates the priest from laity and celibacy is arguably the clearest sign and indication of what separates the Latin Rite Catholic priest from a lay life of service. The question then is, does an exception to the discipline of celibacy signal to lay Catholics a diminishment, or movement toward secularization of the Catholic priesthood? In this vein participants were asked for their ideas and comments to the question: “John Paul II indicated the sacrificial example of chastity and perfect continence as a clear and plain sign and indication to the laity of priestly identity. What do you make of these words from the man who approved the Pastoral Provision?”

Four priests, Fathers 02, 07, 12 and 15, framed responses to the question in terms of discipline vs. dogma. Father 02 said the following:

I think what I make of it is that his coming to understand a priesthood that included marriage ... is a guiding of the Holy Spirit, [and] also an acknowledgment, without saying it, that [celibacy] is a discipline, ... not a requirement. Our Lord said some are able to be eunuchs and others are not. We know that St. Peter was married. So, it's not as if the history doesn't have, in fact, up until the 8th century or so, a priesthood that was unable to marry. And it was a discipline because of the bad behavior of priests. Many of them were not behaving. So, bishops and archbishops, cardinals and popes, had to deal with the bad behavior of clergy. I think it's important for us to recognize that Saint John Paul was acknowledging, without using a lot of words, that yes, that what he described as you just read it, is true. But there's also another truth, and that the discipline is a discipline, and that marriage of a man who's a priest can happen. And when it does

happen, it can benefit the Church.

Father 07 continued the idea of discipline versus dogma in this statement:

Consistency is not always a virtue, but obviously, he is speaking a truth [for] 99.9 percent of the Catholic priesthood, [and it] does involve a vow of celibacy, and with it a theology of celibacy; a theology of being married to the Church, and all of that. There's... a rich truth in that, particularly for a celibate man. I do think, it is understood, that celibacy is still a discipline, not a doctrine. I think we need to be careful with some of this theology that we don't see it as a dogma, but as a kind of theological reflection on the celibate priesthood, but not to identify celibacy as essential to the priesthood. Clearly, that is not true historically. It's not true. Did I mention already the Eastern Church? It's not true by virtue of the Pastoral Provision and the provision in the Ordinariate that [celibacy] be absolutely essential. It may have been the norm given the history of the Western Catholic Church, but it's certainly not dogmatically essential to the priesthood.

Father 15 agreed with Fathers 02 and 07 above, commenting on the similarities between living a chaste and celibate life. He stated the following:

I think that St. John Paul II understood in a particular and unique way the mystery of the Church and that there was an important witness to be offered by those who come and offer their services for the Pastoral Provision and a potential for good service to the Church as well, without casting a Cartesian distinction between living a chaste and celibate life versus a married.

For Fathers 01 and 04, it seems to be a one-generation issue that will quickly resolve itself. Father 01 stated the following:

I think you would see that we are the exception that proves the rule, but that the exception still has validity. I don't think [John Paul] saw this as a long-term solution to anything. I see it more as a short-term solution, or a short-term response rather, to a particular need, that in time would go away.

Father 04 agreed in context of Pope Benedict XVI opening up the Ordinariate pathway in the following statement:

I think it's a very interesting dichotomy, and for me personally it's almost oxymoronic. I do believe that there is a place for celibacy, and I think if one chooses celibacy, certainly

chastity, and including quote “perfect continence” is, I think, necessary. I think anything less is to bring scandal to the life of the Church. At the same time, I think that the Holy Father, when he opened up the Pastoral Provision did say as a matter of pastoral grace [an exception is warranted]. I’m not quite so sure that all the theological or iconic dimensions in that were brought out in offering the provision because I think in many ways it was seen as a one generation concern. At least, again, that’s my personal perspective. So, I think there are issues involved with a celibate priesthood that may or may not have been adequately responded to when the Pastoral Provision and/or the Ordinariate were created.

In the themes of gratefulness and humility Fathers 09, 10 and 11 also viewed the question of celibacy through the lens of discipline, but also as a sacrifice that deserves respect and its place in the Church. Father 09 commented the following:

Well, I have great respect for the fellow priesthood, and the laity know that a man has willingly made a significant sacrifice to become a priest and to minister to them, which they don't know about me because I have a wife. I haven't made that sacrifice. At the same time, while the celibate priest practices chastity by continence, there is still chastity that must be practiced in marriage. And so that kind of sacrifice is still possible to a married man. I'm not suggesting it is equivalent, but there is a sacrifice involved in being married, namely that you don't please yourself for the well-being of your wife and your children. So, the sacrifice is a different one, but it is still a sacrifice. I guess that I'm not sure how one would verify empirically that there is a difference in what one character might be, between celibate priests empirically and married priests generally. And a celibate priest often lives by themselves are not used to the kind of daily humility that is necessary for priests to live with the family. I'm not saying that a priest can't be humble, and I'm not saying that a married priest always takes advantage of the opportunities for self-denial that their families give them, but generally one can perceive the difference between the celibate priest and a married priest. There is a practical spiritual advantage to being married in terms of the cultivation of humility.

Married priests, while not being called to celibacy, indicate that their celibate brethren certainly deserve admiration and respect for answering the call to a celibate life. Celibate priests may voice a wish, or silently yearn, for more flexibility of the discipline of celibacy so that celibacy is a choice, and thus their decision to forego a family and devote their lives to the Church, is a clear and plain sign; an example of self-denial and love that demands our admiration and respect.

Personal Thoughts and Experiences

The cohort of married men who have become Pastoral Provision or Ordinariate priests have a shared perspective on the U.S. Catholic Church, unique from their celibate brethren, as well as their own unique personal thoughts and experiences to share. The following are responses to questions related to feelings of alienation, possible psychological effects of celibacy and their roles within the Church.

Alienation

Loneliness is an issue for some Catholic clergy because of isolation they feel, due to relational barriers. One such barrier, not solely based upon celibacy, is social distance, manifested as a practical barrier to friendship. Catholic clergy maintain a social distance with parishioners because of a need to professionally manage the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Married clergy experience additional layers of alienation from the greater celibate Presbyterate because of their marital status, the isolation of some Ordinariate parishes, and the loss of a shared seminary experience. With this concern, I asked participants the following question: “Have there been times when you felt alienated from the priestly brotherhood and what opportunities do you have to spend time with celibate priests?” Seven participants described some form of alienation, while eight described their reception and experience with their celibate brethren as welcoming.

Participants who disclosed experiences of alienation, Fathers 01, 02, 05, 06, 11, 12, and 13, primarily concentrated their responses around the absence of a Catholic seminary experience and the resulting social distance created between themselves and other Catholic priests. This seems an area of concern that might be overcome with some well-focused attention to social

networking, but one can certainly understand how being a substantially differentiated late-comer to the party might result in some social distance. Father 02 spoke directly about this issue in the following:

I do feel an alienation in the wider group, but only to a small degree. It may be me more than them. There is a fraternity that we married priests are not able to get into because we are late-comers and because we're married. We're just not able to get into it. They've gone to school together, they've served together. They've built relationships with each other, and we just don't fit in. Yet, importantly, we are welcome[d]. In smaller groups, I'm treated as a priest. My brother priests, don't treat me differently. It's very interesting to be in this position.

Father 01 spoke about the alienation that he now feels in the Catholic Church that he did not feel in the Episcopal Church. He stated the following:

Yeah. I actually don't feel connected to it... as a Catholic priest. I was always connected in the Episcopal environment.... I feel very disconnected, and I don't know the cause of that. I suspect that it has to do with I did not go, nor did I experience in seminary the friendship that these guys do. Whereas in the Episcopal Church, you have the same kind of seminary experience... whereas here I don't have any of that, so I am an outsider.

Father 05 talked about how the Ordinariate has alleviated some of the alienation that a married priest may encounter by providing opportunities for Ordinariate fellowship that Pastoral Provision priests may not be afforded, even going as far as saying that he really couldn't handle many more opportunities for building relationships. He said the following:

I can tell you that it will never feel like I'm part of the fraternity as it were, but in a sense, the Ordinariate has really helped that. A lot of the Pastoral Provision guys had that problem. In the Ordinariate, we're a diocese unto our own. We have our own priest retreat and things of this nature, and that's been very good for us. I can honestly say in my day-to-day life, in my vocation as it stands right now, it would be hard to add on another retreat, social event, [other] things of this nature that build up any more relationship than I can handle right now.

Father 06 spoke directly about how married priests may find themselves outside the normative social circles of celibate priests, but that he had still felt welcomed into the priesthood. He also commented that he had come to understand the hostility directed towards married priests, and used patience and tolerance to deal with such instances. He commented:

I wouldn't call it alienated... more that at my age, given my position and age, I've been around for a while, I'm not threatened. The opportunities that I have to spend with my brother celibate priests have been good opportunities. I don't get them very often, [because] I don't run in the same circles. I guess you could say we married priests [are] not fully part of the social network of celibate priests because we come from different worlds, but I've also, at the same time, been very well received by celibate priests, and when I get around the other priests of the archdiocese it's always warm and accepting and I enjoy myself around them, but I have a different background, my social circles are different, and it's because I have a family and I come from a different world, but I think the two worlds have been blended nicely together. So, I can't complain. I wouldn't want to complain about how I've been received. I have run into an occasional priest in the Latin Rite that I would call it hostile, yes, to me because I'm married, but most of it comes from, if I understand where he's coming from, a lot of it has to do with he had friends who were priests who had to leave the priesthood because they got married. Now he's looking at a priest, married. I try my best to understand those feelings and to be patient and tolerate... when I run into that and I have run into it. I certainly have. Not very often, but it does happen.

Father 11 has similarly felt warmly embraced by the brotherhood of priests, but also expressed a feeling of alienation from the fraternal bond of celibate priests:

Well I don't get as much opportunity as I would like. We're all so busy. And then in the evening when clergy might gather for a drink I'm home waging bed-time and bath-time, and all the rest, so I don't get to do that as much. My experience here is that I have been very, very warmly and generously welcomed by the local diocesan clergy, and I have developed a couple of friendships with them that I value very deeply. I was at a social occasion where there were 5 or 6 of us who had been together for a dinner party and so then I did realize that there was an aspect to their fraternal relationship that I would always be on the outside of, ... but it wasn't anything they did, or said, or were trying to do. There was just the reality of the bond that they had together, which is more than their celibacy. They were formed in the Catholic Church and went to Catholic seminary, so they had a whole range of experiences in their formation that I don't have... So yes, there is an aspect of priestly fraternity among celibate priests that I can't share in.

Father 12 illuminated a perception, that other married priests might share with him, that while he has felt warmly welcomed into the priesthood, a lingering question remained; do celibate priests silently harbor ill feelings toward those who have been granted a dispensation from celibacy? He also commented on his perception that celibate priests live with a level of loneliness that is assuaged for him through marriage. He stated the following:

You know, I spend most of my time with married priests, but I do spend time with celibate priests, and I feel comfortable with them. I don't feel alienated. I do feel, sometimes, that they may feel that... my presence as a married person and as a priest in the Catholic Church makes them wonder... how fair is that? You know? Nobody has ever said that to me, nobody has ever even alluded to that. I guess that's my question, if I were in his position, would I be asking myself [how fair is that?]. ... Over at the seminary, there were some retired priests who were living there, and I happened to be eating in the refectory one evening, and the retired priests were sitting around a table, and I was just struck by their look of loneliness, and emotionally... picked up a great sense of loneliness. And I thought to myself, I'm so thankful that I have a wife and a family, and I don't have to go home at night to an empty room. And while ... they have fraternal relations for sure, I felt a sense of loss for them. And so, I guess that's what I feel sometimes when I'm around celibate priests; that marriage has been such a wonderful part of my life. I can't imagine my life without it. And so, I guess I just unconsciously assume that they're missing something that's an important part of life. And I know that most of them would answer, "well, you know, you're missing something that's an important part of life that we experience...."

The quote above illustrates the potential for differing perspectives celibate and married priests might bring to their ministry within the Church. All priests, celibate or married, have a unique experience that they bring with them; adding to their personal "toolbox," one might say, for use in pastoral and administrative leadership opportunities afforded to them. Married priests, perhaps, bring a shared experience of familial comfort that celibate priests did not choose. Father 13, however, illustrates below how that familial comfort may also inhibit a sense of community with the celibate priesthood. He stated the following:

I've been able to spend a lot of time with my brother priests. Where I feel separation as a married priest is to actually be able to live in community where there is a regular sharing

of meals, the sharing of life, the sharing of just conversation in the evening. That basically doesn't take place because I'm home with my wife, and they're at the rectory. So, that is the point where I probably feel the greatest point of separation. [To resolve that here] is we have one night where it's just the other priests and myself... The pastor and I have a night of our own, and we just go out... and we have fellowship. We pray the evening office. We go and have a meal. We have conversation, and we have a night together. But I would say that the community factor of praying, eating, and just living together, is the place where I feel the greatest point of separation.

Other priests, specifically Fathers 03, 04, 07, 08, 09, 10, 14 and 15, indicated there have been little or no feelings of alienation at all from their celibate brethren. For example, Father 07 believes that if there was hostility towards he being a married priest, it hasn't been overt. He stated the following:

I've felt fully embraced by that community of priests and have the rich time of prayer and sharing, and we study together and share our lives intimately and openly. I feel well accepted. If there is any prejudice to[ward] me... none of it's overt. One hears rumors of people being hostile to the married clergy, but I haven't experienced any of that hostility directly.

Father 04 expressed his experience of acceptance in terms of colleagues pleasantly inquiring about his spouse. He said the following:

I feel like I have been very blessed in coming into the Catholic Church. I have been well-received by my celibate brothers. Whenever there is a gathering, [sometimes] a deanery gathering, I'm certainly included as part of that. I certainly attend the Presbyteral functions within the diocese... There's clearly a positive and healthy relationship. I'm also gratified by the fact that whenever I'm with them, the vast majority will ask me how my spouse is doing. She is included in a lot of their thoughts and prayers, and she lives out her life in this very different world than we never expected to be in.

Lastly, Father 15 provided a humorous example of the cordial and jesting relationship that he has with celibate priests within his social circles in the following:

Well, I function collegially with all of the local diocesan priests... and I have a lot of opportunities to engage with typical, or normative, diocesan and celibate priests as well... There are different sets of expectations, [however]. The look on a gathering of celibate

priests' faces when I say, "I have to go home and cut the grass," is priceless because of a different way that we deal with expense and chore.

Feelings of social isolation are seemingly normative to the priestly experience, celibate or married, because of the nature of the vocation itself. For half of the married priests in this study, the conditions of isolation and alienation are noticeably different from their celibate brethren, however and begs the following questions: a) what might be done to further integrate married priests, socially, into the normative Latin Rite priesthood to alleviate feelings of alienation; and b) whether a discipline of celibacy by choice might lessen the isolation and loneliness of celibate priests, in comparison to their married brethren.

In the chapter 5 section entitled Reflections on the Modern Priesthood, participants responses to questions of a universally accepted married priesthood are presented. Respondents also commented about whether they feel the discipline of celibacy has detrimental psychological effects, due to loneliness.

Role and its Effects

Married priests recognize and defend their dispensation from the rule of celibacy. How then, does this exception affect how these men perceive their role within the U.S. Latin Rite Church? Without question these men, as shown throughout their comments below, primarily perceive their role as agents of evangelization as promulgated from the Second Vatican Council (Paul VI, 1965b). For example, Father 10 commented the following:

I see my role as a renewal to the Church. I'm bringing with me all my Evangelical, mildly charismatic experiences of my past. I see myself very much in touch with Vatican II and the recent call for renewal; for encounter with God. That's my language, so I see myself as an agent of renewal in the Catholic Church.

Evangelization is not something Catholicism does well, in my opinion. Perhaps the addition of former Anglican and Episcopal priests, as well as other Protestant ministers, to the Catholic priesthood will be a welcomed evangelizing breath of fresh air following the past few decades of crisis in the Catholic Church. The roles these men embrace in the Catholic Church may be highly influenced by their past experiences. In this context participants were asked the following question: “How do you perceive your role and its effect upon the collective consciousness, culture and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church?” I was struck by the genuine notions of gratefulness and humility that permeated their responses. Father 08 humbly responded to the effect he might have on the larger Church community. He stated, “One little grain of sand on the beach” (Father 08).

Eight of the 15 priests remind us that their numbers are so small in the grander enterprise of the U.S. Catholic Church, that they are often overlooked, having little or no effect on the institutional Church.

Fathers 02 and 06 commented on their ability to be a witness to a married priesthood for the Catholic faithful. Father 02 said that the institutional Church has limited the effect the Ordinariate can have on the U.S. Catholic Church by limiting their scope of influence. Father 02 stated:

Well, I do think we have a witness that married priesthood is possible. I do think holy matrimony and Holy Orders can be lived together. I think that's a witness. That's not our agenda, but I think the Vatican, the pope, is pondering this allowance of rescripts of married clergy. And we do have a great offering, the Anglican patrimony. John Paul knew our liturgy and pastoral style. Benedict knew what we had to bring as our best offering as former Catholics in England and now Anglicans for 500 years. [Our] music, too, is particularly beautiful. And the way we pray our liturgy. We can affect in a good way, without trying to stand out in any fashion. We can make a big difference. We could be effective in terms of a reverent liturgy that would enhance [the Church], and that's what Benedict was thinking, if I dare, to speak of what he [was] thinking. We have

this patrimony to offer, and it's wrapped in a liturgical package. We could be more effective if we were given more room to move, [however]. We can't recruit. We're not supposed to do anything that would be a solicitation of other Catholics, especially those disaffected, meaning those that are tired of the new liturgy.

Father 06 agreed with Father 02 and conceded that it is not his mission, nor the Ordinariates' mission and that ecumenism is the purpose of Pastoral Provision and Ordinarate exceptions to the rule of celibacy. He stated the following:

We're not on a mission to bring married priests into the Catholic Church. That's not what our mission is. We have them, and we understand them to be chosen. That is to say the Holy Father [makes] a case-by-case exception. [The Church] gives us dispensation from the rule, but it's for purposes of Church unity. We're not here to carry the flag and fly the flag that we [want to] see a married priesthood, but we also, at the same time... are able to show that given a balanced and disciplined life and a mature understanding of what marriage is and what the Catholic priesthood is, it is possible to be a faithful Catholic priest and be married, at least in my case. I'm only speaking for me.

Themes of Christian unity and evangelization were popular responses to questions regarding a married priests' role within the U.S. Catholic Church, with Fathers 05, 06, 07, 10, 13, and 14, speaking directly to these important topics in the modern Church. Father 05 talked about the effect his presence and that of the Ordinarate are having on the normative priesthood in regards to Christian unity outside the Catholic Church. He stated the following:

I see my role as a way to remind the U.S. Catholic Church that there are other ecclesiastical communities that God yearns for us to be in communion with... It's very easy in the Catholic Church [because of] how vast it is... to get lost in [the idea that] everything is Catholic, and not to think about [our] Christian brethren in the Protestant denomination. And I should say also, that's our role too.... That's our mission to think about that... I've seen a great reminder to the diocesan clergy [that] ... the Second Vatican Council says that these are Christians, and there's space outside the Catholic Church, and we need to work on unity with them.

Father 06 continued the theme of evangelization noting that the Ordinariate might be able to draw certain groups of people into the Catholic Church that might otherwise never consider doing so. He stated the following:

I think it illuminates some of the concepts that the second Vatican II constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, gives. I think it helps the Church become more full... as it manifests its gospel to the world; the gospel of Christ. I think we have a way to reach people, certain groups of people. It's easier for us to approach, and form, and help people come into the Catholic Church that otherwise might not come. I think that would be a blessing. I think the second difference we'll make is that we do have some charisms, like musical heritage, liturgical heritage and the way that we do liturgy that can be very helpful to the overall presence or manifestation of the liturgy within the Catholic Church.

Father 07, after humorously responding to the question of his effect on the Catholic Church, then beautifully expressed the sentiment that enthusiasm serves as an inspirational reminder to laity that there is much to rejoice in, even when there is lost perspective of the faith.

He stated the following:

You think I have a Messianic complex? [Laughter] Oh gosh, I don't know. I think I'm one little tiny presence in a big, big institution... a big, big archdiocese... I've had a lot of speaking engagements [sharing] my journey to becoming a Catholic... [and] someone came up to me after one of my presentations [and] said: "I haven't felt this good about being a Catholic in a long time." I feel like the Catholic Church, at least in this part of the country, I don't know if it's different where you are, is fairly demoralized. It's still demoralized by the sexual scandals. It's demoralized by the decline in the priestly ministry; it's demoralized by the shrinking of the churches, the closing of churches, the combining of churches. It's just not a healthy situation. For someone to come along and want to join this troubled, from their perspective, institution with joy and excitement is kind of counter-intuitive to them, and a source of encouragement, to really help people see beyond the present tribulations of the Church, to the beauty of the Church and the beauty of the Catholic faith and the fullness of the faith and for them to rejoice in what they have, rather than be discouraged and demoralized by the challenges of the present situation. That's been a good experience. Even in my preaching I get a lot of response from people, [because] I speak a lot about, as a former Protestant, why I became a Catholic... what I love about the Catholic Church and what it has done [for me]. I found a lot of lay people respond quite positively to a positive tone. Whether that has any big impact, I don't know, but that's why I feel like God used me in that small way here.

Father 13 expressed a very similar message of encouragement in regards to the impact a conversion story has on evangelization. He stated the following:

I just see myself as a priest who has a story to tell, that I think has a great deal of impact when it comes to the new evangelization. I have, over the last three years in particular, but even before my ordination, ... a story that was used in a lot of ways to really challenge Catholics to become more involved in their faith, and non-Catholics to really look at the importance of examining Catholic faith. So, I see one of my principal roles as just being an example of one who has found the pearl at great price, and has been willing to do whatever it takes to get here, and now to be able to offer the sacraments as a priest to continue to call people to the fullness of the Catholic faith.

Father 14, comparatively commented on the state of Christianity in the United States today and the hope that he may encourage people to see God at work in the world. He stated the following:

I've been told that I'm a sign of hope in that people have found it encouraging to see, at a time when so many nominal Catholics have decided, "okay, I'm [going to] have to see somebody going through such a radical change," as a reminder that God's at work in the world, and still bringing people to the Church. I remind people of the way the world's going right now. There might be a bigger difference between people who are nominally Christian or completely secularist than there are between Catholics and Protestants, but there's so much more in common. It used to be that the world was divided between Protestants and Catholics, and right now it's divided between Christians and nothing in the United States. Not necessarily a good thing, but a reminder of that shared experience a lot of us have had. Other than that, for so few of us, I would guess that most bishops and priests haven't given us a second thought. Most of them won't encounter us, although we tend to be infamous in the area we're in, and everybody knows about "oh, I hear the diocese next door has a married guy." But outside of that as a curiosity, I think unless you actually worked with us day in and day out, I don't think it has an effect.

One can see from their comments above that at least a few of these priests feel a responsibility to be a witness to the Church that a married priesthood is possible, yet they have tended to focus their role upon unity and renewal of evangelization. It is also clear that they consider themselves to have a very small presence within the larger depth and breadth of the institutional U.S. Catholic Church.

CHAPTER FIVE REFLECTIONS ON THE MODERN PRIESTHOOD

While the previous chapter examined the personal experiences of married priests, chapter five takes a hard look at questions facing the priesthood in the 21st century. Study participants were asked about such issues as the priest shortage, the sexual abuse scandal, homosexuality and same-sex attraction in the priesthood and an array of other questions through the experiences and perspective of the married priesthood.

The Discipline of Celibacy and Psychological Effects

Much has been written regarding the discipline of celibacy from the Church's perspective (Paul VI, 1967; John Paul II, 1992; Benedict XVI, 2010) and there is no lack of opinion on clerical celibacy from others regarding the psychological effects of celibacy (Doyle, Sipe & Wall, 2006; Plante, 2004). A 2014 activity report from the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, who coordinated the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia, went as far as to state that "obligatory celibacy may also have contributed to abuse in some circumstance" and further noted that "ongoing training and development, including psycho-sexual development, is necessary for priests and religious" (Truth, Justice, and Healing Council, 2014, p. 23). The council was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia and included 12 members with expertise in specialized fields of trauma, sexual abuse, mental illness, suicide, psycho-sexual disorders, law and others (Truth, Justice and Healing Council, 2014). The point of this research study, however, was not to determine if there are positive or negative effects of the discipline of celibacy but to gain an understanding of the thoughts and perspectives of married priests on a subject that affects their celibate brethren, in life-changing ways. In support

of this objective, participants were asked the following question: “Do you feel that there are any negative psychological effects of the tradition of priestly celibacy and do you feel that the discipline of celibacy is too demanding of priests in the modern world?”

These questions proved difficult for married priests who have practiced chastity in marriage, but not clerical celibacy. Two priests, using very few words, expressed opposite reactions to the questions. Father 01 plainly stated “I think there could be. Yeah. I think there could” (Father 01), while Father 05 stated: “My initial gut reaction on that one is just a simple no” (Father 05). Father’s 04 and 06 framed their responses to the questions in terms of priestly loneliness. Father 04 stated the following:

I think I find a higher degree of loneliness among my celibate brethren. Even with the amount of time that some of them have to spend together, there still seems to be an underlying loneliness that I often sense coming from them. As far as healthy and mature psychology, I don’t see a whole lot of difference between the married and the celibate, in terms of their own psychological maturity. So, that underlying loneliness, it may be just a little bit of a twinge of depression in a good many [that] seems to be there. (Father 04)

Similarly, Father 06 referenced priestly loneliness in the following:

There can be, yes, especially if one gets away from the theology of it being a gift. Yes, it’s like anything else, it can become a burden. It can produce loneliness if it’s dealt with in an unhealthy way. If one succumbs to the temptations of loneliness and one begins to express one’s needs in an unhealthy manner, but that’s true of anything. Celibacy and the practice of celibacy are chasteness within marriage. This is where the laity, when I’m given the opportunity to teach about married priests and the Ordinariate and celibacy and all that sort of thing, the laity become less and less confused when they understand the various levels of discipline that are being practiced, you see. So, I think I would come at it from that direction. Yes, one can become very unhealthy as a celibate, but one can also become very unhealthy as a married man as well. (Father 06)

Of other interesting concern in responses to these questions was the seminarian screening process, the complementarity of a spouse, perceptions of celibate priest envy, societal pressures,

and the overall struggle of the discipline. Speaking directly to the seminary screening process,

Father 02 said the following:

I do believe... that it's a struggle. And that the psychology, if you will, psychological effect, is that you've got to guard your sexual response all the time. You can have relative freedom, but then there are times when your hormones are acting up, and you are feeling a response to an individual [and] you've got to be very careful. So it does make it easier for some because they're not that sexually affected: sensually affected. And then for others it's horrible. Seminaries have to be aware, particularly the seminaries, to watch for those who cannot live within the celibacy rule. Benedict XVI made one of his early requirements that seminaries make sure those who are same-sex oriented could go forward, live a celibate life, as those who are heterosexual. I think he was saying not to hide in the seminary and in the Church so that you can be sexually active.... It is tough – it's a tough row to hoe. I'm not restricted from ordination. I am, by the Grace of God, by the Holy Spirit opening the eyes of these two popes, a married priest. I always wanted to be a Catholic priest, but I did not have the calling to celibacy. I did not. I had a calling to marriage and family as well, and that was the first sacrament I entered. I would not have had the psychological constitution to be a celibate, to not exercise a sexual response within a lifestyle of holy matrimony.

Father 07, spoke about the health and grace that stems from self-denial in the following:

Well sure. I think obviously one's psychology is affected by that. I don't know if you mean a negative. I think for... celibate priests... to embrace this as a vow, as a commitment, as a form of self-denial; if that is all done in a right spirit, then it's a source of health and grace and freedom and a lot of things that can be drawn out of that situation. Similarly, a married priest, having fidelity to that, can have certain positive psychological effects that come out of being married and living faithfully and fruitfully in that.

Father 09, conceding that the discipline of celibacy is a challenge, noted that difficulties arise from the way it is practiced, not necessarily the idea of celibacy, itself. He stated the following:

Celibacy presents challenges. I think if there are negative, psychological effects they tend to stem more from the way it ends up being practiced.... In many cases the priest may not have a social life, they end up by themselves, and that introduces a variety of problems. But I don't think that the psychological ill effects, if there are any, are rooted in the celibate priesthood, per se, because we can take psychological damage from all sorts of things. I think rather it's rooted either in the psychological weakness that we bring to it or in the way it gets worked out in practice.

Father 11, in a similar vein, defended the discipline of celibacy by providing examples of some of the Church's most revered saints who expressed the fulfillment of the discipline. He stated the following:

I think it's a challenge and it might have, for some, negative psychology effects, but I read some crazy back and forth on Twitter not so long ago where a fairly well-known – I guess it was an article that was reporting the conversation, but Andrew Sullivan, who you know is a well-known pundit and a Catholic, and gay, ... very blithely made [a] remark [that] to expect... same-sex attracted Catholics to live chastely was psychologically damaging, which to me is just a crazy thing to say necessarily. When the Church is filled with the communion of saints who lived chastely and in many cases celibately.... Was St. Francis of Assisi psychologically damaged by his celibacy, or St. Thomas Aquinas, or Mother Theresa? I would say that they were strange and wonderful; I wouldn't want to say that they were psychologically damaged, but they were fulfilled.

For married priests, there is a noticeable respect for the discipline of celibacy and for the sacrifice that celibate priests have made in order to enter into lifelong service to the Church. Respect for the discipline of celibacy brings us to the following question: how might these married priests serve as catalysts for change in the U.S. Catholic Church?

Catalysts for Change in the U.S. Catholic Church

The dispensation of the discipline of celibacy for some Latin Rite, American priests by the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter may be seen in a larger context as a weakening of the Church's stance on priestly celibacy, in spite of repeated Vatican commentary regarding its importance to the Church (Paul VI, 1967; Benedict XVI, 2010). For many, the admittance of even a small group of married men into the ranks of the Presbyterate leaves one to wonder what effect their membership may have on the culture of the priesthood or the collective consciousness of the U.S. Catholic Church. In this context, participants were asked their thoughts about how a married priesthood might affect such complex issues as the priest shortage, the sexual abuse crisis, homosexuality and same-sex

attraction within the priesthood, and the possibility of a reconciliation between the Church and former priests who left the ministry to marry.

Priest Shortage

The discipline of celibacy is often reasoned as one of the primary causes of a decline in the number of Catholic priests in the United States. Much can be argued against such a claim, including controversial changes coming out of from The Second Vatican Council, the continued secularization of American society since the 1960s and 1970s, the reinstatement of the permanent diaconate and publicity from the sexual abuse crisis. While the Catholic population in the United States has risen dramatically from 46.3 million in 1965 to 68.1 million in 2015, weekly Mass attendance has fallen substantially during this same time period, from 55% in 1965 to just 24% in 2015. This coincides with a dramatic decrease in the number of priests, and priestly ordinations in the United States. The number of Catholic priests in the United States, both diocesan and religious, was near 60,000 in 1965 and has steadily decreased to under 40,000 in 2015. Ordinations have steadily decreased during this timeframe as well, from nearly 1,000 ordinations in 1965 to just over 500 ordinations in 2015 (CARA, 2016).

The purpose of this dissertation is not to determine if a priest shortage does or does not exist, but to gain a better understanding of the thoughts and experiences of married priests in the United States. To this end, study participants were asked the following question: “Do you feel there is a priest shortage in the U.S. Catholic Church and if so, do you feel that a married priesthood would alleviate a priest shortage?” In response to this question 87% of respondents indicated they felt a priest shortage does exist, while 13% indicated they were uncertain. It would seem important to note that in their responses, not a single priest said “no” to the question

of whether there is a priest shortage in the U.S. Catholic Church. Overwhelmingly, married priests feel that there is a priest shortage in the United States. More than half of the priests questioned (54%) felt that allowing priests to marry would not be a solution for a priest shortage, however. Twenty percent of respondents indicated that allowing priests to marry would be a solution for a priest shortage, while 13% were uncertain, and 13% provided no response.

For three priests in this study, a married priesthood, or optional celibacy, might be one way to increase priestly vocations. Father 10 succinctly stated: “The first question: yes, there is a shortage. The second question: let's say it's a married priesthood, in my mind, ... yeah, there would be a lot more priests. That's my feeling” (Father 10). Furthering this stance Father 01 stated the following:

There is definitely a priest shortage in the State of (state omitted for anonymity). I can't speak for the United States... except that I would expect that to be true in the United States as a whole. Forty years ago, I am told there were something like 200 priests [here] and now we're down to less than 60. So there definitely is [a shortage]. The question of whether [optional celibacy] would alleviate it is sort of a qualified yes. ... For the Catholic Church to receive a substantial number of married priests, not just one or two here and there, but a substantial number, would require significant structural changes and expectations within the institutional Church... [concerning families, incomes, and] the limitations of hours, it really would [start looking] very much like the Protestant Churches with married clergy.

Father 02 discussed a priest shortage in terms of a possible prophetic plan of the Church to loosen the disciplinary reigns of celibacy and the implementation of a policy of optional celibacy. He stated the following:

We're not allowed to talk about that in public, of course. Now, this is a private conversation for your dissertation and so forth. To the side and privately, yes, there is a shortage. And do I think a married priesthood would change that? There is no doubt in my mind that that would happen. ... I think there's a real testimony of patience and of willingness to place oneself outside the normal family context of a wife and children by these men who are ordained. ... I would interpret Pope Benedict's reflection about the Ordinariate being prophetic, that maybe a married priesthood is the prophetic thought he

has in mind. I guess we'll see over time.

Six priests, specifically Fathers 03, 04, 06, 07, 11 and 14, spoke specifically about the idea of optional celibacy, or a universally accepted married priesthood and indicated such a change in policy would not be their choice for the Church. Father 03 commented that he thought to offer the priesthood optional celibacy would have unintended consequences. He stated the following:

There is definitely a priest shortage in the United States, but I do not believe that opening the door to a married priesthood would alleviate the problem. As a matter of fact, I think it would be the catalyst for many more problems. There would be myriad unintended consequences of that, [and] it would probably all fall in the negative category.

Father 04 expressed doubts that the vocational concerns of the Church would be affected by optional celibacy in the following:

I think there is definitely a priest shortage. Whether or not a married priesthood would alleviate it or not, I think is a large question. I'm not sure that marriage is the answer to the vocational concerns that the Catholic Church has right now. I think that the option to marry certainly with celibacy being held out as an ideal or norm might help... some of the itching, but I'm not sure that just a wholesale opening up [of] marriage would necessarily do that.

Father 07 indicated that the shortage of priests is having a negative effect on the pastoral ministry of the Church, but that he doubts there would be enough married priests to affect significant change in the shortage. He stated the following

There certainly is a shortage. In (city omitted for anonymity) it's an extreme shortage, and it really shows in... a real diminishment in the fullness of pastoral ministry. There just aren't enough priests to go around, so parishes are being closed, parishes are being combined, and the real reason behind it all is the shortage of priests. I think it's a system in decline, frankly, and the major reason is the shortage of priests. Certainly, any new priests will help out, although there aren't enough of us to make that big a difference.

Father 11, responded to the question of a priest shortage, discussed the idea in context with the troubling divorce rate in the United States, the issues with divorce if a large-scale addition of married priests were allowed in the priesthood and made a comparison to the Episcopal Church. He said the following:

I do think there's a shortage, but I don't think that long-term a married priesthood is an answer to that. You can look at, for instance, the queue numbers that were recently released about a decline in numbers, [the] vocation[al] decline, [and] from what I can tell, [it] seems to be easing out, and starting to advance and go the other direction in places. But you have to balance those numbers, and what people don't do, I've been having this conversation a lot, is balance those numbers with the other numbers on marriage, and how difficult it is to maintain a marriage in America today. So, bringing on a large scale married clergy into the Church might help, at least in the short-term, with some vocation numbers, but it would bring a lot of very difficult problems with it in terms of clergy and failed marriages and so on and so forth. So, I don't think it's necessarily the answer and you know the other part of that again is in what sense is there a shortage of clergy in the Church? In America ... the comparison is always the numbers of clergy that [existed] in the 40s and 50s, and people take that as the standard, but my hunch is that was really the aberration rather than the other way around. But I would love to see more priests; I'm just not sure again that ... throwing open the doors to a married priesthood is the answer to that. And I guess the other part of that is you can look at, for instance, the Episcopal Church, or other protestant denominations that have a married clergy and they have perhaps plenty of priests, but they're running out of people very rapidly, so you have to factor that in as well. They're in rapid demographic decline.

Father 14 commented in context of the Eastern Rite Church in the following statement:

There certainly is a priest shortage. I don't think having a married priesthood would have much of an effect in the long term. You might end up with a lot of priests right off the bat, but I don't think it would be a long-term solution. I mean if it was, we'd be borrowing all of our priests from the Eastern Catholics that we're not.

Eighty-seven percent of priests in this study indicated that they believe there is, in fact, a current priest shortage in the U.S. Catholic Church. Fewer, only 20%, have indicated that a married priesthood would have any impact on that shortage.

Sexual Abuse Scandal

In January 2002, the Boston Globe's Spotlight Team of investigative reporters began publishing a series of articles that exposed systemic problems of sexual abuse and an institutional cover-up of abuses within the Boston Archdiocese. Reported instances of sexual abuse involving Catholic priests can be found prior to this timeframe throughout the country, but the Boston Globe articles dramatically opened the eyes of the Church, her faithful, as well as the nationwide populace to the enormity of the issue. The articles framed for society not only the horrific instances of individual abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests, but also framed the larger systemic problem of hierarchical apathy toward dealing with a very offensive and embarrassing subject for the Church. The sexual abuse scandal, an unquestionable blemish on the legacy of the Catholic Church, has created myriad problems for Catholic priests, the vast majority of whom have no connection to or issues with sexual improprieties. Many Catholic laity feel that a panacea for the sexual abuse crisis would be to allow priests to marry.

The overwhelmingly consistent response to the problem of sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy is that it's not unique to the Catholic priesthood, with 93% of priests in this study indicating that they do not feel that there is an abnormally high rate of sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests in comparison to that found in the general population. The problem of sexual abuse and the under-reporting that accompanies that abuse is an issue that must be confronted in the light of God's Truth with all the might of the institutional Catholic Church. In the context of this research study, the acts of abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests are not only a violation of the trust given to the office of a priest, but also a betrayal of their vow of chastity and a betrayal of the Christian values of love and compassion. To gain insight into the thoughts and perspectives of married priests on the subject of clerical sexual abuse study participants were

asked the following question: “Do you feel there is an abnormally high rate of sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic Priests and do you feel that a married priesthood would reduce the instance of sexual abuse?” As indicated earlier, overwhelmingly 93% of priests felt that there was not an abnormally high rate of abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests. The remaining 7 percent declined to answer. On the question of if a married priesthood would reduce the instance of sexual abuse 67% indicated no, while 33% declined to answer.

The clear majority of respondents do not feel that a large percentage of Catholic clergy have committed sexual abuse or that sexual abuse is unique to the Catholic priesthood. Father 01 commented specifically regarding this theme and noted how the violation of trust has magnified the offensiveness of the abuse. He stated the following:

It's not an area of my expertise at all, but it seems to me not specifically Catholic. Abuse by Catholic priests is less than or about the same as other religions or even secular institutions that... work with children. So, in that sense, no I don't think it is. Nor do I think a married priesthood would alleviate that. I don't see the relation, but [for me] the difficulty has been the claim and expectation that they've given to priests, and the trust that was given to priests by virtue of their vocation, and the Church's stand socially and religiously, ... for them to violate [that trust] is of a higher magnitude as far as offensive.

Father 11 used the John Jay Report (USCCB, 2004) as the definitive source of information on the sexual abuse scandal within the Catholic Church and as a reference to his belief that Catholic priests do not commit abuse at a higher rate than others in society.

Not at all, and in fact, we know from the John Jay Report that that's not true, and if you can abstract the abuse crisis within the Catholic Church and look at abuse in the rest of the world, including the other Christian communions, abuse happens by married men and non-vowed celibates, so no.

Father 04 cited his experiences within the Episcopal Church in relation to this issue and concludes that the issue may be helping clergy reach a healthy, mature sexual identity. He stated the following:

No. I think in my role as an Episcopal Priest I saw enough of that, and we know clinically that the average abuser is known and is a member of the family. I don't think Catholic Priests, in terms of the vocation, are any higher percentage at risk than other vocations, other helping professions. And I think that most studies have pretty much born that out and I'm not so sure that it's the issue of celibacy as the issue of helping clergy, celibate or married, to reach a healthy sexual identity and with their own sexual maturity

Father 07 affirmed the words of Father 04 in regards to experiences from within the Episcopal Church. He stated the following:

I believe, and I've read, there's no proportionally higher incidents of sexual abuse among Catholic priests than among the population in general... other clergy in general, other professions in general... Assuming those statistics are true, there's no reason to believe that there's any particular reason for Catholic priests, by virtue of their celibacy anyways, to be any more inclined to that disease, addiction, and sin than anybody else. I certainly know, having been an Episcopal priest, there was sexual abuse by married Episcopal priests as well.

This theme was continued with Father 13, who also highlighted his previous pastoral experiences outside the Catholic Church and offered a view of the priesthood as good, faithful and Godly. He stated the following:

After 30-some years of ministry in the protestant world, I can tell you that there was a lot of abuse going on in those realms as well. I think that there were certain things going on in especially probably the early '60s, '70s, and '80s in the Catholic priesthood that may have given rise to a higher degree of sexual activity particularly with what we're seeing now. Most of what we're seeing is I don't think that necessarily a married priesthood is an answer to it. I think living a holy life is the answer. We're all called to chastity whether we're married or single. I've seen married men in the ministry, in the protestant world, that have just been as loose with their morals as celibate Catholic priests, but I think we also have to recognize the problem for what it is and to deal [with it] forthrightly. I think there were some intake issues and screening of candidates obviously, that went on for a number of [years]. The thing that I've noticed, though, after being immersed as a Catholic priest within the priestly community, is how many good, faithful, godly men there are, and I think that the spotlight has been so intently tuned on Catholics that there's a lot more going on than what's really there. At the same time, there are very few incidences within Protestantism or orthodoxy that are being spotlighted, but at the same time, there are things going on there as well.

Father 15 noted the emphasis placed on the Catholic priesthood considering media attention surrounding the scandal and the trust violated by those involved. He stated the following:

Yeah, I don't think that there's an abnormally high incidence of sexual abuse. I think that the public places great trust in the priesthood and great expectation. So, when any given community that has trust and expectation placed upon it, when they fall, it's a far more notable circumstance than those areas and communities of people who don't have that type of pedestal. So, I think that there's been a heightened emphasis perhaps and awareness, but I don't believe that it's statistically abnormal.

It seems obvious from their comments that married priests, many with extensive pastoral experiences in the Anglican and Episcopal Churches, do not feel that clergy sexual abuse is a purely Catholic issue. One third of respondents chose not to comment on whether or not a married priesthood would reduce instances of sexual abuse, the other 67% indicated that a married priesthood would have little or no effect on the instances of sexual abuse. Given the magnitude of the crisis within the Archdiocese of Boston, arguably one of the most influential and powerful dioceses in the United States, the question of clericalism arises.

Clericalism, in this context, can be defined as an institutional practice of maintaining or increasing the power and influence of the religious hierarchy over government, politics, lay business leadership, as well as the generalized laity. A 2013 National Catholic Reporter article entitled *The New Pope's Real Target: Clericalism*, noted that the newly elected Pope Francis was breaking with recent tradition of conservative popes and through example, was “preaching almost daily a powerful, silent sermon denouncing the scourge of clericalism that is at the root of most of the problems bedeviling Catholicism” (McClory, p. 1).

Clericalism is an issue for some clergy who perpetuate a philosophy of authoritative arrogance and the philosophy of clerical power may have attributed to the existence of a

generational group of priests who now find themselves in the eye of the hurricane that is the sexual abuse scandal. This idea of clericalism is clear in the retrospective lens that oftentimes parents of those abused by clergy took their concerns to Church leadership rather than to law enforcement and some experienced the reluctance of law enforcement to investigate and charge such crimes because of the power Archdiocese leadership held over both laity and established secular leadership. If there is any good news from the failure of institutional responsibility, it might be the societal awakening of the issue of sexual abuse that is prevalent throughout our society, not just the institutional Church. The Boston Globe investigative inquiry has since opened our eyes to the magnitude of this problem not only in the United States but around the globe. Perhaps the Catholic Church is the only institution in the world that could survive a failure of this magnitude while shedding the light of Christ on one of the most prevalent forms of abuse in the world today.

Homosexuality and Same-Sex Attraction

Another perceived issue for laity and the Catholic priesthood is that of homosexuality and same-sex attraction. Many in the laity feel that there is, or has been, a disproportionately high rate of homosexuality and same-sex attraction within the priesthood in relation to percentages within the general population and feel that a married priesthood would somehow alleviate a portion of that perceived problem. Again, this dissertation is not agreeing or disagreeing with this perception, but rather researching the thoughts and experiences of married priests in relation to such claims.

This issue is not unique to the Catholic Church. More than 100 Clergy of the United Methodist Church, one of the nation's largest Protestant denominations, recently signed an open

letter to their Church leadership identifying as LGBTQI and calling for a pathway of hope into the ministry of the Church (Reconciling Ministries Network, 2016). As identified in the following responses, such issues are prevalent in the Anglican and Episcopalian traditions as well. To gain insight into this experience in the Catholic tradition, participants were asked the following question: “Do you feel there is an abnormally high rate of homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood and if so, do you feel that a married priesthood would reduce the number of homosexual priests?” I would like to comment that when these questions were developed, I did not fully recognize the meaningful difference in terminology between a homosexual priest and a priest who has same-sex attraction. The delineation of same-sex attraction was identified first in my interview with Father 02 and although I did not change the wording of my question for future respondents, Fathers 02, 07, 13 and 14 all noted in their interviews the distinction and significance of that distinction, as it relates to the acceptance of seminarians and clergy within the Catholic priesthood. The distinction expressed is that homosexuality is characterized by sexual behavior, while same-sex attraction does not preclude one from living a life of chaste celibacy.

Nearly half of the priest respondents, 47%, were unsure if there was an abnormally high rate of homosexuality in the priesthood. This may be due to the majority of study participants being ordained through the Ordinariate, having limited interactions with celibate priests, or may be due to the possibility that priests do not often openly talk about such matters with their brethren. A third of respondents, 33% did believe there was an abnormally high rate of homosexuality and same-sex attraction within the priesthood. The smallest percentage was 20% of those who responded with a no, they did not believe there was an abnormally high rate of homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood.

Even more diverse were the responses to whether a married priesthood would reduce the number of homosexual and same-sex attracted priests. About 43% of respondents were either unsure or chose not to answer, while only 7% agreed that a married priesthood would reduce the number of homosexual and same-sex attracted priests. Finally, 50% of respondents said that marriage would not prevent homosexuality and same sex attraction.

The question of whether a married priesthood would reduce the number of homosexual priests garnered the greatest variance of responses than any other question in this research study. While 50% of respondents said no, the diversity of responses as well as the 29% of participants who chose not to respond, highlights the difficulty with questions regarding sexuality and the priesthood. Experiences from the Episcopal Church was a frame of reference for two of these priests as outlined by Father 01 in the following statement:

I can't speak with expertise and I can't speak about homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood from a first-hand knowledge basis, [but] from anecdotal things that I've heard I would say there is; for a profession, that it is much higher than you would expect in the normal population. ... I can tell you that when I was at seminary in the Episcopal Church that about 38 percent of my graduating class or at least more than, at least 30 percent were homosexual orientation and in many cases in partner relationships, so that is something that's there too. So, it's not like it's unique to the Catholic experience. Again, I don't think that the married priesthood would ... necessarily affect that, or reduce that unless you did away with celibacy all together. I think they're independent events. I don't see they're correlated.

Father 14 also commented on his experience within the Episcopal Church and the probability that the priesthood was a safe place for men with same-sex attraction prior to the sexual revolution of the mid-twentieth century. He stated the following:

In my experience in the Episcopal priesthood, I've found perhaps slightly more men who admitted to homosexual tendencies than I do in the general public. But that's simply because I knew them better because people ... are more open with people who share a profession or a vocation. I wouldn't be surprised if there was on a historical level, ... although we talk about how it's perfectly legitimate to be a single person and how you can use being a single person to further God's work in the world, there is a bias against

unmarried men after a certain age. I think there's probably a safe place for men who, ... because of their attractions, could never be anything other than [themselves, were] probably pushed into the priesthood. Is it today? I honestly don't know. I think things are different now than they were 50 years ago, so I'm not sure, but I guess 100 years, probably yes.

Father 07, speaking once again about experiences of the Episcopal Church, noted the importance of fidelity in the context of living a Christian lifestyle. He stated the following:

I remember John Newhouse from War and Peace [in the Nuclear Age] constantly saying the issue is fidelity; whether that's fidelity to celibacy, if that's their vow, or fidelity in marriage, if that's your vow. The real challenge and the real issue is holiness and fidelity to a Christian lifestyle as you have vowed to have. I just don't know if [a married priesthood] would make a difference around those kinds of issues. It certainly was interesting in the Episcopal Church there were a lot of homosexual priests who were married. Of course, ... this is sort of in the era before homosexuality became more normalized and accepted. I know a number of Episcopal priests who, in the process of their liberation, left their wives in order to claim their true sexual identity, as they would say it, as homosexual. Whether the cultural shifts we're going through are [going to] change the likelihood that there'll be married priests who are also homosexual, or with same-sex attraction; hard to know how that'll unfold itself in the future.

In addition to the issue of same-sex attraction in the priesthood, Father 02 highlighted the issue of priests actively participating in sexual acts. He stated the following:

Just from my observations, both historic over a long period of time, and currently, ... listening to what's going on and reading, I do believe there are a large number of persons with same-sex attraction who seek the priesthood. ... whether that's a larger group than any other organization of people, I couldn't tell you. ... and I do believe that there are those actively participating in sexual acts. And that's probably happening heterosexually, as well. My suspicion is there are those that are failing to keep their vows as they ought to. How big of a percentage is that? Very small. If you were trying to percent it, I'd have no idea, but it would be a small number in the total population of priests worldwide. I think homosexuality, or same-sex attraction, is an intrinsically disordered orientation, and I think it's totally separate. And I believe people struggle with their sexual expression all the time. Heterosexual or homosexual. And you know, what you do with that is how you live your life.

For Fathers 03 and 08, marriage has no bearing on proclivities toward homosexual or same-sex attraction. Father 03 explained the following:

I do think that there is a high rate of homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood. There again I do not believe from personal experience, both in the secular world and in chaplain's work, the fact that a person is married has no bearing whatsoever on proclivities to homosexuality.

And Father 08 continued this thought in the following:

I have no idea about the numbers. You don't see too many out and dancing about as gay priests. So, you know, I think the Church is kind of like the Army, don't ask, don't tell. And that seems to be just fine. And, again, I don't think the marriage thing is going to ... have any effect on it. You know there are married gay people in the regular life.

A less complex issue, but one that has a direct impact on the experiences of married priests, is that of the Church's stance of non-reconciliation with priests who have left the ministerial priesthood marry.

Reconciliation with Laicized Priests

The vow of celibacy has been too great a burden for some men who have been called to the priesthood and many of these men have left the ministry to marry. Canon 290 of the Code of Canon Law clearly communicates that the sacrament of Holy Orders confers upon a priest an indelible spiritual character that cannot be invalidated. So, while a priest, through the loss of clerical state, is prohibited from exercising the power of orders, deprived of all offices, functions and delegated power (Canon 292-293) he does not and cannot, become a layman again in the strictest sense (CCC 1583). Therefore, even a priest who has been laicized by the Church, through dismissal from the clerical state, is a valid priest, yet forbidden from exercising the duties and responsibilities that are connected to the clerical state, except in grave cases (Canon 986.2). Canon 291 also notes that a priest who breaks his vow of celibacy to marry is not automatically relieved of his obligation to celibacy, thereby making any attempt at marriage invalid under the laws of the Catholic Church. Dispensation from celibacy, in any form in the Catholic Church, is only grantable by the supreme pontiff.

In light of the celibacy dispensation provided by popes to married priests through the Pastoral Provision and Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, many laicized priests who have married since leaving the Church, hope for a reconciliation with the Catholic Church that would allow them to return to approved ministry. The Church has, to date, denied the possibility of reconciliation for those who have abandoned their vows without permission and the issue has become a point of contention between laicized priests and validly ordained married priests of the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate, with celibate priests often taking sides based on their personal beliefs rather than Church doctrine. As example, Father 02 noted the following:

I got ostracized by a Catholic monastery for being a married priest... because they know a number of Catholic priests, who left the priesthood in order to be married. They stood in solidarity with those men who broke their vows to be married and wouldn't allow me to serve or use their facility. It wasn't acrimonious... They didn't use the word solidarity, but that's what it amounted to.

To better understand the thoughts and reasons of validly married priests on the possibility of reconciliation with laicized priests the following question was posed to participants in this study: "Do you agree or disagree with the Church's stance on prohibiting priests, who have left ministry to marry, to reconcile with the priesthood in light of recent celibacy exceptions?" For nearly three-quarters of married priests, 73% of those questioned agree with the Church's stance of prohibiting any reconciliation with former priests who have abandoned their vows for marriage. Only 7% disagreed with current policy, while 20% offered no response.

Father 7 disagreed with the Church's position of non-reconciliation and based that on the need for pastoral ministry, in light of the priest shortage. He stated the following:

That's an interesting question, because one of the things we were told coming into the Catholic Church; be aware, not everyone is going to be cheering you on, and among the people who won't be cheering you on are particularly those priests who are married, who left their ordained ministry to get married, and they're not being permitted to come back,

and yet you are able to be a married priest and function as a priest. So, I gather that resentment and feeling of injustice ... are out there. I do think the Church should maybe do some more work trying to reconcile these priests who are married to receive them back. Obviously, after having not functioned as priests in a long time they'd need to be trained again to see whether they should be given faculty, but I would hope that many of them could be reconciled and go back into their priesthood ministry. Particularly because, frankly, in a practical matter the shortage I think is diminishing the effect of the ministry of the Church that it's simply not fulfilling, faithfully, priestly ministry to the people of God. If there's a group of priests ... that could be available, that could be reconciled, I think perhaps for the sake of the health of the Church the leadership ought to ... consider opening that door and seeing if some of them could be reconciled and returned to the priestly ministry if they're qualified in terms of their present skills and faith.

Father 04, while agreeing with the current position of the Church as non-reconciliation, also noted that he was prayerful that reconciliation might be possible in the future. He stated the following:

No, because I think there are other issues ... and other dynamics that have to be addressed. My prayer would be that there would be a way of reconciliation opened in the future. I'm not sure that we've reached that point yet, simply because I'm not sure that the dynamics have been worked out to how; to say what that reconciliation would look like. I think if the Church is [going to] have a continued emphasis on mercy, reconciliation and forgiveness, the question again certainly has to be raised as part of the overall ethos of who we are as people of God, but I'm not sure that we've reached the point yet of being able to do that.

Fathers 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 also all agreed with the current state of non-reconciliation, with Fathers 08, 09 and 15 providing no response. For Father 03, the problem isn't about marriage, but the breaking of a promise to the Church in much the same way the Church looks at someone who breaks their marital promises to a spouse. He stated the following:

I agree that they should not be able to reconcile with the Church in their priestly order if they've been married. It doesn't even so much have to do with the marriage aspect as it does for me as the renegeing on promises that have once been made. Once that happens, once one has made a promise to the Church and reneges on it, there is no difference than making a promise to a wife and renegeing on that by separating from her. So, I don't believe they should be able to reconcile with the Church. There is a myriad of lay

ministries in which they could become involved. They could teach. But I think once there has been the turning [of] their back on their initial promises to their bishops... the idea of reconciliation, and entering in the priestly orders again, should not be undertaken.

Father 05 noted the apparent paradoxical juxtaposition that this belief may have for laicized clergy. He stated the following:

I agree with it. And that's a hard line to tow as an Ordinariate priest because I enjoy the exception. But you know that's going against Church teaching and in my role, if I go against Church teaching then I should be inhibited as a priest.

Father 06 continued the theme of the primacy of Church rule. He stated the following:

I don't conflate celibacy and the marriage. The men that went into the Catholic Church and became Catholic priests as celibates and left the priesthood because they wanted to be married, I have full respect for that. So which means that I have full respect for the rule of celibacy. I don't think I myself, coming into the Catholic Church as a married priest, is a challenge to that rule. So, I'm not here to challenge it, and I feel very strongly about that. That's the Holy Father's decision. It's not my decision.

Father 10 noted that this primacy of Church rule was why he was Anglican, rather than Episcopalian. He stated the following:

I joined the Roman Catholic Church because it has a catechism and because it has Canon law. I'm not what you'd call revisionist; that's why I'm Anglican. I couldn't become Episcopalian. I'm not here to revise anything in the Catholic Church. I feel small in it. I don't have any opinion that would go against the Church.

Father 13 commented on the acceptance of some celibate clergy was based on this primacy of rule, as well. He stated the following:

I agree. Yeah, I think that they made a conscious decision to refuse the gift of celibacy and left the Church. And this is one of the things that is said over and over again to me is they appreciate the fact that since we did not have that rigor on us, they respect us coming in and being married.

Reconciliation with laicized clergy could be addressed on a case-by-case basis with papal approval, similar to the process by which married men are approved through the Pastoral Provision. While this is possible it's not likely, even with recent comments by Pope Francis that he is open-minded regarding questions of a married priesthood (Gibson, 2014). Although Pope Benedict XVI followed suit with John Paul II in regards to the acceptance of married priests through the Pastoral Provision and the Ordinariate, the issue of reconciling with priests who have snubbed Church authority and broken their vows of celibacy, is a completely different issue. The Church has signaled that it would be difficult to justify reconciliation with a man who has broken his vows to the priesthood, in comparison to the acceptance of married men who have never taken such a vow, but who, as a condition of their acceptance and dispensation, accept that same vow should anything happen to their wives and find themselves widowed. Reconciliation with laicized clergy might make a small dent in the priest shortage issue, but it seems a general-consensus that it may cause more problems than it solves. Forgiveness is essential to the faith, and recent rumors suggest that the next Synod of Bishops may include a discussion on married priests, which might initiate a conversation on forgiveness and reconciliation with laicized married priests. If Pope Francis were ready to make an effort at reconciliation with laicized priests it would seem timely to do so during the 2016 Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, which ended on November 20, 2016.

After analyzing married priests' views on some of the modern issues within the Catholic Church I wanted to get their thoughts on what effect, if any, these married priests might be having on the Catholic Church.

Change of Culture in the U.S. Catholic Church

Allowances for married men to serve as priests in the Latin Rite U.S. Catholic Church may have some effect on laity and the Presbyterate alike. While significant research must be conducted to find out whether, or not, this is true, to gauge the thoughts and experiences of these married priests, I asked participants the following question: “How do you think the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter have changed the culture of the U.S. Catholic Church?” Responses to this question offered a wide range of thoughts and experiences related to the impact that the Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate may be having on parishioners, the diaconate, the priesthood and the institutional Church. Father 02 spoke about a level of disappointment that has come with a lack of interest in the Ordinariate from the larger, national Catholic community. He stated the following:

Not very much. I think there's a real resistance in some areas of the United States, and worldwide to the whole idea. I think Cardinals surrounding Benedict XVI said don't do it. Those surrounding John Paul II may have said the same thing... don't do it. But the Holy Spirit inspired John Paul and Benedict, and they responded by allowing the Pastoral Provision and for Ordinariates to go forward. Changing the Church? I don't think it's changing it very much at all, or only a small amount, because it appears that nobody really wants to know, really cares. So, that's the thing that's most... disappointing for us, in a way. It just appears that many don't care about this, or want to know about it. And there are those that do, and appreciate what's been offered when they come to Mass, to the Ordinariate Mass, [and] go through that Rite. They respond to it very, very well. [It's a] small number, but they like the reverence with which we say the Mass. And I think that's our gift to the Church, but it's not really wanted in very big numbers.

Other priests, specifically Fathers 04 and 05, expressed the impact they might be having on the institutional Church as an opening of the idea of a married priesthood, or at least the openness to a conversation with others regarding Eastern Rite traditions, as well as the impact of the ordination of married deacons. Father 04 stated the following:

I think it's opened it now to the question of a married priesthood. I think that the Pastoral Provision did that long before the Ordinariate. I don't know that it is radically changing the culture of the Church that much, largely because it's – right now we're such a minority within the ordained, within the Church. But I think it's at least begun to open up the question regarding celibacy, as has Pope Francis' openness to the Eastern Churches in the country, now ordaining married men to the priesthood and quite frankly I think an even more significant issue has been the ordination of married deacons within the Church, but that, again is just my perspective.

Significant in part to this discussion on the married priesthood and a perception that the Church might be temporarily relaxing the rules of celibacy in the broadest sense of the Church, Father 04 noted above, in June 2014, Pope Francis lifted a ban on married priests for the Eastern Rite Churches in diaspora. This authorization formally permits Eastern Rite bishops to ordain married priests in Eastern Rite churches in the United States, allowing for the tradition of the Eastern churches to be honored regardless of their specific location.

Father 05 continued the discussion about the openness their inclusion has created in regards to conversations about differing priestly paths. He stated the following:

I think that many in the U.S. Catholic Church have realized that many of the priests that have come in from the Pastoral Provision or the Ordinariate are much more orthodox minded and that many of them have voiced their concern with them being a model for married clergy as the norm. But I've also seen an openness, or a starting of an openness, especially in Houston and in Ft. Worth, because of the priesthood of the Catholic Church getting to know other priests of the Catholic Church that have different paths, they're more open to speaking and to have talks with their Protestant brothers across the Tiber. And I've seen that happen.

In regards to changing the culture of the U.S. Catholic Church, Father 06 believes that the Ordinariate has the opportunity to bring a liturgical, pastoral and preaching heritage from the Anglican tradition to the Catholic Church, but that proof of such change may be generations from today. Father 06 stated the following:

Gosh, I don't think it's changed at this point. I think we're just beginning. I say this in all humility. I think we're literally a drop in the bucket. I think we've got an opportunity to bring into the Church some of the charisms that we have bringing what our

experiences are not only as married men but also as former Anglicans. We have a liturgical heritage. We have a pastoral heritage. We have a preaching heritage that maybe these kinds of things could hopefully make a bit of a difference in the Catholic Church, but the proof will be generations from now. It's not [going to] be seen very readily now. I see myself as fully a Catholic, part of the Catholic Church, but I have a set of experiences, of charisms that might be able to contribute in the long run to helping the Catholic Church and me. It's a mutual helping to become, for example, more sensitive to family life. Not that it's not sensitive now, but in a way, that maybe the sensitivities are a little bit more honed, but at the same time I come into the Catholic Church and receive from the Catholic Church things that I didn't have in my former life that I was searching for, like for example, the magisterium and the ability of truth that's in the Catholic Church, which I didn't have in my former life.

Fathers 07 and 10 believe that much of the U.S. Catholic Church doesn't know the Ordinariate and married priests exists in the Church today. Father 07 said the following:

I don't think it probably has changed it much at all. I think it's just too insignificant [a number] of people. ... I'm constantly bumping into people who are still completely surprised that I'm a married priest, because they simply didn't know they existed at all, or certainly if they did, vaguely knew... that there were a few of us. It's simply not a normal, regular, experience for most Catholic people.

Father 10 elaborated on the sometimes-apparent invisibility of married priests in the United States. He said the following:

The Ordinariate is so small that most of the large Catholic churches out there are not even aware of it. I still run into people who just can't believe that I'm a married priest. So, I would probably say it was very minimal. There are some people out there, especially people who watched when the Ordinariate was created; they made a big deal about it, but most people are just ignorant. Well, they're not ignorant, but they just don't know about the Ordinariate in the Latin Rite Church.

Father 12 commented that he thought the inclusion of married priests was probably having a greater impact on priests within the United States than with laity. He stated the following:

I don't think it has changed the culture. ...the only analogy that comes to me is a negative one, and I don't mean it that way. It's kind of like a foreign body being introduced into the bloodstream, you know? It's there, but it's clearly different than the rest of the components of the blood... and is noticeably so. So, while for instance in this

archdiocese, we are received wonderfully well, and in many, most archdioceses, wonderfully well, we're still a separate thing that is not by any means assimilated into the Catholic Church as a whole. We're still a unique thing that many Catholics don't understand. When you explain it to them, they like it, and they're positive about it, but it's different, you know? We're different. And so, I don't think – at least my impression is that we have not made a big impact on the Catholic Church in the United States. Now, I think many people who both like the Ordinariate, and those who might not like it, kind of see us as the first domino in a row of dominos, you know? I think people who may be anxious about us, may think we may be the first domino in terms of celibacy going down. For those that don't like celibacy, they may be 'for us' because of that. I think it depends on their viewpoint. ... I guess I would say too that we've made a bigger impact upon priests than we have upon laity in the Catholic Church, both positively and negatively.

Conversely, Father 13 discussed the impact he is able to bring to the laity of the Church, through a difference of perspective than celibate priests and a passion for the faith that often, life-long Catholics seem to lack in his opinion. He stated the following:

I think that there's been a dramatic change.... I think that one of the things that we bring is an experience that celibate priests don't have in terms of the marriage relationship and I have a number of people that have sought me out for counseling and even seek me out for confession because of the fact that they know that I understand their world perhaps from a different experiential standpoint than a celibate priest. I think the other thing that we bring, and we don't bring it because we're married priests but I think we bring it because we're converts, and that is we bring a passion and a conviction for our Catholic faith that is very different from a lot of our parishioners and even a lot of the priests. We've had to sacrifice a lot to get what we got, and that is one of the things that people bring up to me numerous times, even other priests, is, "I can't believe what you gave up to become a Catholic and become a Catholic priest." For me personally, it was giving up not only my position in my faculties, my income, my future, my pension. I had to sacrifice it all in order to become a Catholic, and that really is I think, for many, a testimony of the importance of the Catholic faith. So, one of the things we do bring is, I think, a transformation of their appreciation.

As a convert to Catholicism myself, I can relate to the words of Father 13. Oftentimes a life-long Catholic has exasperatedly said to me, "I think you know more about the Catholic faith than I do and I've been one since birth!" This comment may illustrate the passion in which a convert to Catholicism can sometimes bring to raise the awareness of and remind the faithful of all that is good and beautiful with our faith, when there are too many reminders of the areas that need our devoted attention.

Father 14 expressed concern that changes in the Church, such as a married diaconate and a married priesthood are vocationally confusing for parishioners. He stated the following:

I think it probably helps the diaconate in some ways, which I'm not sure I'm necessarily happy about, but I think that a lot of people have a default understanding of [the idea that] the only reason why a deacon is not a priest is because they're married. But in fact, it's a different vocation.... and if parishioners have a married deacon and a married priest ... and both have children, [they can see that] our vocations are very different and they can see the difference in the vocations and say well things are equal in this case, they're both married. So, I don't think it's the best, it's not great ... to do that but I think, and I do hope that it does change the view that I encounter and read about so often that deacons are simply, you know, junior priests who would be priests if they could, except that they're married.

Lastly, Father 15 commented on the importance of the Ordinariate and the Pastoral Provision as an indication to the faithful and to our Christian brethren, the willingness to set aside tradition and discipline, without compromising on theology, in an effort toward Christian unity. He stated the following:

I think it's too soon to say on the Ordinariate. Certainly, it has I think served a greater sign value than a particular impact at the moment. It is an incarnation of the idea, the Ordinariate is, of the idea of how far the Catholic Church is willing to go in the pursuit of Christian unity, how much of its particularities is it willing to divest itself of, and how many are vital to the faith. So, I think that those are items to watch moving forward. The Pastoral Provision, as I understand it, is an opportunity for married men to participate in the diocesan life and ministry. I would imagine it has a negligible impact on the culture, but a rather important impact on the sign value of moving toward Christian unity.

In the humble opinion of many of these men, their acceptance into the Church has had little effect to date on the institutional Church, but they feel that they are making a positive change in the lives of those whom they minister to, just as their celibate brethren. It may be decades, or even generations, before the full extent of the transformative nature of their inclusion might be felt.

Looking Forward

While the Ordinariate is considered a permanent addition to U.S. Catholic Church, the Pastoral Provision does not benefit from such an understanding or designation. It does, however, offer a potentially permanent pathway for individual exceptions to the rule of celibacy for non-Anglican married clergy. Given the temporary status of the Pastoral Provision and questions surrounding the long-term generational viability of the Ordinariate, many questions remain regarding the future of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. While the Ordinariate is seen as a permanent structure of the Church they have a directive not to recruit disillusioned former Catholics and a celibacy rule for new seminarians entering the Ordinariate. The future of the Ordinariate is unclear. While it has the potential for growth and sustainability, it also has a very distinct possibility of being absorbed into the larger U.S. Catholic Church within a generation or two, although other small faith communities, such as Eastern Rite churches, do thrive in small numbers throughout the United States.

Questions were posed to participants about the future of the Pastoral Provision and the Ordinariate. They were asked to consider the possibility of a universally accepted married priesthood and any advice they would give to other non-Catholic clergy who might wish to follow in their footsteps. Finally, they were asked what research might be missing from this study that might prove beneficial to the continued body of knowledge in Catholic Studies.

Future of the Pastoral Provision and the Ordinariate

As stated earlier, questions remain about the future of the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate. In this context, participants were asked for their thoughts on what the future might hold for these pathways to Catholic ordination for married clergy.

For perspective on the Pastoral Provision Father 04, a Pastoral Provision priest, noted that he thought the Pastoral Provision would be sustained by the Church as a lifeboat, if you will, for the small number of exceptions granted by the pope for married clergy to enter the Catholic priesthood.

I think that the necessity for the Pastoral Provision is going to probably run its course within a generation. I think because, within the Ordinariate, you have the requirement that any of our seminarians would train alongside their counterparts, or be required from the beginning to be celibate. You're not going to have a major increase of married clergy in that avenue. I think that the Pastoral Provision will always offer that lifeboat, if you will, for clergy who find themselves no longer able to live within the confines of their pod of some ecclesial structures. But I don't think it is going to have the long-term influx of clergy that we've had at this point. I mean the – in many ways it seems, to me, that what John Paul did, as well as Benedict XVI, was to create an incredible lifeboat for an immediate crisis that was being faced by many of us who could no longer remain within the Protestant community.

The continued use of the Pastoral Provision seems like a viable and acceptable open doorway for married clergy to be ordained into the Catholic priesthood. If it is used other than sparingly, however, it perhaps loses its true provisional nature. If it is frequently used, the policies, tradition, disciplines and rules of obligatory celibacy should probably be reviewed and structured in a different manner. The long-term sustainability of the Personal Ordinariate is seemingly hampered by the Church itself, as explained well by Father 12. He stated the following:

Well, that's a hard question, actually. Because I think the parameters the Catholic Church gives us, within which to operate, are narrow. That is, our admission right now can only be to – it can't be real evangelization of lapsed Latin Rite Catholics, because if they've had their three initiatory sacraments, they cannot become members of the Ordinariate. So, our mission is clearly to Anglicans who actually have come to question or doubt the teachings of the Anglican Church. And to – and we really don't have an expressed mandate for other Protestants. But I mean, that's a question, but we are – we have accepted a mandate, de facto, for other Protestants. So, our window of mission is for Anglicans and other Protestants who have come to believe that the teachings of their Church may lack something that can be fulfilled in the Catholic Church. And so, now, lord knows, that's a big window. But articulating that mission and reaching those people

is a difficult task. So, I think the Ordinariate has the work, the potential. I think it's going to take a good while for us to really begin to hit our stride. Because right now, we're still in the foundation building business, and you know, we're trying to build the plane and fly it at the same time, and that's a very difficult thing to do. But the future is ultimately open for us, I believe.

Father 03 commented on the Vatican's role in recently reigning back the ordination of married men. He stated the following:

The things that are set in place... are set in place, and Rome has pretty much put the brakes on the whole thing... I always emphasize this with anyone who wants to hold the discussion; they did not change the rules for us; they made allowances for us. And I always use the analogy of a military waiver. You can't go to some military school[s] if you're over 25, but if you bring a whole lot to the table, they may waive the age requirement for someone who's 28 or 30. They waived the celibacy rule to get the Ordinariate up and running and to keep communities together, but now that that's in place, they've really put the brakes on how free they are making their decision as to ordinations for married men.

Father 09 succinctly summed up the possible future of the Ordinariate by stating the following:

Well it faces many obstacles, and if it survives and thrives it will be by the grace of God. I believe and hope that it will... but it will be by the grace of God and not by an act of man because there are too many ways in which it could tank. So, I think it's around for the long term. How it will grow and how it will develop, I really have no idea.

Difficulties facing the Ordinariate were also expressed by Father 13, who suggested that even some Anglicans were not interested in the Ordinariate as a place of worship, wishing for an integration within their local diocesan parish. He stated the following:

Honestly, that's a big question mark. I think we're too young to really even know what our true charism is yet and what our true patrimony is. I think part of it is liturgy, but if we're in existence only to preserve a liturgy, I think we're going to be short-lived. The vision of Pope Benedict and the vision of Pope Francis, I believe, is that we are part of the new evangelization, and what that really looks like I don't think we know yet. Again, if we are basing it on the appeal of our liturgy only, that may be short-lived. Many from the Episcopal-Anglican world that are coming into the fullness of the Catholic faith are not coming in because of the liturgy. They're coming in because of the truth. And so one of the things that I've found as an Ordinariate priest is I was counseling a large number of people from Anglicanism that had no interest in joining the Ordinariate even though they

were coming into the Catholic Church. They wanted a local Church, a local expression of parish ministry that gave them youth group, gave them a place for fellowship, gave them all of that, and especially if they've been involved in the Episcopal Church, or certain versions of Anglicanism, the historic Anglican liturgy wasn't that important to them. They're very comfortable with a standard Roman missal. So, I think that part of what our true charism is, our true deposit, our true patrimony, I think that we're still exploring that. I believe that we'll find it, but I think that it's [got to] be more than just the fact that we have a liturgy that uses 'thees' and 'thous' and uses different prayers.

Father 14 expressed an opinion that the success of the Ordinariate cannot be judged on the numbers of Churches or parishioners, but on whether it is serving the spiritual needs it was born from and likens its future to that of other Churches, such as the Armenian Catholic Church. He stated the following:

What do I see as the future of the Ordinariate? I think there will be a trickle of people, slow trickle, that will always be coming in, but I wouldn't expect to see any more congregations founded. There may be a few more Churches that come in, over time, but pretty much what's established in these first couple of years is pretty much, I think, where it's [going to] be. ... I'd say I think there were unrealistic expectations about us, but, you know, the Armenian Catholic Church is a couple of hundred people but it still exists, and it's not going anywhere, and the Ordinariate is the same thing. The success of the Ordinariate cannot be measured on its numbers, you know, on whether it actually met the spiritual needs of people... and it did. I just think people expected more than is ever [going to] happen and place these expectations on them, and want the Ordinariate to do more than they really can ever realistically be expected to do with the [number] of people they have.

Commentary from priests within both the Ordinariate and the Pastoral Provision offers cautious optimism as to what the future might hold for the pathways to Catholic ordination for married clergy. Some laity and clergy alike put forward as a basis of argument that these pathways to an exception of clerical celibacy are a test balloon and precursor to a future Vatican shift in discipline, to a celibacy of choice for the Latin Rite priesthood. Previous commentary by the priests in this study show that their conservatism does not generally support the widespread acceptance of a married priesthood, but in this vein, participants were asked about such a possibility.

Universal Acceptance of a Married Priesthood

Furthering the discussion of a married priesthood and the potential change of culture in the U.S. Catholic Church, participants were asked: “How might the psychology of the priest/parishioner dyad change if a married clergy were universally accepted?” For Father 03, he believed there would be unintended consequences to the universal acceptance of a married priesthood. He stated the following:

I think if it became more normative, then it wouldn't be an anomaly, so to speak, when the newness wore off the whole thing. And I think as the other problems would arise from a married priesthood, again there are unintended consequences.

Conversely, Father 10 thought people would just roll with it. He stated the following:

If married clergy was universally accepted, the psychology of that with regard to relating to the Church, I think just off the top of my head... that the Church would roll with that and go with it. It may not have gone with it 50 years ago, but in today's world, it seems to me that there's a general acceptance among people for married priests in the Catholic Church of today. That's just my feeling about it.

Father 04 agreed with Father 10 that he didn't experience much of a difference as a married priest than how parishioners treated a celibate priest in his parish. He stated the following:

I find that in relationships that I see, at least at a very surface level within the life of the parish, I don't see people treating the pastor or myself with a great deal of difference. I think that I see them approaching us both, pretty much in the same way, expecting our availability in the same way, including us in their lives in very much the same way. So I'm not sure that, again, the celibate-married distinction has a great deal of distinction.

Exposure to and familiarity with a married priest seems to have a significant role in the acceptance of a married priesthood. Father 15 explained in the following:

In my particular context, ... I am not the first married priest in the community. Whereas nobody would suggest that any of us are particularly normative in the Catholic

experience, ... parishioners have some understanding that this is something that's possible, and engage accordingly. So, there's far less wonderment about it.

For Father 07, perhaps it is just a perception by laity that a married priest would be a better counselor for the married. He stated the following:

I don't know. People will think or feel that they can have aspects to a married priest, more aspects of understanding, than they might from a celibate priest. As I said, I'm not sure that is necessarily a true perception. There's certainly been excellent Catholic priests who were celibate who have, I think, been good counselors, good [counselors] in the confession; the confessor to married people dealing with issues related to marriage. Perhaps the perception will change among the laity.

For Fathers 05, 11 and 12, the idea of a universally accepted priesthood brought up the notion of priestly identity and how some non-Catholic clergy are treated as a regular guy; a friend, rather than the more typical formality that exists between Catholic laity and their priests, and expressed some concern regarding a shift in the relationship. Father 05 commented the following:

I guess the only way for me to answer that question is to go back to the Episcopal world [where] there was a real acceptance of priest as friend...and in the Catholic world, it sometimes seems like the priest is on a pedestal. Now that's a huge stereotype there, and I want to admit that right there, but I think it's good for this study to be able to see that. And I'm not saying that priest as friend is the best model for the future, but it would change for sure... but it also, priest as friend, [is] like calling your dad a friend. In a way, it lessens his role as dad, as father, and so that's a tough one because at the end of the day, that [transfers] into all aspects of ministry, including, for instance, finances, and so if the priest is friend, then it's pretty easy to come up to him and say, "Hey, why don't we do this, because I'm your friend." But if the priest is father, it's not easy to do that. And I have seen that in ministry. It's easier for parishioners [in those situations] to try to get something done, [and] because I have a family they think that they know me better than if I was celibate.

Father 11 continued this theory of the potentiality of issues with parishioners perceiving their priest as a regular guy. He stated the following:

I think that there would, and this is obviously speculation, but there would be a tendency to regard the priest as ... more of a regular guy, and [that would create] more points of

contact on the social level that would inform [the relationship] and probably alter to some degree the relationship with the priest.

Father 12 discussed this same issue of parishioner familiarity, framing it in terms of formality. He stated the following:

There is a much more formal and respectful attitude towards Catholic priests by parishioners, ... formal doesn't describe it either, but formal maybe is the best word, [but] a much more formal relationship between Catholic priests and their parishioners ... than there was for me in the Episcopal Church. And so, the way I say it is, everybody in the Episcopal Church expects that their priest is going to be their friend, their buddy. I don't find that expectation in the Catholic Church. I find that lay people have a sense that there is going to be, or maybe should be, some distance there between the priest and the congregation. Am I making myself clear? And I don't know which is better. ... I know the demands were greater when everybody wanted me to be their friend. The demands on the priest are greater. Now, whether the fulfillment for the congregation is more, I don't know the answer to that question, [but] I think. ...and again, this is my own observation, ... managing that distance well is an important part of priesthood in the Catholic Church.

For Fathers 13 and 14, the idea of a universally accepted married priesthood was about family and the difficulties in how the Church would provide for those with families. Father 13 stated the following:

Well, I think that it would dramatically change the Church, not necessarily all to the good. I think that there is a ministry that may not be as easily encountered and expressed within a Church if we had a universal married priesthood... just because of the fact that a lot of priests, especially younger priests, have families that they have to work with. ... I think when you begin having priests with families, especially if they're large families, I know we have one priest in the Ordinariate that just had his ninth child, and I think if we were in a traditional diocesan parish, that could definitely be an encumbrance, whereas serving an Ordinariate community that's a much smaller venue, and much more used to a married priest, it isn't as big of an issue.

Father 14 framed the same issue in terms of how Eastern Rite Catholic parishes see the entire family of a married priest as their responsibility. He stated the following:

It will probably change the sound bite, but on the substantive level, I don't think it will change the actual psychology of the Church other than perhaps the way a parish sees supporting their priest. I mean Eastern Catholic congregations that are used to married priests have a different mentality than Latin Rite congregations do, where they see the

whole priests' family as their responsibility.

The Church has clearly communicated, by rule (Canon 277) and by the limitations set forth to exceptions to that rule (Canon 194), that clerical celibacy is the norm for the Latin Rite priesthood. One can postulate, however, that there have been centuries of Papal discernment on the continuance of the rule of celibacy in the Latin Rite, given the dissimilarity within the Eastern Rite. Perhaps a discipline of celibacy by choice would be the next evolution entertained by Church leadership, but conservatism often rules the day in difficult Church decisions.

Advice for Non-Catholic Clergy Seeking a Path to Catholic Ordination

Married clergy who have transitioned to the Catholic priesthood have an extraordinarily unique experience added to their personal stories. The cohort of married priests who have been through this process has gained a particularly unique perspective on the personal and marital stresses that come with conversion discernment, the necessary emotional and economic sacrifices of resignation from their previous ministry with no guarantee of Catholic ordination, and the complex application and approval processes of the Pastoral Provision and Personal Ordinariate. To gain a better understanding of this unique perspective participants were asked: "If you were to advise another married pastor on the process and experience of ordination within the Catholic Church, what would you say?" Advice that was repeated, included the issue of time demands of the vocation when children are involved, having patience during the approval process, the need to first choose to be Catholic, even if that choice means you will remain a lay Catholic, and the issue with being able to devote time to a seminary experience now that changes are happening in the Ordinariate ordination preparation process.

In terms of time demands of the vocation when clergy have children still living at home several priests had advice, but not always positive advice. For instance, Father 01 stated the following:

I would say to him; he needs to be very careful, and he needs to do a lot of interior work and analysis. He needs to recognize the fact that his responsibilities as a Catholic priest, compared to a protestant pastor, are going to be considerably more... or possibly much, much higher than he had. He's going to have a greater demand put on him, but at the same time, he's going to find that people in the Catholic Church really value the sacraments. So, that they aren't always looking for him personally to be a source of prayerful inspiration to them, but rather as one who conveys the sacraments to them. ... I would advise him that if he has children at home that it will be much more difficult; much greater demand [will be] put on him that will reduce [and] affect [the] time that he can have with them. He may not be able to do all the things that he's been able to do. [He] probably won't be able to do all that he's been doing with his children, whether in school or their extracurricular activities. It will be a very difficult job for him to balance both his family and his vocation. It's going to depend a lot on where that man is. In some circumstances, it would be extremely difficult to be in the married state, with a wife, and we have all these considerations about who she is and, you know, all that. But it isn't the same everywhere. That's very important; very important, because ... it's just not the same in every situation, in every diocese. Secondly, I'm going to say in countering that, though, that being a Catholic, the sacraments in the Catholic Church, being a Catholic priest is an enormous blessing. So, I don't want to appear all negative about this because it is. There's ... a great comfort. There's great truth; there's great sacrament. The spiritual life, all of this stuff is so rich and so fantastically beautiful that it's very, very, very rewarding and very, very meaningful, and very, very fulfilling. So, that exists in, and of itself, and it's just a beautiful, beautiful vocation. ... A married priest needs to have his eyes wide open about the challenges. They are very real, and not the least of which are placed upon his wife. ... I have a hard time imagining what it would be like to have children in this vocation, and I don't think I could do it. I really don't. In fact, I don't think I would have. So, to have children at home would really be, and I don't know how these guys do it, but there are some that do, but I couldn't do it.

Father 03 agreed that the priesthood is a difficult vocation for those with children in the following statement:

If I was talking to a man who was in my position, I would lay out what he had to expect and let the Church worry about the outward calls to the man. But if it was anyone who had been married less than 15 years, anyone who had children that were not ready to leave the house, if not already gone, I would dissuade them.

Father 02 warned of how slow the approval process can be, as well as the fact that the Ordinariate is not an off-shoot of the Episcopal Church. He stated the following:

Of course, we have a unique problem in that there are few jobs. We have a second unique problem, and that is the process is being governed by the Vatican. Though we have the Ordinariate established with a bishop in place, the Vatican is still the final authority. And that means there's going to be an interesting evolution for one who seeks Ordination and is married because the future may require the discipline of celibacy. If that happens, it will be a challenge to grow. I would advise anybody interested, married or single, to understand that the process is terribly slow. It was seven years for this miracle made possible by Benedict XVI. Those going forward from 2016 who might come to me today and say they are interested, as I had one say recently, I had to remind him the Ordinariate is not an offshoot of the Episcopal Church. Some still think it's just a small thing to get ordained. Secondly, it's [going to] take a long time. So, I don't have much encouragement.

One central theme was the need for a willingness to be Catholic first, due to the consideration that there are no guarantees that one might be ordained a Catholic priest. Clergy must leave the comfort and safety of their previous pastoral ministry and convert to Catholicism before any consideration might be given to their call to the priesthood in the Catholic Church. Father 09, although he would encourage non-Catholic clergy to come into the Catholic Church, commented specifically about there being no guarantees in the following statement:

That we're better off in the Catholic Church than we were outside of it and it could be there's still help for the good of whatever congregation they have. They should pursue that good. That said, ordination is not automatic, they don't accept everybody, and there are some challenges involved in that... but that it's worth doing, and we found general acceptance in the Latin Rite. So, I would encourage them.

Notable also, in Father 09's comment was the idea that clergy should pursue the good within their current congregations, leading one to infer that he believes that each individual and personal process of moving to the Catholic Church, is one that requires a significant amount of prayerful discernment. Father 05 cautioned that for non-Catholic clergy, submission to Church authority in a highly-structured institution like the Catholic Church can be difficult for some

clergy, given the tradition of frequent protests of authority found in some Protestant denominations. He stated the following:

I would say to them that it is one of submitting yourself to the Church and learning authority, being able to distill out of you that protest of authority that has naturally come within the Protestant denomination. And so, it's an act of humility to be able to go through that series of hoops and dossiers and things of this nature that you have to go through. But it's one that is absolutely sanctifying. And you are submitting yourself fully. And when I mean you, I mean your family, fully to the Catholic Church, to allow her to decide what your vocation is and how are you to exercise that.

A central theme for many priests, including Fathers 04, 06, 13, 14 and 15, was that a call to the Catholic faith must precede a call to the Catholic priesthood. While one may be called to the Catholic priesthood, there is, again, no guarantee that the Catholic Church will accept one into the priesthood. Clergy must willingly enter the Catholic faith in full understanding that he may have to lay down his ministerial vocation and live the rest of his life as a Catholic layman. This may be one of the more beautiful examples of the sacrifices these men make to become Catholic priests and an example of faith that gives laity an appreciation and respect for that sacrifice. The idea of submitting vocation and accepting the possibility of being a Catholic layman was expressed by Father 04.

Be patient. ... My first words would be, be sure that you would be happy remaining as a layman within the Catholic Church because the first decision you've got to make is [that] you're being called into the Catholic faith, not that you're being called to the priesthood. And that's one of the things that I was so very grateful to my bishop, that he was very clear on the front end. The possibility was certainly there and maybe even in my case, probability, but he said you've really got to make the first decision that you're called to be a Catholic Christian. Once you become a member of the Catholic Church, then we can talk about the possibility of ordination. So, I think my first words would be, be sure you want to be part of the Catholic Church... [and] that you could be happy to be so as a layman. The second would be if you enter into this process... be patient... because this really is, in many ways, an anomaly that I think the Holy See is still trying to make sense of, that our hierarchy in this country is trying to make sense of, as it is in other countries. And I'm not sure the Church is going to move rapidly in anyone's case, and rightly so, because I think the Church needs to be sensitive to the needs of its parishioners, to the needs of the diocese in which we serve a particular Church, as well as to the long-term

ramifications of what it means to have a married clergy within the Latin Rite.

Father 06 continued the theme of patience and layman-ship in the following statement:

I would say, first, be patient. I would say the first and foremost thing that needs to happen is the conversion, his conversion to the Catholic Church. In other words, he ought to be willing, if need be, to spend the rest of his life as a layman. I was willing to do that when I converted to the Catholic Church. I had no guarantees that I was going to become a priest, [and] I was prepared not to be a priest and to be a layperson for the rest of my life, because my conversion was first and foremost to the fullness of the faith, and not to the priesthood.

The meaningful expression for accepting the Church before the possibility of ordination was furthered by Father 13 when he agreed in the following statement:

Well, I would first say to them, "Do you really want to be a Catholic?" ... It's not, "Can you find a ministry here," and if so, enter the Church... [you must] be willing to be a Catholic first, and then after you're willing to be a Catholic, [you can] then look at whether God is continuing to call you to priestly ministry, and then to pursue it at that point. One of the great heroes for me in the Ordinariate is a man who was one of the priests in my denomination, and when the Ordinariates were established, he along with others, saw an application to come into the Church and to be ordained. He had previously been Catholic, and so was not ordained, but still entered the Church, and he's a real hero to me because his commitment and conviction to being a Catholic was that important. I think that some of the motivations have got to be evaluated on the basis of... do you want to be a Catholic... or are you only willing to be a Catholic if you can [only] be a priest? And to me, if you're only willing to be a Catholic if you can be a priest, then I would be concerned.

Father 14 agreed in the following statement:

You know, it's usually Episcopal and Anglican priests who call me and I always tell them that ... the first decision to make is not whether you're supposed to be a Catholic priest... it's whether you're going to become Catholic.... Then the secondary decision, assuming [you've] gotten past that, the job of an Episcopal priest has more in common with a Catholic deacon than with a Catholic priest. It's a different experience. What people expect of you is just so much more than they do as a Protestant. I think most ministers are able to not be a minister at some point. They're allowed to just be gone at some point in the day that Catholic priests don't do. So, I tell them that it's an entirely different type of [experience].... Take what you've experienced and double that... that's what the life of a Catholic priest is. ... And then [I would] remind them of the politics of it, that they have to find a diocese that's willing to work [with them]. People forget that.... and the assumption that just because you're in [an] area that needed a Methodist minister does

not mean you're in the same area that needs you to be a Catholic priest, ...[and] the Church is [going to] see you as a layman, clearly a layman with experience, but a layman nonetheless. Psychologically it's hard....

Father 15 spoke directly to a caveat regarding the idea of the grass being greener mentality. He stated the following:

I'd say that they want to be very confident in their understanding of the faith of the Church, the teachings of the Church, as being revealed by God, that if they're looking at this as the grass is somehow greener, that there's some qualitative distinction or difference, something that makes it better, ... gradations of truth, then they might really want to spend some more time in discernment. Once they are convinced that ... the Catholic Church holds the truth that there is no other, then the choice itself can't be an option for them. It has to be a compelling drive that they are willing to step out on without necessarily the promise or guarantee ... that they will be able to exercise any type of ministry within the Church. It'll be a moment of discernment following their conversion. Then I think they really need to give serious consideration to the type of ministry that they are called to, with due consideration that the Catholic priesthood is a thing unto itself. It's not akin to being an Episcopal priest directly. It's not akin to being a minister of another Protestant community. We never, ever caution people, "Oh, yeah, absolutely. Jump right over. The water's fine."

For Fathers 07, 11 and 12, advice for non-Catholic clergy looking at ordination within the Catholic Church focused on changes in the seminary experience moving forward that might have a huge effect on whether someone could devote the time away from family and the financial implications of a required seminary experience. Father 07 commented on the potentially changing requirements at the Ordinariate. He stated the following:

I just had a long conversation with the person in charge of the ordination process within the Ordinariate, and it seems that the process is changing. The problem is, my process was relatively welcoming. ... It had some demands to it, but it wasn't a particularly demanding process. I hear now, though, that they want to make it much more demanding; to insist that someone actually go to two years of seminary. [The first groups of Ordinariate priests] did all our seminary formation online for ordination and with personal mentoring with local priests and ... a whole system that recognized, and was friendly to, our situation.... Now I think they want people to spend two years off in a seminary, and that could be a difficult challenge for [a] person who's married, with family and financial need for work, to be able to pick up and spend two years in a seminary. That could be quite a challenge and something that would make, perhaps, [cause] someone not as inclined to pursue an ordination in the Ordinariate. [It would] depend a lot on how welcoming and accommodating the Church is to Episcopal or

Anglican priests, particularly those who already [have] a good amount of experience under their belt, but [also] have the challenges of a wife and children and responsibilities of caring for them.

Father 11, similarly, commented on the difficulties of ordination and the seminary experience. He stated the following:

Well, again my experience has been very positive... and the Ordinariate, there is this – it's more or less closed now, but a kind of fast track [happened] for those of us who were approved towards ordination, and I wish that ... we had had more formation before being ordained... but as a practical matter, I think it would've been difficult to achieve doing that. [Our formation] was very brief, and it had to be done via Internet video link-ups, which is not the best way, those sorts of things, [but] it [was] the best they were able to do, [and] I wish there had been more of it. ... My experience was just ... a love fest the whole way. Through our local Diocese clergy and the seminarians, I've got to know, the entire process is a long, unpleasant gauntlet they have to get through. And so, as the Ordinariate grows and evolves I don't know how that process will change.

Father 12 expressed the continued need for clergy in the Ordinariate, as well as the potential difficulties for future seminarians and Christian clergy outside the Anglican / Episcopal Churches to obtain ordination. He stated the following:

I would say that if he had the opportunity, and felt called to the priesthood, that it would be just the most wonderful experience for him, ... because that's just what it's been for me; just a grace-filled event, a series of events. And I would tell him, pursue it, and with faith, because the Ordinariate still needs clergy; there would be room for him, and that the experience would be just excellent. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. The Ordinariate began in one room of the seminary. When the Ordinariate was erected, the ordinary was a man I knew, and I [had] already ... completed a master's degree ... over a period of three years or so. ... Then I went through another 12 months [before I] was ordained. ... That's a pretty fast track. But for me, it all kind of fell in place, you know? But I think it's clear, that in the Ordinariate, ... it's changing now, and has changed, [from where] there was a very short length of time between coming into full communion with the Catholic Church and being ordained if you qualified. Because, essentially, all of the people were already seminary graduates, and then ordained in the Anglican Church, and so you [had] something specifically tailored for us. That's where we were fortunate, as opposed to the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, and everybody else who had to go through the Pastoral Provision.

Father 10 succinctly encouraged clergy to seek ordination in the Catholic Church as a means of escaping the theological turmoil that has emerged elsewhere. He stated the following:

An Ordinariate priest, huh? I would say go for it. I love the Catholic Church; I have a home here, am glad to be here. I'm glad to be out from all the turmoil that's out there. But again, at least we have the Catechism; we have the Holy Father who is an icon of unity. We're historically rooted. Most of the people who want to come in are not rooted and are looking for something. I would say, Go for it.

To reiterate the themes of advice that were repeated in light of the experiences of these men; time demands on the Catholic priest are dissimilar in nature to the experience of a Protestant minister. Where a Protestant minister may be able to disengage at time during the week, this does not seem to be the experience of married priests within the Catholic Church. Additionally, the focus of advice was around the discernment process to be Catholic, prior to the discernment process of a call to the Catholic priesthood. It was clear that one must have a willingness to enter into the Catholic faith with no guarantee of priestly ministry, and that one must be accepting of Church authority in both a call to the priesthood, as well as the vocational ministry one might be asked to perform if that call to priesthood is accepted. These men also felt an importance for clergy to come forward with eyes wide open to the patience required for the approval process, as well as potential difficulties with a seminary requirement that may be changing currently.

While this ends the research data findings of this study, chapter 5 provides an analysis of the data in context with the theoretical traditions that framed this dissertation research study.

CHAPTER SIX DATA ANALYSIS

Data from this research primarily converged around themes of identity, role and career. The predominant sociological issue of identity for married priests is related to their reconstruction of their priestly identity within a highly structured, Catholic, institutionalized system, with a dominate tradition of priestly celibacy without an elementary, foundational, and essential experience for that reconstruction; - the Catholic seminary. The predominant sociological issue of role in this study is the expression of identity and the role conflicts that exist for married clergy, living and working within an organizational sphere where broadly accepted traditions and expectations of Catholic laity, are in opposition to their lifestyles, identities and roles. Lastly, their careers are negatively affected, not just by rule, which they have accepted prior to ordination, but also, and perhaps unfairly by role allocation and mission, which are forced upon these priests by Church leadership.

Identity

Identity is integral to the human experience; whether an artist, physician, soldier, or priest, identity has enormous impact on expression, in both professional and personal lives.

Burke and Stets (2009) offer the following perspective:

An identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or who claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person. p. 3

Identity plays a significant role in our interactions with others, how the world is understood and experienced and how both the challenges faced in life, as well as the opportunities in which a

person engages, are shaped. Identity is an understanding of the core self and it is shaped by society and the media, through the projection of symbols, meanings, values, and definitions, collectively assigned to certain identities. Identity is a set of behavioral and personal characteristics that are distinctly recognizable to others, as attributes belonging to a group and that are easily understood.

Identity can be a difficult concept to grasp, but in examining the adolescent struggle to define identity, the concept becomes clearer. It is quite normal for adolescents to struggle with finding their identity and this struggle is often highlighted by personal turmoil that is readily apparent to adults who have been through that experience. For adults, the internal struggle with self often recurs during what is called the mid-life crisis. Adolescents and adults with poorly developed identities often have difficulty with social interaction and struggle to “fit in” within established social structures and the world around them. These examples make the definition of identity clearer and the behavioral challenges, great or small, associated with identity loss, or identity conflict, become more recognizable. Sociologist George Herbert Mead (1934) mapped the interconnectivity of identity, social interaction and social structure, stating that the self emerges from the mind, which arises from, and is developed from, social interaction and that patterned social interaction forms the basis of social structure (Mead, 1934).

Identity and how one expresses that identity, has enormous impact on the interactions that actors have with others. Identity, although socially constructed, is not neutral. It can have enormous impact on social, moral, economic and political power. An artist, for example, holds an identity that is readily understood to others as a creative ability and expressed and nurtured by working, learning and socializing with other artists. An artist has a passion for creativity and their identity as an artist informs others as to who they are as a person, prior to and during, social

interaction. An artist who is confined to a highly-structured work environment will struggle with work-life balance and often show signs of identity conflict. The same is true for a priest, who has a passion for the salvation of souls. He expresses that passion through working, learning and socializing with those seeking closeness to God through the Sacraments of the Church. A priest who is confined in any way within their need to fully engage the Christian faithful in fellowship, learning, prayer, or sacrament, may find themselves with identity and role conflicts.

Much has been written on the theological identity of the Catholic priest and this dissertation does not delve deeply into that subject, but of interest to this study is how a Catholic priestly identity is constructed and expressed, particularly for a married priest.

The Construction of a Catholic Priestly Identity and the Seminary

Identity construction is a complex process that is continually produced and affirmed through interactions with others within the world around us. An identity standard is a set of meanings that define the character of an identity. A Catholic priest has an identity standard created in part by the Catholic Church itself, but also by society through the definitions placed upon the priesthood by media, non-Catholics and Catholic parishioners alike. This may include characteristics such as kindness, approachability, faithfulness, empathy, respectfulness, etc. A priest assumes these characteristics of the priesthood, especially when in social interaction with others. Many would argue that a priest assumes these characteristics at all times, unlike many other professional identities, because of the idea that a priest is always a priest. Police Officers have a similar identity issue, as they often consider themselves as always on the job. While an accountant may never feel like he has any professional responsibilities away from the office, priests and police officers often feel a duty to assist with a crisis, even when out of uniform. The

characteristics of the priestly identity are therefore nearly always engaged during social interactions. One exception, noticeably important, is that married priests have indicated in this study that their wives do get to see behind this curtain of priestly identity. Not only do they see and experience other identity characteristics through interactions with their husbands, wives of married priests are occasionally allowed behind the curtain of priestly identity during private conversations with celibate priests. The point of this commentary is that although the priesthood can be a very internalized concept, one also learns to be a priest, learns the mindset and behaviors of the priesthood and assumes those characteristics of identity, when interacting with others. This is the construction of their identity as a priest.

An easily understood pathway for the construction of this identity oftentimes involves identifying what one is against, rather than identifying what one is for. It is often easier to see who one is not, in comparison to the complexities of identifying who one is. The construction of identity is often molded and shaped by our life choices in regards to family and career, as well as our religious beliefs. Most importantly, identity is mutually influenced by the characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of society in its complex construction.

The Catholic priest is no exception to this complex construction of identity. Complex organizations, especially labyrinthine religious institutions such as the Catholic Church, often provide a framework for what one should be, as well as what one should not be. This includes a framework of identity for both parishioners and priests. As noted above in the introduction, much has been written on the identity of the Catholic priest and one could argue that the Catholic seminary is the essential developmental construction site of Catholic priestly identity. Not only does the Catholic seminary serve as the scholarly institution for theological, pastoral, and moral understanding, it incontrovertibly shapes young minds politically, sociologically and

psychologically. Seminary is oftentimes where lifelong friendships are created for priests and their shared experiences serve to build solidarity within the priesthood. It is an incubator for the development of a social network that provides lasting and influential relationships, which creates and fosters opportunities for the advancement of one's professional career.

For married priests, both Ordinariate and Pastoral Provision, ordination to the Catholic priesthood comes after a Protestant seminary experience and years of pastoral experience within a Protestant tradition. This is true of all the priests in this study. One might argue that leaving the Episcopal Church and seeking Holy Orders within the Catholic Church requires a fracture of one's former Protestant priestly identity and reconstruction of a new priestly identity, which conforms to Catholic theology, morals, values, and traditions. Married priests may experience a period of identity fracture and reconstruction that begins with their first struggles with disunity and discernment to leave the Episcopal Church. It continues throughout the departure from their former church, progressing through their formalized acceptance into the Catholic Church as a layman, and then their preparation, approval and ordination within the Catholic priesthood. This reconstruction and validation of Catholic identity can continue beyond acceptance of Holy Orders and can be a difficult process for married clergy.

This period of transition often gives rise to relationship difficulties and creates social distance between these men and their families, friends, parishioners and colleagues, as identity-relevant meanings are consciously discarded or changed in order to transition into the Catholic Church. Priests in this study have indicated that relationships with family, friends and former parishioners have been strained during this transition. This period of career transition can be very stressful, as actors in a society continually seek to verify and reaffirm their core identities. This is evident with police officers as well. Police officers often invest so much of their core

identity to the law enforcement community that upon retirement they feel disconnected to society and often have difficulties related to identity loss as they can no longer verify and reaffirm their former identity without a badge. In comparison, a former Protestant priest may still attempt to hold his core identity as priest and pastor throughout this process of transition to the Catholic Church, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to verify and reaffirm this identity while the Catholic Church takes its time to carefully and critically examine and approve their rescript before publicly reaffirming their Catholic priestly identity. This period of transition can be difficult for clergy as they are essentially stripped of their priestly identity and held in a state of “laymanship” while the Church decides their Catholic priestly worthiness. Married priests have expressed this transitional period as a hopeful, but also a very stressful, time in their lives.

This transitional period is also when these men fill an educational void between their Protestant priestly formation and a Catholic priestly formation. A prerequisite to Holy Orders, each priest is evaluated on his educational history, merits and experience, and an educational plan is established in consultation with his sponsoring bishop. Although coursework may be taken on a Catholic seminary campus, this educational portion of the transition process rarely, if ever, results in what one would characterize as a substantial Catholic seminary experience. Married priests are essentially absorbed into the Catholic priesthood following some Catholic theological education while not fully experiencing the institutionalized construction of Catholic priestly identity, essentially rendering them outsiders within their own profession from the very start. This process certainly has its practicalities, but the data of this dissertation supports the claim that married priests often feel some alienation and social distance with their celibate brethren as they come to the Catholic priesthood late in the game and the development of a Catholic identity must be undertaken from what must feel like an inferior, self-directed position.

A recognizable counter-point to this theory is that there are nearly 200 Catholic seminaries in the United States alone and one could argue that a Catholic seminary experience could vary significantly for any given cohort of priests depending on where and when they experience seminary. I would also argue that no other institutionalized formation process for a Catholic priest has the impact on identity construction than does the Catholic seminary, regardless of when or where that process takes place. A Catholic seminary experience may not definitively solve the issue of alienation that is felt by married priests, but data from this study suggested that some further integration with the Catholic seminary experience is something that married priests felt may play a role in reducing the stigma of differentiation and create priestly friendship that might bridge some relational gaps that cause feelings of alienation. Fathers 01, 09 and 11 all expressed a sentiment that they had at times, felt like outsiders while in small group conversations with other priests because of their lack of a Catholic seminary experience.

To further this argument, I would then contend that the lack of a true Catholic seminary formation separates these married priests from their celibate brethren in ways that are difficult, if not impossible, to overcome from an identity perspective. Seminary is a rite of passage where one leaves behind a secular life and embraces a sacred life. Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests have fulfilled a similar rite of passage through a Protestant seminary experience and they have internalized that seminary experience into their Catholic priestly identity, but they may not be seen as fully Catholic without a similar and specific Catholic seminary experience or they themselves may not feel fully Catholic without such an experience to help validate that belief. The alternative pathway married priests take through this rite of passage may be considered too dissimilar by celibate priests and therefore it may be difficult for celibate priests to identify with this small group of men as “one of us.” It might be safe to say that a Catholic priest, without a

truly Catholic seminary experience, could be labeled as “deficient” or “not one of us,” by the larger priesthood. It seems inevitable, given our deficient human nature, to segregate ourselves based on our similarities and differences, however small they are. Remembering that identity is mutually influenced by the characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of society in its complex construction (Mead, 1934) and given the fact much of the Latin Rite Church does not fully understand the inclusion of married men to the priesthood, one can see that it may be difficult for these men to fully validate their Catholic priestly identity. Much of the fear of married priests may also come from an inability to fully recognize married men to their social position as Catholic priest and thus one possibly questions their associated behavioral expectations without cause.

The essential point of this commentary on the difference in identity construction for clergy accepted through the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, is that without the institutionalized formation of identity through the Catholic seminary there is an immediate differentiation between those Catholic clergy and the normative Catholic priesthood, regardless of celibacy. While this differentiation is perhaps primarily caused by practicality, rather than intentionality, the following two points of interest should be noted a) if leadership of the Church were deliberately attempting to further differentiate married clergy from the larger priesthood, this would certainly promote that differentiation; and b) one could certainly see this as a positive if the purpose of ordaining these men to the priesthood is to generate change or promote diversity of identity. Either way, one must concede that a certain degree of identity segregation must exist because of this difference.

One might argue that Anglican and Episcopalian priests, especially those traditionalists who have answered the call to the Catholic priesthood, already possess closely aligned identities

with a so-called Catholic priestly identity and thus a Catholic seminary experience is unnecessary. If one assumes a significant identity reconstruction is unnecessary, one might then presume that Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests need only to fundamentally verify and affirm their new Catholic identity. If this were the case, married clergy might seek that initiatory affirmation through a pathway known as identity conformance and adherence to tradition.

Identity Conformance and Adherence to Tradition

Without a need for substantial identity reconstruction, a significant secondary component of identity verification would be identity affirmation (Mead, 1934). Identity affirmation is gained by engaging in activities that promote the values, beliefs and norms that are central to an individual's identity or that of the larger group. A Catholic priest is expected to be staunchly pro-life, publicly, even if they hold personal beliefs that are perhaps contrary to such a view. When priests resist traditional identity norms on such Catholic doctrinal issues such as divorce, abortion, etc., they place themselves in opposition to traditional norms and values of the priesthood. Using this example, married priests could gain Catholic priestly identity affirmation through identity conformance and adherence to such traditional values, beliefs and norms expected of the celibate priesthood. It is not unheard of, however, for celibate priests to challenge authority of the Church from their comfortable and relatively safe spaces of acceptance. For example, many have done so on the idea of optional celibacy. However, married priests in the Latin Rite priesthood may be far less willing to project non-conformity. Adherence to the values, beliefs and norms of a traditional priestly identity thus signals to the celibate priesthood that they are “one of them;” an outward indication of unity, solidarity, commitment and allegiance, thereby strengthening their shared identity.

Adherence to traditional Catholic values for former Protestant clergy, requires upheaval of some previously held beliefs and acceptance of newly acknowledged beliefs. There is a shedding of some Protestant norms, such as pastor as friend, for example and a new adherence to Catholic norms, such as social distance in the priest/parishioner dyad. Without a seminary experience, there is no formalization of the processes which reshape the thoughts, attitudes and perceptions of the mind, thereby leaving daily interactions with other priests and parishioners as the process in which to develop and affirm this new shared identity.

This study suggests that married priests tend to downplay perceived differences between themselves and celibate priests and they tend to emphasize their similarities. For instance, priests in this study de-emphasized parishioner perceived notions that a married priest can more fully understand the difficulties of marriage and divorce, thereby signaling to parishioners an adherence to the bonds of the celibate priesthood. Not only does this signal to parishioners that they are a part of the established priesthood, but also signals to their celibate brethren a cohesiveness of identity. Married priests in this study are also quick to convey that they are not flag-bearers for a married priesthood and expressed significant respect for those called to the discipline of celibacy. Married priests are also quick to convey that they are as available or oftentimes more available to parishioners than are celibate priests, in opposition to assumed presumptions that they can't possibly be as available as celibate priests. These are all examples of identity conformance and adherence, which signal to the Catholic faithful and the established celibate priesthood, that their internalized core identity as priest meets established expectations of identity and role of the celibate priesthood.

Other obstructions exist to the establishment of a shared identity for married and celibate priests. A shared identity would be easier to establish between married clergy and celibate

clergy if more interaction took place between them, but opportunities for fellowship is severely limited by the practicalities of the priesthood. Any chance of network development to help alleviate issues with identity conflict is at least delayed, if not stunted, without opportunities for fellowship. The work-load of the American Latin Rite Catholic priest can be overwhelming in an age of declined vocations and the opportunities for bonding with other priests, especially given the loss of fellowship through shared housing, makes it difficult for married priests to further assimilate into the Catholic priesthood after ordination. Some married priests in this study have indicated that they had ample time for fellowship with other priests, but many indicated that time for fellowship is complicated by family obligations or is just difficult to manage given their workloads. Married priests could be seen as subsequently disadvantaged in the construction of a Catholic priestly identity due to a lack of practical opportunity for meaningful fellowship alongside their celibate brethren. Without this essential shared-identity building opportunity, it seems nearly impossible to replicate a shared political, sociological and psychological identity between married priests and celibate priests.

Additionally, secondary themes expressed throughout research data for this project of conservatism, humility and gratefulness are expressions of adherence to a shared priestly identity. Married priests in this study were quick to express these characteristics as they seek to reduce social judgement, dissuade criticism and establish themselves as not just properly ordained Catholic priests or even establish themselves as complimentary to the priesthood, but to be accepted as equal, legitimate and authentic to the Catholic priesthood.

Lastly, in analyzing the identity of the Catholic priest, and married Catholic priests in particular, I want to express the idea of the eternal priesthood, which is a theological bond of identity for all Catholic priests. Priests at their core, hold an essential identity belief of eternal

priest, as a core priority for the salvation of souls and the eternal life, in contrast to secular activities and the earthly life. A properly ordained Catholic priest is eternally a priest. A laicized or excommunicated Catholic priest remains a priest in the Catholic tradition. This tradition claims that the Sacrament of Holy Orders leaves an indelible mark upon the soul that cannot be erased, as does baptism. Priests often express and validate this belief when they talk about themselves and the priesthood. They honor that unique status, not only as tradition, but as identity which is something that defines them at their core. Scottish philosopher David Hume (2004) wrote “A soldier and a priest are different characters, in all nations, and all ages; and this difference is founded on circumstances whose operation is eternal and unalterable” (p. 218). I offer this quote for context, but also as a reminder that the Catholic Church has authoritatively accepted these married men from the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter as authentic Catholic priests and one would do well to remember that truth when analyzing the priestly identity from a sociological perspective. This means the definition of Catholic priest is not open for interpretation, even though one might debate their identity differences.

In this section I have talked extensively about adherence to the norms, values and beliefs of the traditional priestly identity, but how does one assimilate to a Catholic priestly identity given non-traditional familial roles, duties, responsibilities and expectations, as husband and father? What impact do multiple roles, as priest, husband and father, have on married clergy careers? The roles that married priests assume are fraught with opportunities for conflict, personally, professionally and financially.

Role, Conflict and Career

The definition of role is a complex ambiguity for social scientists. One clear expression of role for nearly all who use the term in sociology is that role is “a set of prescriptions defining what the behavior of a position member will be” (Thomas & Biddle, 1966, p. 29). In pre-modern societies roles were fairly limited. Complex societies proliferate the number of identities which can be accepted and maintained. Modern actors assume many roles, yet the archetypical Latin Rite Catholic priest is limited in role, particularly those of husband and father. The point of this commentary on multiple roles is that “events and conditions that affect the individual have the capacity to affect all the identities held by the individual” (Stryker, 2009, p. 144). The importance of this statement will be made clearer as our discussion unfolds, but directly relates to the balance of identity and the potential for identity conflict between roles such as priestly father, husband and biological father.

In the following paragraphs, I will talk about leadership roles and how conflict created by institutional policy on both leadership and financial concerns, has direct impact on the identity of married clergy. Data from this research study suggested only mild behavioral differences between married priests and celibate priests, but the expression of their identity, through their oftentimes limited roles was of great interest. What follows is an analysis of the roles and more importantly the conflicts of roles for married priests and the negative impact these roles and conflicts have on their lives and careers within the U.S. Catholic Church.

Leadership Conflict

Complex societies organize themselves into divisions of labor where members perform tasks on behalf of a larger group. Societal complexity and economic advancement causes greater

and greater role specialization and differentiation, as one can see in highly developed national economies and complex multi-national organizations that exist throughout the modern world (Durkheim, 2001). One could argue, taking a complex organizational perspective, that being a married priest, especially an Ordinariate priest within the larger Latin Rite Catholic priesthood, is an inevitable specialization of the priesthood. While the priesthood maintains a relatively flat hierarchical structure, the Vatican has essentially mandated differentiation for this cohort of priests by the roles prescribed to them. The Church holds aside married clergy as specialized, provisional and differentiated, while at the same time proclaiming that they are authentic, legitimate and equal. They may be authentic and legitimate while being specialized, but can they be equal at the same time as provisional? And can they be equal and differentiated, when that differentiation includes institutional exclusion and oppression from Church leadership? This exclusion from leadership is not only the mandated and accepted exclusion from the bishopric, but also includes exclusion from parish pastorship for Pastoral Provision priests and implicit limitations on mission for Ordinariate priests.

Exclusion from Institutional Church Leadership

As discussed previously in this dissertation, leadership is a prerequisite expectation for a Catholic priest, yet married priests face obstacles to leadership within the Catholic Church that celibate priests do not. As is the case in the Eastern Rite tradition, Latin Rite married clergy are not eligible for appointments as bishops of the Church. The denial of married clergy to Church leadership positions stifles discussion of a universally accepted married priesthood, a provision for optional celibacy and a Church structure to support such change. However, decisions by Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have not only cracked open the door to such conversations, they have left it slightly ajar for winds of change to sweep through, should the

issues be deemed worthy of discernment. Research outcomes of this study indicate that married priests willingly accept the limitation of promotion to the bishopric as a part of their acceptance into the Catholic priesthood. There was no hesitancy of acceptance in the data in this research. In fact, one priest openly commented that he appreciated the fact that he would not be considered for a position as bishop.

Pastoral Provision Exclusion from Parish Pastorship

Married clergy, validly accepted into the brotherhood of Catholic priests through the Pastoral Provision face further career obstacles as they are excluded from being named the proper pastor of a Catholic parish. As outlined previously in this dissertation, Pastoral Provision priests are limited to positions peripheral to the primary leadership position of a parish. They typically work in associate pastor or associate priest positions as parochial vicar or parish administrator, or work in other non-parish priestly capacities such as hospital chaplains or Catholic school administrator positions. Pastoral Provision priests who come to the Catholic faith with years of Protestant pastorship experience can find difficulty in expressing themselves in roles where few will accept them in the way in which they can and wish to express themselves. This exclusion results in both leadership role conflict and career limitation beyond that of the accepted exclusion from the bishopric. Pastoral Provision priests in this study knowingly accepted this limitation from parish pastorship prior to ordination, as they did the exclusion from the bishopric, but data from this study indicates that they do not accept this career limitation with the same willingness and often yearn for the opportunity to put their experience to work providing greater leadership at the parish level. A defense of this position by the Church is difficult to ascertain or understand, leaving one to believe that this exclusion from parish pastorship is at best an attempt by the institutional Church to shamefully hide a wonderful

example of Christian ecumenism; or at worst, nothing more than the Church oppressing and rendering married priests as subservient and less worthy. The positive leadership influence that an experienced parish pastor can have on parishioners and entire communities, should not be denied to married clergy based solely on their marital status. Leadership can, and does, come from many places and in many forms. With the extensive pastoral experience these men bring into the Catholic Church, it seems unfortunate that celibate leadership would deny that leadership experience to the Catholic faithful, especially when many parishes have no resident pastor due to priest shortages.

The exclusion from parish pastorship also manifests itself as a leadership conflict in relation to interactions with parishioners. Mead (1934) and Blumer's (1969) interaction theory suggests that Catholic laity will act toward married priests on the basis of meanings they have associated with the much more typical celibate priest. Data from this study suggests that parishioners often do not understand the inclusion of married clergy to the Latin Rite Catholic priesthood and the Church has done little to further that understanding. If the Church limits exposure to married clergy by limiting the roles that they may hold within the Church, parishioners who do find themselves in an infrequent encounter with a married priest may find these interactions confusing, thereby straining the expressible fabric of the normative priest/parishioner dyad. The institutional policy of limiting exposure to married clergy, particularly those ordained through the Pastoral Provision does not help alleviate parishioner discomfort or help integrate these men into the greater Latin Rite priesthood.

While not so polite to say, the truth is that encountering a married Latin Rite priest may cause an uninformed Catholic parishioner to question the theological meaning of what a priest is. This manifested itself in the data when a married priest was asked not to perform Mass for a

Catholic school, so as to not confuse the school-age children about celibacy and the priesthood. Such encounters with married priests might prove beneficial for those parishioners who can wrap their heads around the theology and traditions of the priesthood, but also might prove alarmingly discomfoting for those who cannot do so without some formalized explanation. Social interaction, which generates understanding, constitutes a basic starting point of acceptance. The Church might find it beneficial to explain the provisional acceptance of married clergy to the faithful, and allow for greater access to promote the acceptance of these provisional, yet legitimate priests.

Holding married clergy at arms-length is somewhat perplexing to even informed Latin Rite parishioners and comes across as an attempt by Church leadership to separate these priests into a specialized cohort that are somehow more than deacon but less than celibate priest. Considering the lens of Émile Durkheim (2001) one might suggest that the institutional Church is concerned with laity interpreting the provisions for married clergy as a signal of the small slide down the slope of universalism, yet the Church does little to explain the provisional inclusion of married priests to alleviate any such misunderstanding. Circling back to Mead (1934) and Blumer's (1969) interaction theory, one should note that a plurality of roles, such as priest, husband, father, etc., increases the potentiality of role conflict. Role conflict itself generates the potentiality of uncertainty and mal-integration, which further generates an expectation of deviance. Deviance, in this context, may simply mean an unwillingness to adhere to certain social norms of the celibate priesthood. If one were to follow this progression from plurality of roles to expectation of deviance, then perhaps the Latin Rite Church is intentionally holding married priests at arms-length out of an expectation of deviance, born of a fear of what they do not fully understand. This level of fear and uncertainty by the Church is difficult to understand

from an institutional level, given the Eastern Rite Churches experience and historical example of married clergy. Yet data from this study suggests that Latin Rite married priests, at least those in this study, feel held back at some level from serving the Church and her faithful to the extent that celibate priests are able.

Leadership Conflict and the Mission of the Ordinariate

A leadership conflict that specifically limits the careers of Ordinariate priests is the implicit mission of the Ordinariate itself. The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter is limited in mission and scope by Vatican leadership. Ordinariate priests are discouraged from recruiting disaffected Catholics or to market the Anglican Use Mass to Catholics who find this beautifully arranged Mass as personally superior or more satisfying, than the Latin Rite Mass. Data from this study indicated that for ecumenical reasons, Ordinariate priests, regardless of marital status, are limited in their evangelization to Episcopalians as well, essentially allowing them to minister only to those who seek them out, rather than allowing a true evangelization to bring souls into the Catholic Church. These limitations negatively impact the careers of Ordinariate priests, the clear majority of whom are married, by creating barriers to the development of congregations that could support a parish and its pastor's salary on their own, consequently also limiting the leadership opportunities for Ordinariate priests.

This leadership conflict gives us a glimpse into the financial obstacles that Ordinariate priests face and could be interpreted as another example of the institutional oppression of married clergy and their wish to be fully seen, honored, and supported in the Church.

Financial Conflict

Married priests who serve in the Catholic Church and have a wife, children, family health insurance needs and a host of other familial fiscal responsibilities, cost more for the Church than do average, healthy, celibate priests. Pastoral Provision priests negotiate a salary with their bishop that hopefully constitutes a fair and balanced pay structure for himself and his specific family situation. Some married priests have no children, while others have a stereotypically large Catholic family, thus making each Pastoral Provision priests' salary a negotiable point of stress for married clergy in the institutionalized diocesan structure.

Data from this study indicates that the Ordinariate priests face additional financial role conflict because of limited financial support from the Church to their Ordinariate parishes. Ordinariate parishes function on their own financially, with the limited resources of their small communities. A typical Ordinariate parish may constitute a dozen Catholic families in comparison to several hundred or several thousand Catholic families for a typical diocesan parish. Ordinariate priests in this study indicated that some Ordinariate priests work and serve their parishes without taking a salary from their community at all. Ordinariate priests are the only Catholic priests who are approved to work secular jobs that do conflict with the values of the priesthood and the Church. Although the Church has designated the Ordinariate as permanent and not provisional, perhaps the Church foresees the Ordinariate as a meaningful expression of ecumenism that will serve its purpose for a generation or two before simply being absorbed back into the folds of the Latin Rite. However likely this may seem in our short-sightedness, the Eastern Catholic tradition has provided this example with many small parishes that continue to survive the test of time.

Summary and Personal Reflections

In review, data from this research study primarily converged on the themes of identity, role and career. An identity standard is the set of meanings that defines the character of an identity (Stets & Burke, 2003). Catholics construct that identity through prescribed formation of the Church, be that Faith Formation for parishioners or Seminary for priests. The characteristics of the Catholic priest are nearly always engaged during social interactions and are thus an important aspect of priest/parishioner relationships. The pathway for the construction of that priestly identity is the Catholic seminary, which married clergy have little or no experience with inside the Catholic Church. Without that experience it may be difficult for married clergy to reconstruct their priestly identity within a Catholic framework as well as to develop relationships with the celibate priesthood in order to verify and affirm a truly Catholic priestly identity.

Not only do married clergy suffer a fracture of their previous priestly identity during the transition to the Catholic Church, this period of transition places stress on their relationships with family, friends, former parishioners and colleagues. Without a Catholic seminary formation process, many married clergy are immediately differentiated from their celibate brethren, not only by rule of celibacy, but by an experience gap that possibly has lasting impact on their ability to be seen, heard and valued as truly “one of us” within the Catholic priesthood. Without this form of identity construction, married clergy possibly conform and adhere to traditional Catholic values, beliefs, norms and practices as a means to signal and verify their allegiance to the Catholic priesthood. This may account for married clergy as being seen as traditional and conservative in their theological, political and sociological perspectives.

The Church limits the careers of married clergy not only by rule, but also through policy and practice. Pastoral Provision priests are further limited in their career by the inability to be appointed as a Parish Pastor. Ordinariate priests are further limited by the scope and mission of the Ordinariate and the financial obstacles to parish growth, created by those limitations on scope and mission, particularly as they relate to evangelization of Episcopalians and disaffected Catholics. Such policies and practices suggest that the roles which married clergy can invest themselves are limited and most likely have a direct impact on leadership and financial conflict between their roles and their identities.

What follows are some personal reflections on this research project that may not have direct support from the data provided from these 15 priests and may contain some personal bias.

The professional lives of these married clergy are meaningfully different from that of their celibate brethren. When one enters a different culture, even an organizational one, there is a negotiation of identity and a reconstruction of identity in some cases, based on the interactions one has within that new culture (Mead, 1934). The construction, verification and affirmation of a Catholic priestly identity can prove challenging for former Protestant priests. The construction and ongoing affirmation of identity for married clergy is fraught with challenges that the Church seems hesitant, unwilling to resolve. Perhaps this cohort of clergy is just too small in the grander scheme of the U.S. Latin Rite priesthood to be fully seen, heard and valued by Church leadership. Perhaps such a burden for married clergy is the price paid for acceptance into the Catholic priesthood for those who do not meet the archetypical definition of a Latin Rite priest, but perhaps the obstacles to identity construction and affirmation, meaningful roles and mission, just need to be further illuminated before Church leadership.

Specific to the Ordinariate, it seems shameful to me that the Church has created this avenue of ecumenism with our Christian brothers and sisters, creating a specialized diocese, so to speak, as well as a specialized pathway for ordination of married clergy, to then abandon them financially to flourish or die on their own, given the limitations of mission and scope that have been placed upon them. This not only signals to mainstream Catholics that the Ordinariate is somehow unworthy of institutional support, but creates a system of obstruction that almost certainly destines the Ordinariate to a perishable, one-generation ecumenical project.

Specific to the Pastoral Provision, it seems negligent of leadership to deny parish pastorship to priests that have been welcomed into the Catholic Church as authentic, legitimate and equal to their Latin Rite celibate brethren, especially given the experience that these men bring to the Catholic Church and the need for parish pastors in many rural areas.

The Church also needs to do a better job of explaining Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate celibacy exemptions to the Catholic faithful, while encouraging interaction and dialogue with married clergy rather than the current practice of holding them at arms-length from the day-to-day parishioner experience, for the good of all His Holy Church.

CHAPTER SEVEN IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were two primary goals for this study: a) to study the perspectives and experiences of married Catholic priests so that we can make meaning of their unique roles, duties and leadership provided within the Church; and b) to gain an understanding of how they perceive their roles and their effect upon the collective consciousness, culture and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church. The phenomenological study of this research provided valuable, rich descriptions of the lived experiences of married Catholic priests.

Implications

The primary implications of this study center around the concepts of priestly identity, role and career limitations for married clergy. Identity is shaped by both the individual and society. If we change the nature of the individual, then the nature of society changes. Similarly, if we change the nature of society, the individual changes (Stets & Burke, 2003). The Church, in this perspective is an institutionalized society that exists independently within a truly American context, but also must be viewed within a larger, world-wide, authoritatively and uniquely, non-American context. Change does not come easy for the Church, known for having an institutional memory that reflects, contemplates and deliberates on issues over centuries, rather than years or even decades. What changes married clergy might bring to the U.S. Catholic Church and how the universal Church will change these men, remains to be seen in this context. What can be seen to date is that the inclusion of married clergy to the Latin Rite U.S. Catholic Church has created an opportunity for discussion and dialogue regarding the merits of optional celibacy, the otherwise provisional inclusion of married clergy for ecumenical reasons, the worthiness of financial support of the Ordinariate, and the basis of reasoning for accepting or denying

reconciliation with celibate priests who have left the Church to marry and who wish for an opportunity to return to active ministry as a married priest.

What must be considered and remedied in the immediate future for married clergy is the pattern within the Church of not truly engaging, seeing, hearing and thus valuing these men. In my opinion, the Church does not see them as authentic to the Latin Rite priesthood, and therefore does not value their leadership potential, and does not respect their frustrations with institutionally created obstacles that exist to authentic service to the Church.

The cohort of married men who have converted to Catholicism and subsequently been called, accepted and ordained as Catholic priests share a predominantly conservative and traditionalist identity, more so, they perceive, than many of their celibate brethren. They generally are humbled to have been accepted into the priesthood of the Catholic Church and are extremely grateful for the opportunity to continue their mission in the care and salvation of souls. They commonly speak of a desire to fulfill their priestly duties without being ‘flag-bearers’ for a married priesthood and in fact, nearly all speak with high regard for the discipline of celibacy. Additionally, while they are thankful for their specific disposition, they see the normative practice of priestly celibacy as a practice of self-denial worthy of their respect and admiration. They are quick to defend their exemption as a gift of the Church, as an opportunity for evangelization and a significant effort of outreach toward unity with those who seek full communion with the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. For the clear majority of married priests, as is suspected of the vast majority of celibate priests, these men seek little more than a life of service to the Church with little regard toward career advancement and are humbled by the work they do. The majority of married priests have been welcomed into the brotherhood of the Catholic priesthood with open arms and little hesitation. Very few have felt hostility, overt or

covert, directed toward them by parishioners and even fewer have felt hostility directed toward them from the celibate priesthood or Church hierarchy. Occurrences of open hostility have come primarily from those priests who have left the Church to marry and have therefore been denied full faculties of their priesthood; and the celibate brethren in current ministry who feel some allegiance to those men.

Looking back at the Visual Representation of the Research Framework (Figure 1), research data confirm that an exemption from the discipline of celibacy creates the most significant of differences between the celibate and married priesthood, interlacing and entwining itself with nearly every other factor that defines their priestly identity. The exemption from celibacy limits their careers. It has impact on their priest-parishioner relationships. It dictates what duties and roles they are assigned by Church hierarchy. It reveals familial conflicts of duty that are uniquely different from familial conflicts that celibate priests have. It creates opportunities for alienation from the celibate priestly brotherhood, as well as those who oppose the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate. It creates fraternity with other married priests. It creates fraternity with parishioners who would seek out pastoral guidance from a priest who they think can better understand the struggles of marriage, children and their daily lives. Negatively and positively, an exemption from the discipline of celibacy impacts their priesthood. Yet they set about work every day, in an effort to serve the Lord and save souls as do their celibate brethren. While their circumstances may be different, their conversations with parishioners different, and in many cases the structure and patrimony of their Mass different, they continue the good works of the Catholic priest.

From a leadership perspective, these men appear to be highly informed in Catholic doctrine and theology, humbled by their opportunity to serve within the Catholic Church and

bring a renewed passion for the priesthood, in a time when the normative priesthood seems apathetic toward evangelization and unity. The passion that these men have shown in risking their livelihoods to convert to Catholicism on the mere hopes of being accepted as a Catholic priest is venerable. While I have serious concerns about a universally accepted priesthood with optional celibacy, I do have a renewed excitement for the spiritual renewal and interfaith unity that may come from the inclusion of this unique cohort of priests.

Social constructionism analyzes the ways social phenomenon are created, institutionalized and become tradition and suggests that action should be taken in light of the knowledge gained (Mead 1934 & Blumer 1969). In the context of this dissertation, the data suggest that at least one phenomenon creates an opportunity for change. The financial hardships that Ordinariate priests experience as a result of their unique status in the Church should be studied in further detail and an equitable pay structure developed and implemented before the current Ordinariate pay structure becomes institutionalized. Given that the Vatican has expressly limited the mission of the Ordinariate and that the reunification efforts tasked to the Ordinariate have been deemed worthy by their approval and formation, some greater direct financial support from the Church seems appropriate. If institutional support isn't strengthened, the Ordinariate is burdened with a financial support system that seems difficult to maintain independently.

In conclusion and in my opinion, married clergy have not to date made radical transformations to the structure, practices or culture of the U.S. Catholic Church. Conversely, they have taken what they perceive as the richness of Church norms, practices and traditions on as their own, with no expectations to take on Church leadership, structural transformation or to change religious doctrine. In fact, they may be the Church's strongest adherents to its traditional tenets in their perceptions of the value of Church teachings and doctrine. For many in this

sample, they were doing their best to fit in, feeling that it might be inappropriate in light of their unique acceptance to go beyond the contributions asked of them by the institutional Church. Their gratitude for being even nominally accepted as a Catholic priest was palpable in their comments. It seems clear that they did not feel that total acceptance would ever be there for them and did not feel that the exceptions made in their own cases would necessarily represent a change in structure for the Church in the future, but they do see a place where they could help bring their parishioners closer to God.

On a personal note, during the research for this dissertation I realized that in my haste to reach out nationally to Ordinariate and Pastoral Provision priests, I had overlooked the presence of an Ordinariate church in my home Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. I decided it was obviously in my best interest to attend an Ordinariate Mass because I had never done so before and at that time I had hoped to linger after Mass and talk with Father Vaughn Treco, a married Ordinariate priest and pastor of the Church of St. Bede the Venerable about this study and to ask if he would be willing to participate. I feel free to confide this because I have never met or even contacted Father Treco, nor is he a part of this research study in any way. Unfortunately, the day I attended Mass he was absent and another, presumably celibate priest stood in his place at the Alter. Fr. Treco's absence that day was fortuitous because it allowed me lay down my researcher hat and to focus purely on the beauty of the Mass as a lay Catholic. The beauty of the Anglican Use Mass is astonishing. The music is extraordinary. I immediately understood the myriad reasons why Pope Benedict XVI approved the use and expression of the Anglican Use Mass. It's simply beautiful. The purpose of this story isn't to regale my experience with the Anglican Use Mass, but to validate the various expressions of this great universal Church. The implication is that there is much to be seen and experienced within the greater Catholic faith than just the

Latin Rite. While the Anglican Use Mass is unquestionably different, it is also beautifully complimentary to all that I've known in the Latin Rite.

Beautifully complimentary is a true reflection of my personal experience with married clergy as it exists today in the Latin Rite, U.S. Catholic Church. I've met married priests and attended Mass where married priests have been the celebrant and my life has been affected, only positively by these experiences. I'm often struck by the obvious differences for married priests, the stark realities of financial obstacles, divergences of the Mass, distinctively dissimilar experiences, assumptions of celibacy, confusion and questions from laity and everyday challenges of marriage and family. I'm also struck by how beautifully complimentary a married priest is to the larger Church. My experiences with married priests through the Pastoral Provision and Personal Ordinariate has opened my eyes to the Eastern Catholic Churches in the United States and the diverse traditions that exist throughout the world within this enormously complex and universal Church.

Lastly, let it not be said that married priests have not sacrificed as their celibate brethren have. Married clergy have held up a sacrifice to their Lord as well and although different, the sacrifice is great. They have left behind family, friends, congregations, job security and financial security to convert to Catholicism with no guarantee that they would be accepted and welcomed into the Catholic priesthood, simply because of the Truths they saw in the Catholic Faith. Such a sacrifice takes courage and faith. The vow of celibacy is a tremendous sacrifice for those called and accepted to the Latin Rite priesthood and worthy of our greatest respect. As we celebrate and admire the vow of celibacy for Latin Rite priests, the Catholic faithful should also be cognizant and celebratory of the sacrifices married clergy have made to join us in our shared faith.

Limitations

While this study has its strengths of information and analysis, certain limitations existed in the development and implementation of this study. The sample size, while seemingly small at 15 priests, represents a fair proportion of the total population of married Catholic priests within the United States, comprising approximately 10% of the population. The 15 priests who participated in this research study could, however, hold significantly different views of the priesthood than do the 90% of their married brethren, who either chose not to participate or who were not contacted to be a part of the study. In addition to the 15 married priests who accepted participation, 20 additional priests were contacted. Of those 20, 11 did not respond to the request to participate, 4 indicated they were celibate, 2 declined to participate and 3 indicated their willingness to participate, but did not do so due to interview timing conflicts. Two Pastoral Provision priests were interviewed for the pilot study to this dissertation research, but were not included in the subsequent final research project. Although the small number of interviews in this research project limits the generalizability of this study, data saturation did occur in many areas of the study, with the caveat that there were questions that did not garner consensus. A larger sample may have led to additional findings.

The views of American priests, married or not, can also raise generalizability issues with the greater collective views of Catholic priests from around the globe. The fact that most married priests have been pastoring in other Christian denominations prior to conversion to Catholicism suggests that their age will be significantly older than the newest cohorts of normative priests coming into the Church today.

Another limitation of this research project is that I am a practicing Roman Catholic and results of this study may be more easily influenced by my personal biases and idiosyncrasies. In all areas of interest to this dissertation, I have attempted to research, as much as possible, the complex 2,000-year history of the Church and use quotes from various people to accentuate points and place current trends, discipline and doctrine into the appropriate context. It becomes all too easy from the wealth of information on Catholicism to “cherry-pick” ideas and quotes that meet your expectations and viewpoints. I recognized this fact early in preliminary research on celibacy, for example and have attempted to reduce such bias as much as possible through researching multiple perspectives on each topic. Hopefully I have risen above the biases that I hold toward subject matters within this dissertation. I have personally learned a lot from this experience and many of my previously held beliefs have changed as a result of my deeper research and understanding of married clergy in the Latin Rite. My hope is that others might read this dissertation and be changed as well. Although I feel that I have learned an immense amount from the years spent working on this project, I feel there is much more for me to learn and I hope that I have not misrepresented married clergy in any way with this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

While much of the veil has been pulled back from the mystery of married clergy within the Latin Rite Catholic priesthood, there remains research that should be conducted to shed light on this unique cohort of Christian men.

The financial hardships experienced by these men and their families, particularly within the Ordinariate structure, is a much-needed place to start. There were no interview questions related to financial hardships in the original set of interview questions for this dissertation as

shown in Appendix E. I did not begin an inquiry of financial challenges until my interview with Father 07 and this was due to unsolicited comments about financial hardships from interviews with Fathers 01 through 06. That line of questioning continued through the end of interviews with Father 15. The specific question asked was, “What financial obstacles exist for a married priest within the Catholic Church.” Salaries for Pastoral Provision priests are negotiated within each Diocese by the priest and his bishop, but Ordinariate priests are not afforded a set salary from the Office of the Personal Ordinariate. Salaries for Ordinariate priests must come from the Ordinariate parishes that they serve, which oftentimes are not large enough to sustain a livable wage for a priest, let alone one with a family. Father 07 indicated that there might be only four churches within the Ordinariate with congregations large enough to fully support their priest without assistance from other sources. Had I fully understood the financial hardships that exist for Ordinariate clergy before this research started, I would have delved deeper into this issue as an area of importance for this research project at the onset. This remains an area that certainly requires more research and understanding so that resolutions could be brought to the Church.

The lived experiences of the wives and children of married clergy are also unique areas of study that should be researched in more depth to give Church leadership a better understanding of what support should be offered to families of married priests. While participants themselves can provide anecdotal examples of experiences their wives and children have encountered, their unique perspectives and their real stories can only be revealed through their own words. Research projects that focus primarily on the wives and children of married Catholic priests, respectively, would be worthwhile undertakings.

Research with celibate priests and bishops within the normative diocesan structure of the Church, should be conducted to gain a better understanding of the attitudes, reactions and

concerns these men have with the celibacy dispensation given to Pastoral Provision and Ordinariate priests. The experiences of bishops who have Pastoral Provision priests in their dioceses may prove to be of great interest to those bishops who have not experienced a married priest within their diocese. Fear of the unknown may be limiting the ordination opportunities that married men may have within dioceses, led by bishops who have no experience as such and may very well be limiting the pastoral opportunities married Pastoral Provision priests have within a diocese as well.

Although the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University annually surveys laity on the question of whether they believe Latin Rite priests should be allowed to marry, further research should be conducted on lay beliefs as they relate specifically to the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate, which are uniquely different subjects. In hindsight, I would have focused this dissertation strictly on one or the other as well.

The attitudes, reactions and concerns on the Ordinariate and conversion of priest to the Catholic Church by current Anglican and Episcopalian clergy, as well as their laity, could also shed light on reunification efforts and opportunities between the two churches. Father 07 expressed a real interest in more statistics as it relates to both Catholic Laity, as well as outsiders of the Catholic Church in regards to many aspects of a married priesthood in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Father 09 expressed an interest in research related to the spiritual formation of married clergy in relation to the process and experience of the celibate priesthood, within both the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate. Such research could have an impact on the spiritual formation process that evolves from the Ordinariate in the near future.

The Sullins (2016) book, discussed several times in this work, was immensely useful in the understanding of married priests, but focused entirely on the Pastoral Provision. In this study 87% of respondents were Ordinariate priests. Quantifiably and qualitatively, there may be differences in the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs between Ordinariate and Pastoral Provision, married priests. This is an area that demands further study as well.

More research should also be conducted with laicized priests who have left ministry to marry and who are no longer active in ministry within the Catholic Church, to gain a better understanding of their perspectives regarding celibacy exemptions given to some married men through the Pastoral Provision and the Personal Ordinariate. Although there are some books written by laicized priests on this subject, I could not find a research study that explored this issue in any depth.

Lastly, I would like to extend a grateful *Thank You* to all fifteen priests who participated in this study. Any errors in fact or understanding expressed in this dissertation were not done so intentionally. The sole intent of this research was to provide readers with a greater understanding of the unique experiences, gifts and challenges of married priests in the Latin Rite Catholic Church.

I conclude with the words of Father 06:

I would say that it's not marriage that makes me a good priest, or a priest that makes me a good married man. I think that the two complement each other, ... complete each other, and in my case, they're both a blessing and a gift.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Participants

Dear (insert name and address of potential participant),

In the summer of 2008, I began a program of graduate study at the University of St. Thomas (Minnesota) that included a joint Doctorate in Education – Leadership and a Master of Arts in Catholic Studies. One area of interest in my graduate studies is that of pastoral leadership within the Catholic Church. This past spring, I completed the Master of Arts degree in Catholic Studies and am now solely focused on completion of my doctoral dissertation. My area of interest for this dissertation is related to the Pastoral Provision, the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, and the acceptance of a small number of married, Latin Rite priests in the U.S. Catholic Church. I am writing to you today in the hopes that you might agree to participate in this dissertation research through an interview.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the experience and perspectives of married, Latin Rite priests and to evaluate how they experience and make meaning of the roles, duties, and leadership they provide within the hierarchical Church and to their parishioners. In addition, this study will explore how married Catholic priests perceive their roles and their effect on the collective consciousness, culture, and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church.

Participation in this research study is voluntary and involves participating in one in-depth interview that will last approximately 60-90 minutes within the next 3 months. This interview will be conducted by the researcher, one-on-one, with you, at a time, date, and location of your choosing, in concert with the schedule of the researcher, or through Skype, an encrypted webcam video service. All information you share with the researcher will be held in strict confidence, and pseudonyms will be used for all names and locations so that any published results will be completely anonymous. Should you participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher, and all of your information will be destroyed.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts anticipated with this study. The benefits associated with your participation include the opportunity to discuss your experiences and contribute to a study that will contribute to the body of knowledge in Catholic Studies and Church leadership.

Prior to participating in the study, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form. This study has been approved by the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board by IRB Number 675002-1. Please contact me if you are willing to participate in this study or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kenneth D. Varble
University of St. Thomas – St. Paul, Minnesota
E-mail: varb8793@stthomas.edu
Cell Phone: 612-619-0163

APPENDIX B**Consent Form****CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS****Married Catholic Priests
IRB Number: 675002-1**

I am conducting a study about the experience of married, U.S. Catholic priests. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because the researcher has identified you as someone who fit the criteria for this study. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by Kenneth D. Varble, a doctoral student at the University of St. Thomas, under the supervision of Karen Rogers, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor, College of Education, Leadership & Counseling, the University of St. Thomas.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of married Catholic priests and to determine what differences may exist between the priestly identity of married Latin Rite Catholic priests and normative, celibate Latin Rite Catholic priests.

Procedures:

Participation is completely voluntary and involves participating in one in-depth interview that will last approximately 60-90 minutes. These interviews will be digitally voice recorded, but will be listened to only by the researcher and a professional transcriptionist, for the purpose of transcription and analysis. Please note that all information you share will be held in strict confidence and that pseudonyms will be used for all names and locations so that any published results will be completely anonymous. Should you choose to participate, you are free to decide to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The nature of any risk to the participant is related to the discomfort a married priest may have discussing issues of celibacy and sexual continence within the context of a married priesthood. The researcher has limited the number of questions on this subject and has appropriately worded them to diminish discomfort for the participant as much as possible. The researcher will also remind participants that they do not have to answer a specific question if they choose not to. The benefits anticipated with your participation include the opportunity to discuss your experience and contribute to the body of knowledge in Leadership and Catholic Studies.

Confidentiality:

The records of this research study will be kept confidential and destroyed 7 years following completion of the dissertation. Pseudonyms will be used for all names and places in any written report or document that is published. Digital voice recordings will be stored in a secure location

in the researcher's home office and destroyed 7 years following the publication of this dissertation. Researcher notes, signed consent forms, and all transcriptions of interviews will be stored in a secure location in the researcher's home office and destroyed 7 years after the publishing of this dissertation.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher or the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, within 7 days following your interview, without reason. If you withdraw from the study data collected about you will not be used in my findings. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask you for personal or professional reasons without elaboration or reason. Withdrawal from this research study, for any reason, should be done in writing through an e-mail to the researcher at varb8793@stthomas.edu. For the protection of the researcher, all withdrawals should take place no later than 7 days following the interview.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Ken Varble. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 612-619-0163. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Karen Rogers at 952-855-4545 or the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6038 with any questions or concerns.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study and to be audiotaped. I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

Message from David Steele:

Date: February 9, 2015

To: Kenneth Varble

From: David Steele, Director, Grants & Research Office

Project Title: [675002-1] Married Catholic Priests: Their Unique Priestly Identity and Potential Catalyst for Change in the Catholic Church

Reference: New Project

Action: Project Approved

Approval Date: February 9, 2015

Expiration: February 8, 2016

Thank you for your submission of this research protocol and for making the requested modifications. The University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board has read your protocol and approved your project as reflected in the modifications that you submitted. Please note that all research conducted in connection with this project title must be done in accordance with this approved submission.

Please remember that informed consent is a process that begins with a description of the project and assurance of participant understanding and the signing of a consent form. The informed consent process must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between you and your research participants. Federal law requires that each person participating in your study receive a copy of the consent form.

Please note that any revision to the procedures approved by the IRB must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to your making changes.

Any unanticipated problems involving risks or harm to project participants or others must be reported promptly to the IRB. Any non-compliance issues or complaints relating to the project must also be reported immediately.

Approval to work with human subjects in connection with this project will expire on February 8, 2016. This project requires continuing review by the IRB on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms in IRBNet for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received at least two weeks prior to the expiration date of February 8, 2016.

Please note that all research records relating to participant consent (signed consent forms) must be retained for a minimum of three years after completion of the project.

Please direct any questions that may arise to David Steele at dfsteele@stthomas.edu and include reference to the title of your project in your correspondence.

I wish you the best of success with your project!

Sincerely,

David Steele, Ph.D.
Director, Grants and Research Office

APPENDIX D

IRB Extension Approval

Message from Sarah Muenster-Blakley:

Date: January 19, 2016

To: Kenneth Varble

From: Sarah Muenster-Blakley, Institutional Review Board

Project Number: [675002-1] Married Catholic Priests: Their Unique Priestly Identity and Potential Catalyst for Change in the Catholic Church

Review Type: Continuing Review

Action: Approval of Extension on Project

Original Expiration Date: February 8, 2016

New Expiration Date: February 8, 2017

Dear Ken:

Thank you for your request to continue your project beyond the original expiration date.

I am happy to approve an IRB extension of one year. Your project will expire on February 8, 2017.

Please note that you may not vary from the procedures originally approved in connection with this project without prior IRB approval. All original conditions and restrictions still apply.

Questions can be directed to Sarah Muenster-Blakley at (651) 962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu at any time.

I wish you continued success with your project!

Sincerely,

Sarah Muenster-Blakley, M.A.
Director, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about your personal and professional background.
2. How do you experience and make meaning of your roles, duties, and leadership you provide within the hierarchical Church and to your parishioners?
3. How do you perceive your role, and its effect, upon the collective consciousness, culture, and structure of the U.S. Catholic Church?
4. Are leadership skills an important part of your roles within the Catholic Church?
5. Which of your priestly roles and duties require your best leadership skills?
6. How would you respond to criticisms that a married priest is not married to the Church?
7. How would you respond to criticisms that a married priest, with a spouse, and perhaps children, inhibits the priestly identity of having an undivided heart and how do you choose between obligations to your family and to the children of God?
8. Do you feel there is a priest shortage in the US Catholic Church, and if so, do you feel that a married priesthood would alleviate a priest shortage?
9. Do you feel there is an abnormally high rate of sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests, and if so, do you feel that a married priesthood would reduce the instances of sexual abuse?
10. Do you feel there is an abnormally high rate of homosexuality in the Catholic priesthood, and if so, do you feel that a married priesthood would reduce the number of homosexual priests?
11. Do you feel that having a wife, and perhaps children, in some way may inhibit your independence from the State?
12. Describe the difference, if any, between the significance of the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of holy orders?
13. What does the idea of priestly identity mean to you?
14. Do you feel that your priest/parishioner dyad (socially significant relationship) differs from that of a normative priest?
15. How might the psychology of the priest/parishioner dyad change if a married clergy were universally accepted?
16. How do you think the Pastoral Provision and/or the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter have changed the culture of the US Catholic Church?

17. Do you agree or disagree with the Church's stance on prohibiting priests who have left ministry to marry to reconcile with the priesthood in light of the Pastoral Provision?
18. Do you feel that your priestly career is limited by your marital status? If so, in what ways?
19. Do you feel that the discipline of celibacy is too demanding of priests in the modern world? If so, why do you feel this way?
20. When one fails in their obligations of chastity within the sacrament of marriage they are forgiven and welcomed back into the Church. Do you feel that the same should be the case for married/celibate priests?
21. Pope Saint John Paul II called the sacrificial example of chastity and perfect continence as a clear and plain sign and indication to the laity of priestly identity. What do you make of these words from the man who approved the Pastoral Provision?
22. Laity may perceive the Catholic Priest as the "living example of Christ on earth." How do you reconcile this notion with the discipline of celibacy?
23. What specific limitations have been set by the Holy See or your Archdiocese on chastity and your priestly duties?
24. Do you feel there are psychological effects of the tradition of priestly celibacy?
25. Have there been times when you felt alienated from the priestly brotherhood?
26. What opportunities do you have to spend time with celibate priests?
27. What issues, if any, have your spouse, or children, experienced as a result of your ordination as a Catholic priest?
28. If you were to advise another married pastor on the process and experience of ordination within the Catholic Church, what would you say?
28. What else, if anything, would you like to say in regards to a married Catholic priesthood in the Latin Rite U.S. Catholic Church?

APPENDIX F

Transcription Certification

I certify that the foregoing documents were transcribed by Verbal Ink based on *the mp3s* of Father 01, Father 02, Father 03, Father 04, Father 05, Father 06, Father 07, Father 08, Father 09, Father 10, Father 11, Father 12, Father 13, Father 14, and Father 15 which were provided to Verbal Ink by *Kenneth Varble from March 2015-July 2015*

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be "S. Jae", written over a horizontal line.

Sam Jae
Account Executive
Verbal Ink

APPENDIX G

Transcriber Non-Disclosure Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Date: 2/22/16
 "Verbal Ink": Outskirts, Inc. dba Verbal Ink
 "Client": Kenneth Varble

This Confidentiality Agreement ("**Agreement**") is entered into by and between Client and Verbal Ink as of the above date in connection with discussions between the parties with respect to Verbal Ink performing transcription services for Client ("**Services**"). Whereas Client intends to provide Verbal Ink with certain confidential and proprietary information regarding Client and/or its business for transcription purposes and Verbal Ink intends to maintain the confidentiality of such information, now, therefore, in consideration of the disclosure of such information, and other good and valuable consideration, the parties agree as follows:

1. The parties acknowledge that related to any Services provided by Verbal Ink to Client, Client may make available to Verbal Ink certain information and materials: (i) in writing, by email, by audio tape or other tangible electronic storage medium clearly marked and identified by Client as "Confidential" or "Proprietary" or (ii) that, by the nature of the information and circumstances surrounding their disclosure ought to, in good faith, be treated as proprietary and/or confidential (hereafter referred to as "**Confidential Information**"). Excluded from Confidential Information are: (i) information which is known to Verbal Ink prior to entering into this Agreement, (ii) information which becomes known to Verbal Ink from a third party who is not subject to a confidentiality agreement with Client, (iii) information which is required to be disclosed as a matter of law, and (iv) information which is generally known to the public.
2. Verbal Ink acknowledges that all Confidential Information furnished to it is considered proprietary and is a matter of strict confidentiality. Verbal Ink further acknowledges that the unauthorized use or disclosure of any Confidential Information may cause irreparable harm to Client. Accordingly, Verbal Ink agrees that Client will be entitled to seek equitable relief including injunctive relief and specific performance, in addition to all other remedies available at law or in equity for any breach of this Agreement. In the event of any dispute under this Agreement, each party and its managers', officers', directors', executives', owners', members', shareholders', employees', affiliates', agents', advisors', representatives', and, in the case of Verbal Ink, its transcriptionists, ("**Representatives**") monetary liability to the other party and its Representatives for all claims related to this Agreement will be limited to direct and proven damages. Neither party (nor its Representatives) will be liable for or entitled to any indirect, incidental, reliance, special, punitive, exemplary or consequential damages arising out of its performance or non-performance under this Agreement, whether or not they had been advised of the possibility of such damages. In the event of any dispute related to this Agreement, each party (and its Representatives) shall pay its own attorneys' fees and other litigation costs.
3. Verbal Ink agrees that, except to its Representatives to the extent necessary to permit them to assist in the performance of the Services, it will not distribute, disclose or convey to third parties any of Client's Confidential Information without Client's prior written consent. All transcriptionists working with Verbal Ink are subject to and must pass criminal background checks before starting work with Verbal Ink. Confidential Information shall not be distributed, disclosed or conveyed to any Representative unless such Representative is advised of this Agreement and agrees to be subject to the terms hereof or a similar agreement.
4. Verbal Ink agrees that all Confidential Information received from Client shall at all times remain the sole property of Client and upon completion of the Services shall be either: (i) returned to Client, if Client has made such prior written request, or (ii) deleted from Verbal Ink's files such destruction certified to the client. Notwithstanding the immediately proceeding sentence, Verbal Ink may (but shall not be obligated to) retain one copy of Confidential Information in its files for legal or regulatory requirements only (subject to the confidentiality requirements hereof). No rights or licenses, express or implied, are granted by Client to Verbal Ink under any patents, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, or trade secrets owned by Client as a result of, or related to, this Agreement.
5. This Agreement is effective upon the date first written above. This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect for three (3) years from the above date.

6. This Agreement is binding on the parties and their successors and assigns, and its provisions may only be waived by written agreement of the parties.

7. This is a binding agreement that contains all of the agreements and understandings of the parties and any amendments to this Agreement must be in writing. This Agreement and any claim related directly or indirectly to this Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California (without giving regard to the conflicts of law provisions thereof). No such claim shall be commenced, prosecuted or continued in any forum other than the courts of the State of California located in the City and County of Los Angeles or in the United States District Court for the Central District of California, and each of the parties hereby submits to the jurisdiction of such courts. Each of the parties hereby waives on behalf of itself and its Representatives, successors and assigns any and all right to argue that the choice of forum provision is or has become unreasonable in any legal proceeding. This Agreement may be executed in counterparts by facsimile.

READ, AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

By: _____

Its: _____

Outskirts, Inc. dba Verbal Ink

By: Sam Jae 

Its: Account Executive