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Thomas H. Hicks
Sacred Heart University

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A STUDY OF THE BACKGROUND, LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION, MATURITY, AND MORALE OF "DELAYED VOCATION" CATHOLIC PRIESTS ¹

THOMAS H. HICKS
Sacred Heart University

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The primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether there was a positive relationship between "late vocations" and more mature, satisfied priests. It also sought to determine if there were some demographic differences that distinguish second-career priests from first-career priests. The subjects for the study were 67 men ordained from Pope John XXIII National Seminary for Delayed Vocations in Weston, Massachusetts, during the years 1967-1975. Each of these priests was matched with a first-career priest on the basis of number of years ordained, diocese, and type of work engaged in as a priest.

Significant demographic differences were found in the areas of family size, parents' educational and occupational level, Catholic school training, number of relatives in religious life, and ordinal position in the family. The findings did not support the theoretical assumptions that second-career priests would have a greater degree of job satisfaction, maturity, and morale, at least as these variables were measured by the Job Descriptive Index, the Personal Orientation Index, and the Purpose in Life Test. But both groups of priests came across as very normal groups of men. The findings would not raise any doubts about the wisdom of making greater efforts to recruit older men for the priesthood, though they would call attention to some functional realities of the priesthood that appear to be a cause of dissatisfaction for priests.

Over the past decade there has been a good deal of discussion concerning the wisdom of ordaining older men to the Roman Catholic priesthood. This discussion has been prompted by such factors as the startling increase in the number of resignations from the priestly ministry as well as the dramatic slump in the number of young men entering the seminaries. The finding of the psychological study of American priests, commissioned by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, that two-thirds of the priests investigated were psychologically underdeveloped (Kennedy & Heckler, 1972:51-52) was also a key factor in generating speculation concerning the desirability and feasibility of ordaining older men to the priesthood. Kennedy and Heckler associated the underdevelopment of the priests they studied with the fact that they did not have enough normal developmental experiences. They did not "pass through all the stages of growth which lead to what is recognized as adult and mature behavior" (p. 8). What the priests needed was "a broader and richer experience of life . . . for nothing makes up for the human experiences they may have missed" (p. 8).

Kennedy and Heckler make the observation that, since we do not have comparable data about other professional groups in American society, we cannot assess how American priests compare with other groups of men. The large proportion of psychologically underdeveloped priests possibly reflects the fact that a great many American males are also underdeveloped. One does not have to be a priest in order to have this growth difficulty. But this does not alter the fact that the problem of emotional underdevelopment within the priesthood is apparently a very real one and had best be faced.

It is frequently suggested that one of the ways to face the problem is to increase recruitment efforts among older men, and many directors of religious feel that it should even be the policy to admit candidates to religious life at a much later age than has been customary (cf. Naeger, 1972; McCarthy, 1972; Michaud, 1974). These directors point out that it is not the function of religious training to give maturity to its members. The process of arriving at a sense of personal identity should be largely resolved before a person is religiously "formed." Appeal is often made to the practice of the early Church, which seemed to think that a man needed time to mature before he could be ordained to the priesthood. The image of a priest in early Christian history clearly seems to be that of a mature man (in fact, usually married with a family).

But what is the actual shape of reality among "delayed vocation" or second-career priests? There is no real objective evidence about them. There have not been any systematic attempts to collect demographic and social-psychological data on these priests. The present study concerned itself with two questions:

1. Are there some demographic factors which distinguish second-career priests from those who enter the priesthood at the more usual time? More specific descriptive questions would be: Do second-career priests come from different backgrounds than first-career priests? Are the factors that influence the decisions of second-career priests to enter the priesthood different from those that motivate first-career priests? Do second-career priests differ from their younger peers with regard to certain topics common in present-day discussions of the priesthood, e.g., celibacy, loneliness of the priestly life, relevance of the work priests do, whether priests have enough work to do, and having a general feeling of fulfillment in the priesthood? Do the two groups differ in the firmness of their intentions to remain in the priesthood?

2. Are there positive relationships between "late vocations" and more mature, satisfied priests? More specifically, do second-career priests differ from first-career priests in terms of job satisfaction, maturity, and morale?

HYPOTHESES

The priest-subjects of this study were compared on the variables: ethnic background; size and socioeconomic level of their families; ordinal position in their families; early education; motives for entering the priesthood; attitudes towards celibacy, finding relevance and fulfillment within

the priesthood, having enough work to do as a priest, remaining in the priesthood; level of maturity, job satisfaction, and morale.

Ethnic Background. It was hypothesized that both groups of priests in the present study would follow the order of frequency for national background of American priests—namely, Irish, German, Italian, and English—consistently found in previous studies (e.g., Fichter, 1961; NORC, 1971).

Family Size. The general decrease in the size of the average Catholic American family suggested the hypothesis that the older second-career priests would come from larger families than their first-career counterparts.

Socioeconomic Level. It was expected that the parents of the younger first-career priests would reflect the general upward mobility of the American Catholic population as well as the general tendency towards greater amounts of education in our society and, hence, have significantly higher educational and occupational levels than the parents of the older second-career priests. An investigation of Anglican seminarians by Coxon (1967) found that second-career seminarians, or the "late group," tended to come mainly from skilled manual worker backgrounds and reflected a "working class self-image," while the "normal group" tended to come from professional and managerial backgrounds and had an upper-class or middle-class self-image.

Ordinal Position in Family. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference with regard to ordinal position in the family. Fichter (1961) found that the greater percentage of priests were younger children in their families and attributed this to the fact that parents were more reluctant to have their first or oldest sons go into the priesthood.

Early Education. It was expected that both groups of priests in the present study would reflect the findings of previous extensive investigations of priests (Ryan, 1956; Fichter, 1961; Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969; Curcions, 1970) that about 80 percent of American priests had their early education in Catholic elementary and high schools and had served as altar boys.

Motives for Entering the Priesthood. Studies done over the past 15 years (e.g., Neal, 1965; Potvin & Suziedelis, 1969; NORC, 1971) have found that older men in the priesthood tend to be more "sacramentally" oriented, while younger priests tend to be more oriented toward involvement in community and secular affairs. In the present study, it was hypothesized that the first-career priests would have a more social-humanistic orientation towards the priesthood, while the older second-career priests would have a more "sacramental" or "spiritual" motivation for entering the priesthood.

Celibacy. In light of their more advanced age, it seemed logical to expect that celibacy would be less of a problem for the older second-career priests.

Finding Relevance and Fulfillment in the Priesthood. On the assumption that their previous careers resulted in their finding out things about themselves, it was predicted that the second-career priests would be finding more fulfillment and relevance within the priesthood.

Having Enough Work to Do. Since so much priestly work appears to be youth oriented, it was speculated that the younger first-career priests would claim to be busier than the older second-career priests.

Intention to Remain in the Priesthood. In view of their age and the fact that they had already made a major shift in their lives, it was hypothesized that the second-career priests would report an intention to remain in the priesthood to a significantly greater extent than the first-careerists.

Maturity. Two previous studies relate to the general maturity level of men coming to religion as a second career, and their conclusions are at variance. Lindenthal (1967) investigated 72 Episcopalian seminary students, 23 of whom had previously been well established in a secular occupation. Lindenthal found that the second-career seminarians scored significantly higher on a number of indices of psychopathology on the MMPI and maintains that his findings raise questions about the wisdom of ordaining older men to the ministry. On the other hand, a study by Van Nostrand (1970) puts the second-career seminarian in a favorable light. Sixty Protestant and 20 Roman Catholic seminarians who came to the ministry from another career were interviewed. One of Van Nostrand's conclusions was that the move of these second-career seminarians into the ministry would best be seen as a move towards higher levels of maturity or as a "self-actualization response" (p. 300).

Raskopf (1974) studied second-career seminarians of the Episcopal Church and concluded that, on the basis of various measures of vocational maturity, the choice of a second-career for these men "could not be associated with regression or retardation in the development of vocational maturity" (p. 141).

With regard to the present study, the hypothesis that the second-career priests would be more mature than the first-careerists seemed consistent with the idea that older men would have had a more expanded and realistic experience of life.

Job Satisfaction and Morale. Again, because of the implications of more advanced age, greater experience and self-knowledge, it seemed reasonable to hypothesize that delayed entrance into the priesthood from a previous occupation would be positively related to the variables of job satisfaction and morale; hence, the second-career priests would have a significantly higher level of these variables than the first-career priests.

With regard to job satisfaction, a number of previous studies have found marked differences in work satisfaction among priests based on whether they were parish priests or in special work, the job satisfaction of parish priests being significantly lower than that of specialists (cf. Schneider & Hall, 1970; Griffin, 1970; Ference, Golden, & Ritti, 1971; NORC, 1971; Cussack, 1973; Madden, 1973). The findings of the present study were expected to echo these consistent findings of previous studies.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The second-career priests investigated in this study consisted of men ordained from Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts. It was thought that men ordained from this Seminary would provide a very representative sample of American second-career Catholic

priests. Pope John Seminary was established specifically for the "delayed vocation" priest. It is a "national" seminary, and men do indeed come to this institution from all parts of the country. Pope John Seminary began ordaining men in 1967. From that year until 1975, 85 second-career *diocesan priests, serving in CE dioceses of the United States, have been* ordained from that institution. All of these men were contacted and asked to participate in this study. The response rate was 80 percent ($N = 67$). This is a very good response rate and is largely due to the support given to the study by the Rector and faculty of Pope John Seminary.

Thus, the actual sample of second-career priests employed in this study consisted of 67 men ordained from Pope John XXIII Seminary during the years 1967-1975. All of these men fulfilled the definition of a second-career priest as one who began to study for the priesthood after the age of 30, having spent a minimum of three or more years in one or more occupations before entering the seminary. These priests ranged in age from 31 to 69, with a median age of 44. Thirty-five dioceses in 20 states and the District of Columbia were represented by these priests. Table 1 gives the percentages of the sample of second-career priests residing in the four major census areas of the country. A comparison is made with the total number of diocesan priests recorded by the *National Catholic Directory* for the year 1976.

Table 1

PERCENTAGES OF SECOND-CAREER PRIESTS IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE U.S.

Area	Percentage of Sample of Second-Career Priests (N=67)	Percentage of Total Number of Diocesan Priests (N=35,654)
Northeast	49.6	40.0
South	20.7	14.3
Midwest	19.2	34.3
West	10.5	11.4
	100.0	100.0

For control purposes, the 67 second-career priests were compared with a sample of 67 first-career priests, matched on the variables of number of years in the priesthood, diocese, and type of work engaged in within the priesthood. A first-career priest was regarded as someone who entered the priesthood at the more usual age of 25/26. In four cases it was not possible

to match completely. Among the 67 second-career priests there were three pastors. In two of the cases there were simply no pastors among the younger priests. In two other cases it was not possible to match according to both number of years in the priesthood and being in a specialized work. In both of these situations, number of years in the priesthood was chosen as the more significant variable.

The first-career priests who took part in this study ranged in age from 26 to 34, with a median age of 31. All the respondents in this study had been priests from one to eight years, with the greatest number (20 percent) having been ordained six years.

Definitions and Instrumentation

Job satisfaction is here defined simply as the feelings a worker has about his job. For this study the operational measure of job satisfaction was the *Job Descriptive Index* (JDI), developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). This instrument measures satisfaction with regard to five areas: type of work, pay, promotion, supervision, and people on the job.

The concept of *maturity* was defined, according to the self-actualization model of mental health, as positive functioning, as a person developing to his full extent. The *Personal Orientation Inventory* (POI), an instrument designed by Shostrom (1964) to tap aspects of a subject's life considered consistent with a self-actualizing approach to life, was used to measure the variable of emotional maturity.

The concept of *morale* was defined as the degree to which a person was experiencing a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The *Purpose in Life Test* (PIL), developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964), was considered to be an instrument reflecting this idea of morale.

A questionnaire was developed to provide a descriptive profile of the priests taking part in the study.

Plan of Analysis

A number of questions in the questionnaire were simply direct questions designed to elicit external, demographic data. With regard to the various priestly concerns, the respondents were asked to indicate whether the factors celibacy, relevance of the work priests do, having enough work to do as a priest, and general fulfillment in the priesthood were a "great problem," "some problem," "very little problem," or "no problem" for them.

On one item in the questionnaire the subject was requested to indicate the firmness of his intention to remain in the priesthood by marking a five-point rating scale ranging from "definitely will not leave" through "I have definitely decided to leave." On a second item, the subject was asked to respond to the question: "If you had your choice again, would you enter the priesthood?" Each subject indicated his preference along a five-point rating scale ranging from "definitely yes" through "definitely no."

One of the items in the questionnaire was a simple open-ended question asking the respondents to state what they considered to be the important factors that influenced their decisions to enter the priesthood.

Chi-square analyses were used to determine if there were significant differences with regard to items contained in the questionnaire. It was expected that some of the differences found with regard to demographic variables might simply be a reflection of the age of the two groups of priests studied. Age was controlled for by separating it as a variable and measuring for its effects on the other variables. The priests were subdivided into the age categories 50-70, 40-49, 30-39, and 25-29.

Analysis of variance was used to analyze the results of the JDI, POI, and PIL. Pearson product moment correlations were performed to determine the relationships between the JDI and POI scores, as well as the relationships between the JDI and PIL scores, and the PIL and POI scores. A chi-square statistical analysis was done to determine whether the demographic variables on which the two groups of priests differed might possibly influence the findings with regard to job satisfaction, maturity, and morale.

RESULTS

Ethnic and Social Background. As hypothesized, the two groups of priests did not differ significantly with regard to ethnic background. Agreeing almost exactly with the national norms established by the NORC (1971) study of American priests, the most prominent ethnic background of both groups of priests was Irish (39 percent), and the next three most common backgrounds were German (14 percent), Italian (13 percent), and English (9 percent).

There were significant differences between the groups with regard to family size, ordinal position in the family, and educational and occupational levels of parents. The hypothesis that the second-career priests would come from significantly larger families than the first-careerists was confirmed. The average number of children in the families of the second-career priests was 5.16, while the average number of children in the families of the first-career priests was 3.52. The difference is significant ($T = 4.04$, $p < .01$). Contrary to what was hypothesized, a significantly greater number of first-career priests were the only or eldest children in their families (45 percent vs. 24 percent). Put another way, a significantly greater number of second-career priests were younger children in their families (76 percent vs. 55 percent).

As Table 2 shows, the parents of the second-career priests had significantly lower levels of education than the parents of the first-career priests.

The fathers of the first-career priests were in significantly higher occupational levels than the fathers of the second-career priests. About 60 percent of the fathers of the second-career priests were in skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled groups, whereas only 40 percent of the fathers of the first-career priests were in these groups. In general, the fathers of the second-career priests tended to be in blue-collar jobs, while the fathers of the first-career priests tended to be in white-collar jobs.

Thirty-five percent of the mothers of the second-career priests and 45 percent of the mothers of the first-career priests had jobs outside the home.

Table 2
PARENTS' LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION

Level	Second Career (N=134)	First Career (N=134)
Eighth grade or less	50.0% (67)	21.6% (29)
Some high school	15.7 (21)	14.9 (20)
High school graduate or some college	23.9 (32)	46.3 (62)
College graduate	10.4 (14)	17.2 (23)
	100.0	100.0
$\chi^2 = 26.82$	df = 3	P < .001

Table 3
FATHERS' OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS¹

Level	Second Career (N=67)	First Career (N=67)
UPPER FOUR LEVELS	40.3 (27)	59.7 (40)
Higher executives, proprietors of large concerns and major professionals	3.0 (2)	20.9 (14)
Business managers, proprietors of medium sized business and lesser professionals	13.4 (9)	14.9 (10)
Administrative personnel, small independent businesses and minor professionals	10.5 (7)	13.5 (9)
Clerical and sales workers, technicians, and owners of little businesses	13.4 (9)	10.4 (7)
LOWER THREE LEVELS	59.7 (40)	40.3 (27)
Skilled manual employees	31.3 (21)	22.4 (15)
Machine operators and semi-skilled employees	14.9 (10)	10.4 (7)
Unskilled employees	13.4 (9)	7.5 (5)
	100.0	100.0
With Yates correction for continuity, $\chi^2 = 4.30$	df = 1	P < .05

¹According to Hollingshead's 7-step scale.

These proportions are not significantly different ($Z = 1.78$, ns at .05 level). Of the mothers that worked outside the home, 70 percent of both the first and second-career priests' mothers held unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

When the various age categories of priests were related to the categories of family size and parents' educational level, a significant association was found ($X^2 = 7.86$, $p < .05$ and $X^2 = 23.36$, $p < .01$ respectively). This would indicate that the differences found in family size and educational levels of parents is simply a reflection of the age of the two groups of priests studied. The older, second-career priests represent an earlier generation of Catholics, whose parents had larger families and were less educated.

But when size of family and position in the family were related, there was not a significant association ($X^2 = .001$, ns at .05 level). The implication is that the fact of being a first- or second-career priest seems to be more related to ordinal position in the family than the fact of belonging to an earlier generation of Catholics. In other words, ordinal position of the child within the family seems to have some bearing on the probability of his choosing the priesthood as a first or second career.

Likewise, a chi-square analysis indicated that there apparently is no relationship between the priests' age and the occupational level of their fathers ($X^2 = 3.37$, $p < .30$, ns at .05 level). It is necessary to be careful about making the sweeping generalization that upward economic mobility among Catholics results in second-career priests being more likely to come from the blue-collar or working class than first-career priests. Coming from a working-class background seems to be more related to being a second-career priest than to being an older member of an earlier generation.

Religious Background. There were a number of significantly different findings which, taken together, would seem to indicate that the second-career priests did not have as "traditional" a Catholic background or experience as did the first-career priests. For example, a significantly greater number of the fathers of the second-career priests were non-Catholic as the respondents were growing up (13 of the fathers of the second-career priests vs. three of the fathers of the first-careerists). Second-career priests were significantly less likely to have relatives in religious life (35 percent vs. 55 percent). They were significantly less likely to have attended Catholic elementary schools and served as altar boys (67 percent vs. 85 percent) or to have attended a Catholic high school (50 percent vs. 85 percent). Of the 50 second-career priests who attended college before entering the seminary, half of them did not attend a Catholic college. It could be noted that about 70 percent of the second-career priests stated that they had thought of entering the priesthood during their teenage years, which would indicate that their delayed choice of the priesthood represented a return to an interest that had lain dormant for a time.

Prior Occupations of Second-Career Priests. Second-career priests engaged in a wide variety of occupations prior to their entry into the seminary. Sixty-one percent ($N = 41$) of the second-career priests at some time or other held jobs that would be categorized as business-related. Forty-seven percent ($N = 32$) worked at jobs that would be classified as pro-

fessional; 21 percent (N = 14) at skilled or semiskilled jobs; 15 percent (N = 10) at technical jobs; 6 percent (N = 4) at social service jobs; and another 6 percent (N = 4) were previously religious brothers. (The total percentage exceeds 100 percent because approximately one-third of the men held more than one job before entering the seminary.)

Teacher and sales representative were the most common individual prior occupations. Each of these jobs was previously held by 19 percent (N = 13) of the second-career priests.

Motives for Entering the Priesthood. Most of the respondents reported more than one significant determinant of their decision to enter the priesthood, and sometimes a given response could contain several categories.

As Table 4 indicates, men who enter the priesthood as a second-career do so for different reasons than do younger men. Almost two-thirds of the second-career priests cited a desire to give more meaning to life as a reason for entering the priesthood, while approximately the same number of first-career priests cited a desire to serve others. While a large number (46

Table 4
DECLARED MOTIVES FOR ENTERING THE PRIESTHOOD

Motive	Second Career (N=67)	First Career (N=67)
Love and Serve God	10.4% (7)	19.4% (13)
Felt call	31.3 (21)	19.4 (13)
Early Catholic Environment	0.0 (0)	17.9 (12)
Give More Meaning to Life	64.2 (43)	17.9 (12)
Religious Writings	6.0 (4)	0.0 (0)
Youthful Desire	21.0 (14)	0.0 (0)
Desire for Deeper Spirituality	13.4 (9)	6.0 (4)
Example of Other Religious	13.4 (9)	35.8 (24)
Serve Others	46.3 (31)	60.0 (40)
	206.0 ^a	176.40 ^a

^aMost respondents gave more than one reason and, hence, the percentages add to more than 100.0. A total of 138 reasons were given in the second-career column and 118 were given in the first-career column.

percent) of the second-career priests also gave this reason, there was a different quality to it. The difference might best be expressed by saying that the second-career priests spoke more of being "spiritually" involved in helping others, while the service the first-career priests desired to give had a more "humanistic" quality to it. The first-career priests appear to be more oriented to a personal involvement with others, which they feel the priesthood can provide.

Views on Various Priestly Concerns. Contrary to what had been hypothesized, there were no significant differences between the groups with regard to celibacy, relevance of the work priests do, and opportunity for fulfillment in the priesthood. Roughly 50 percent of all the priests stated that celibacy was more than a little problem for them. About one-third stated that the relevance of the work priests did and the opportunity for fulfillment in the priesthood were more than a little problem for them. When these variables were related to the age categories previously mentioned, no significant relationships emerged, indicating that having or not having problems in these areas is related to other factors than simply being older or younger or being a first- or second-career priest.

A significantly greater number of second-career priests stated that *too little* work was more than a little problem for them. About 30 percent of them felt this way and also stated that their work in the priesthood did not make good use of their talents and abilities. Only about 10 percent of the first-career priests stated these things. When this variable was related to age, no significant relationship emerged, which could mean that a feeling of not having enough work to do in the priesthood is more related to the fact of being a second-career priest than to being older. This is one of several places in this study where indications are given that a sizable number of second-career priests feel that they are not functioning at their best, that they do not have enough challenging work to do.

Intention To Remain in the Priesthood. No significant difference emerged with regard to the question about choosing the priesthood again. Approximately 70 percent of both groups of priests said that they would "definitely" enter the priesthood again if they had their choice; approximately 20 percent said "probably," and 10 percent were "uncertain."

Roughly 95 percent of both groups said they definitely or probably would not leave the priesthood. A significantly greater number of second-career priests (52 percent vs. 32 percent) expressed this intention not to leave as "definite." When related to age, a significant relationship emerged ($X^2 = 9.13$, $df = 1$, $p .01$). This would indicate that a "definite" decision not to leave is related to the age of the priests. With the second-career priests it is probably also related to the fact that they had already made a major shift in their lives. Seven percent of both groups of priests indicated uncertainty about the future. This item replicated an item on the NORC (1971) study of priests in the United States. Table 5 indicates the manner in which the three groups of priests responded to the item.

Job Satisfaction. The difference in overall job satisfaction between the second- and first-career priests was not significant. Statistical analysis of the JDI scores did not support the hypothesis that men who chose to move

Table 5
FUTURE PLANS SCALE

Feelings about Future in the Priesthood	NORC Sample of Diocesan Priests (N=3045)	Second Career Priests (N=67)	First Career Priests (N=67)
Will definitely not leave	55%	52%	33%
Probably will not leave	32	42	60
Am uncertain about the future	10	6	7
Will probably leave	2	0	0
Have definitely decided to leave	1	0	0
	100	100	100

out of other careers into the priesthood would be significantly more satisfied with their jobs than those who came into the priesthood as a first-career. Further, none of the five scales of the JDI differed significantly between the second-career and first-career priests. The two groups followed a similar pattern of satisfaction with the different job factors. The difference within the groups was highly significant, which means that the priests who took part in this study were much more satisfied with some aspects of their jobs than with others. They were significantly less satisfied with promotion than with every other aspect of their jobs. The other factor they were least satisfied with was pay. They were most satisfied with the work itself and the people they were involved with in the work they did.

Specialists vs. Parish Priests. As hypothesized, the results of the present study support the findings of previous research that priests in special work are significantly more satisfied than those who function as parish priests. Both first- and second-career priests in special work were significantly more satisfied ($p < .05$) with their jobs than were priests who worked as associate pastors. The pattern of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with different aspects of the job was the same as that for priests in general.

Emotional Maturity. The expectation that the second-career priests might score significantly higher on the POI, and thereby give indications of a greater degree of self-actualization or maturity, was not confirmed. There was no overall significant difference on the POI, nor did the two groups differ significantly from each other on any of the various scales of the POI.

There were significant differences within the groups. The priests investigated in this study were most self-actualized with regard to self-regard

(liking oneself because of feelings of worth and strength as a person), spontaneity (freely expressing feelings behaviorally), and time-competence (living in the here and now and able to relate past and future to a meaningful present). They were least self-actualized in the areas of synergy (ability to see the opposites of life as meaningfully related) and existentiality (being flexible in the application of principles).

In general, on most of the scales of the POI the two groups of priests were close to what Shostrom regards as the norms for this instrument. When the priests were looked at in groups, there was no real evidence of poor personality development. Their scores on the POI indicate that they were a very normal group of men.

Correlations were computed between the dimensions of the JDI and the dimensions of the POI to see if any psychological traits measured by the POI might correlate with satisfaction with certain job factors. The findings did not support the idea that satisfaction with particular aspects of the job might be related to personal adjustment or psychological health. Nor was there any significant correlation between overall job satisfaction and overall psychological health. For the priests investigated in the present study, degree of job satisfaction did not seem to be related to psychological health, as that concept is measured by the POI.

Morale (Purpose in Life). Contrary to what had been hypothesized, there were no significant differences between the second- and first-career priests in mean scores on the PIL. Both groups of priests indicated a high amount of purpose in their lives. According to Crumbaugh, scores on the PIL of 113 or above are interpreted as suggesting the presence of very definite purpose or meaning in life. The mean score of the second-career priests was 119; that of the first-career priests, 117. While priests in special work had higher mean scores (119.9) than parish priests (116.9), the differences were not significant.

The priest respondents' scores on the JDI and the PIL were positively correlated, indicating that their morale was related to their satisfaction with their work. Priests who scored in the highest one-third of the JDI had significantly higher (at the .01 level) scores on the PIL than the priests who scored in the lowest one-third on the JDI.

Table 6 gives the results of the chi-squares done to ascertain if there were any significant relationships between the demographic variables on which there were significant differences between the two groups of priests and each of the job satisfaction, maturity, and morale variables.

With one degree of freedom, a chi-square of 3.87 is necessary for significance at the .05 level. Hence, there were no significant chi-squares, indicating that none of the demographic variables was significantly related to job satisfaction, maturity, or morale. The lack of any significant relationship between these variables indicates that, by and large, the first- and second-career priests were at about the same levels of job satisfaction, maturity, and morale. Functional differences with regard to the demographic variables do not seem to be masking some real differences on the satisfaction, maturity, and morale variables.

Table 6
 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DISTINGUISHING DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES
 AND THE JOB DESCRIPTIVE INDEX (JDI), PERSONAL ORIENTATION
 INVENTORY (POI), AND THE PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST (PIL)

Variable	Variable Categories	JDI		POI		PIL	
		High (N=67)	Low (N=67)	High (N=67)	Low (N=67)	High (N=67)	Low (N=67)
Family Size	1-3 Children (N=88)	33	25	31	27	38	30
	4 or More Children (N=76)	34	42	36	40	39	37
		$\chi^2 = 1.95$		$\chi^2 = .49$		$\chi^2 = .12$	
Parents' Educational Level	Less than H. S. Graduate (N=88)	48	40	48	40	46	42
	H. S. Graduate or More (N=46)	18	28	19	27	21	25
		$\chi^2 = .05$		$\chi^2 = 2.12$		$\chi^2 = .34$	
Father's Occupational Level	Upper 4 Levels (N=67)	35	32	37	30	39	28
	Lower 3 Levels (N=67)	32	35	30	37	28	39
		$\chi^2 = .27$		$\chi^2 = 1.46$		$\chi^2 = 3.61$	
Ordinal Position in Family	First or only Child (N=46)	27	19	26	20	24	22
	Later born Child (N=88)	40	48	41	47	43	45
		$\chi^2 = 2.12$		$\chi^2 = 1.19$		$\chi^2 = .13$	
Relatives in Religious Life	Yes (N=65)	28	37	30	35	27	38
	No (N=69)	39	30	37	32	40	29
		$\chi^2 = 2.42$		$\chi^2 = .75$		$\chi^2 = 3.61$	
Father Catholic	Yes (N=118)	57	61	59	59	62	56
	No (N=16)	10	6	8	8	5	11
		$\chi^2 = 1.14$		$\chi^2 = 0.0$		$\chi^2 = 2.55$	
Attend Catholic Elementary School	Yes (N=102)	48	54	47	55	50	52
	No (N=32)	19	13	20	12	17	15
		$\chi^2 = 1.48$		$\chi^2 = 2.63$		$\chi^2 = .17$	
Attend Catholic High School	Yes (N=88)	40	48	39	49	42	46
	No (N=46)	27	19	28	18	25	21
		$\chi^2 = 2.12$		$\chi^2 = 3.31$		$\chi^2 = .53$	

Note: With $df = 1$, a chi-square of 3.87 is necessary for $P < .05$.

DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire enables us to make certain demographic generalizations about second-career priests, even though some situations (e.g., not attending a Catholic elementary school and claiming to have too little work to do) apply to only a third of these priests. A second-career priest was likely to be a younger child in a large working-class Irish family. His parents probably did not graduate from high school, and his father was in a blue-collar job and his mother a housewife as he was growing up. He comes from a practicing Catholic family background, though his father may have been Protestant, and his mother probably was not as "religious" as the mother of a typical first-career priest. There is a good possibility that he did not attend a Catholic elementary or high school and was not an altar boy.

He probably graduated from college, served in the armed forces, and had one or two jobs before entering the seminary. His previous job was very likely in teaching or sales. He entered the priesthood because he wished to give more meaning to his life. He does not intend to leave the priesthood and would become a priest if he had his chance again. But despite this, he may feel that he does not have enough work to do as a priest and that the priesthood does not make good use of his talents and abilities.

The findings of this study were not consonant with the theoretical assumptions that men who enter the priesthood later in life, after having been in previous careers, would have a greater degree of job satisfaction, maturity, and morale than their younger first-career counterparts in the priesthood. At least as these variables were measured by the scales used, this did not prove to be true of the samples used in this study.

But while the study did not find that second-career priests had significantly higher levels of job satisfaction, maturity, and morale than first-career priests, it certainly did not find any evidence that would raise serious questions about the wisdom of making greater efforts to recruit priests from among older men. The findings with regard to second-career priests, like those with regard to the first-career priests, gave no real evidence of poor personality development when the priests are looked at in groups. Their scores on the POI compare favorably with most other groups on which data are available. The priests in this study did not come across as being any less mature or self-actualized than most other human beings.

Second-career priests do not appear to be a psychologically troubled group of men whose move to the priesthood could be seen as an indication of instability or fear of social failure and responsibilities. They appear to be a very normal group of men who speak of having come to the priesthood out of a sense of something missing in their previous lives, and they seem to have a sense about them that now things were in place in their lives. They are men who emphasize the pastoral and spiritual dimensions of the priestly role.

But the low scores of the priests on the pay and promotion scales of the JDI would seem to mark areas of concern for the personnel practices of the Church. It might be argued that the pay and promotion measures are of debatable value when applied to a profession such as the priesthood.

But perhaps the low levels of expressed job satisfaction in these areas ought to be considered a problem for the priesthood. Perhaps these findings should argue for a more rational system of income and promotion for priests. There really is no special psychology for priests. They too, no doubt, work more effectively when they have goals and incentives, such as the hope of attaining some kind of promotion, which is a form of status and recognition. In the present study, it is clear that the main source of job dissatisfaction among the priests was the lack of opportunities for promotion.

Echoing previous research, the present study also found that priests in parish work have significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than priests in special work. All the research on the job satisfaction of priests indicates that the level of dissatisfaction among parish priests is of disturbing proportions. Overall, parish priests appear to operate at rather low levels of industry and self-satisfaction. It would appear that there must be efforts by the Church concerning the organization of tasks and personnel so that human energies among priests can be more productively released. The evidence seems to indicate that the Church needs more priests in special ministries, not fewer. Priests need to be specialists in some areas. A priest can and should be given a more meaningful voice in his priestly work.

This study indicates a specific concern for the greater utilization of the talents and energies of men who come into the priesthood as a second career. There is evidence throughout the present study that a disturbing proportion of second-career priests feel that they are not challenged enough by their work and that their talents are not being tapped. One could speculate that perhaps the past training or experiences of these men might make them somewhat harder to please; perhaps they came to the priesthood with greater expectations than their younger peers. But a general indication in this study is that the second-career priests seemed to be ideologically satisfied with being priests but dissatisfied with some functional realities.

NOTE

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