UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

NEW WINE, *OLD* WINESKINS:

IS A SHORTAGE OF PRIESTS RE-SHAPING CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN AUSTRALIA?

A Dissertation submitted by

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Abstract

The Catholic Church globally is facing a declining number of priests, whose remaining numbers are ageing and for whom there are insufficient seminarians to provide replacements. This thesis seeks to examine the consequence of this situation for Catholic identity in the context of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba in regional Australia. Such circumstances necessitate new forms of day-to-day leadership in parish faith-communities, especially an increasing reliance upon laypeople to fulfil roles once the domain of clergy. In examining this phenomenon, this thesis draws together anthropological discourse on identity and theological insights into the particular importance of Catholicism's ordained ministers in an anthropology *of* theology. In doing so, the *liminality* of the diocese's parishioners and their experiences of *communitas* are identified and examined. Applying the analytical framework of the emerging anthropology of theology to the findings of fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork, this work addresses the question 'Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia?' concluding that this phenomenon *is* re-shaping the identity of Toowoomba's Catholics.

CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Signature of Candidate   Date

ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Supervisor   Date

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God is the centre of my life and no work of my hands will ever be anything less than a gift from God and for God. Therefore, I offer this work of my hands to my Father in Heaven, my brother and Saviour the Christ, and to my guiding Spirit in gratitude for my life, health, happiness and the opportunity to take this journey.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research focuses on the way in which 'on-the-ground' Catholics in one of Australia's dioceses – the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba – are experiencing, and responding to, the present decline in the numbers of clergy available to serve in parishes (also called a shortage of priests). Further, I examine the impact that this phenomenon may have on the ritual life of Toowoomba's Catholics and upon their identity as Catholics, in light of fifteen months ethnographic fieldwork throughout this diocese and through the body of literature related to this subject. This chapter outlines the background to this investigation, explains the purpose of the research, identifies the significance of the topic and provides the key research questions addressed before concluding with an outline of the dissertation's contents.

Background

The Catholic Church is facing a dilemma – globally the number of Catholics is growing while the number of priests and the number of vocations to the priesthood is declining. In some places, the ratio of priest to parishioners is growing while in other places the availability of priests is declining or absent. In Australia, the population of Catholics is growing while its clergy is ageing and declining in numbers. As a result, many dioceses are facing the problem of insufficient clergy to meet the needs of parishes.

This great schism of the sixteenth century Reformation saw the Catholic Church begin to place greater emphasis upon the central role of the sacraments, in order to distinguish itself from the new Protestant Churches whose focus was on using the

Word of God, the Bible, to form a personal relationship with God. In the new Churches the way to salvation was through personal effort and scriptural study rather than through the sacramental actions of the Church and its clergy. Retaining its sacramental nature, the Catholic Church requires that all sacraments, whenever possible, be celebrated within the context of a Eucharistic Mass over which only an ordained minister may preside. Therefore, membership of a Catholic parish community and self-identification as a Catholic is linked to access to, and reception of, the sacraments, primarily through the ritual actions of a priest.

Purpose of the Study

With such an emphasis on the sacramentality of ritual practice, the loss of a resident priest-pastor may have a significant impact on both the sacramentality of the Catholic Church itself and individuals' identity as Catholic Christians. This project seeks to explore the problem of maintaining identity when a key component of that identity is absent – in this case, when access to the sacraments (a fundamental component of this identity) is restricted due to the absence of a resident parish priest as pastor.

This thesis asks the question 'Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia?' It does so by examining the significance of the ordained minister to Catholic ritual, in the universal and Australian Catholic Church, in order to highlight how their absence may impact upon the lives of Australian Catholics. As the interdependence between religion and identity, as well as the means by which religious identity is constructed, is of particular interest to this project, 'identity' is also explored – through the perspectives of the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon*

Law, the insights of theologians, the Australian Catholic Church, my own insights as a fully initiated Latin Catholic and the discipline of anthropology.

Significance of the topic

There exists a broad body of literature about the universal Catholic Church and, within that, the Australian Catholic Church; the shortage of priests; and Catholic identity. In examining this corpus, drawn from anthropology, history, theology and other disciplines five broad categories were identified and the literature within each surveyed – the Anthropology of Religion, the Catholic Church, Identity, Methodology and Theory. Importantly, I have identified current gaps in knowledge within the first three categories. Although early anthropological interest in 'religion' (Durkheim 1912, Geertz 1966, Malinowski 1926 and Tylor 1871) was in the religious beliefs and practices encountered during the Age of Exploration – those seen as 'exotic' or 'primitive' or 'other' – more recently, anthropology has identified and examined 'world religions' – Islam, Christianity, Judaism – both in specific national or cultural settings and in cross-cultural, migrant communities. This more recent work includes that of Angrosino (1994), Eipper (2007), Gocking (2009), Manning (2008), Stein and Stein (2008), Watling (2001) and Winzeler (2008). As this project's field of study is the Catholic Church – in Australia – it is a study of a World Religion. Fenella Cannell's 2006 *The Anthropology of Christianity* is a key work marking a shift within the 'anthropology of religion' to an 'anthropology of Christianity' with the work by Allerton (2009), Bullard (1998), Garelli (2007), Hann (1997) and Michaud (2004) falling into this category, as does this project.

Of more interest to this project is the way in which anthropologists have engaged with Catholicism 'on-the-ground', through ethnographic studies of parishes or churches in sites throughout the world, or of Catholic rituals in multi-sited studies or individual parishes. This extensive body of work includes that of Angrosino (1994), Badone (2007), Baeva and Valtichinova (2009), Bates (1982), Bullard (1998), Burdick (1993), Carroll (1986), Eipper (2007), Galbraith (2000), Gocking (2009), Hamington (1995), Hermkens (2007), Karamihova and Galia (2009), Michaud (2004), Orsy (1985), Taylor, L.J. (1995), Taylor, W. (1987), Van Dijk (2001), Van Rensburg (2005),Warner (1978, Watling (2001), Wiegele (2005) and Wolf (1958), with these works representing ethnographies and anthropological analysis of Catholic parishes, community groups, religious practices and other aspects of Catholicism. There also exists comparative work, such as that of Van Rensburg (2005) who compares the process of transplanting an ethnic religious community to new settings in Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in South Africa, as well as their respective responses to segregation and apartheid.

Aspects of Catholic laity (Muldoon 2008, Pope 2004a, Rowthorn 1986), religious sisters (nuns) (Aquinas 1967; Claussen 2001; Gilfeather 1977; Krueger, Wilson, Shah, Tan & Bennett 2006; MacGinley 1994; Orsy 1996; Petersen & Takayama 1983; West 1994; Wilson, Bienias, Evans & Bennett 2004; Wittberg 1989), priesthood and who is ordained (Dallen 1994, Donovan 1997, Groome 2002, Lane 2005, Rowthorn 1986, Wilson 2008), priestly celibacy (Anderson 2007; Collins 2008; Ditewig 2009; Donovan 1997; Doyle 2007, 2006; Frazee 1988, 1972; Greeley 2004; Hastings 2008; Hoge 1987; McGillion & O'Carroll 2011; Schoenherr 2002; Sipe 2008; Stephey 2009; Worcester 2011), the ongoing impact of the Second Vatican Council (Berger 2008, Ebaugh 2009, Greeley 1982, Haight 2008, Hughson

2008, Hoge 1986, Houtart 1968, Küng & Swidler 1986, Lösel 2008, McGeoch 2009, Murphy 1987, Swidler 1986, Tanner 2009, Walf 1986, Wicks 2009, Williams 1987), and the future of the Catholic Church have all been explored by various disciplines. A particular focus of this project is the role of the laity, in light of a declining number of priests in much of the Catholic world and in the Diocese of Toowoomba in the Australian Catholic Church, in particular.

In his Introduction to the edited volume *Catholic Identity and the Laity*, Tim Muldoon (2009) discusses the relatively recent development of the Church's approach to the 'laity'. He explains the historical development of the clergy-laity distinction in the inter-conciliar years between the First and Second Vatican Councils, and then discusses how the laity has been included in post-conciliar documents. Also representative of the kinds of work undertaken on the laity are those of Rowthorn (1986) and Pope (2004), which represent the broadly general and the highly specific respectively. A non-ordained laywoman in the Episcopal Church, Anne Rowthorn (1986) draws on the works of others as well as her own experience to discuss the laity in Christianity, to review the rise of the distinction between the ordained and laity and to explore the ways in which the laity should 'rise up' to reclaim their ministerial roles. In contrast, Stephen Pope's 2004 book focuses on Catholic Church governance and clergy-laity relations in light of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States, from 2002 onwards.

Although illustrative of the studies that have been done on laity, neither is anthropological in focus, indicative of a knowledge gap that this project seeks to address. A particular focus of this project is the role of the laity in light of a declining number of priests in much of the Catholic world, and in the Diocese of

Toowoomba in the Australian Catholic Church, in particular. This project examines the kinds of roles lay women and men may undertake in the Australian Catholic Church today; an issue, while not new to the universal Catholic Church, is a recent development in the Australian Church for which there is a paucity of literature. The future of the Catholic Church, especially in response to the increasingly frequent experience of ageing clergy and decreasing numbers of seminarians, has been examined extensively by theologians, historians and sociologists, but *not* by anthropologists. As few of these works focus on the *Australian* Catholic Church, they are useful for outlining how this shortage of priests has already been studied in different geographic locations and by various disciplinary means, but highlight a further gap in the current body of knowledge, which this project seeks to address by focussing on the Catholic Church in Australia.

In response to these shortages of active clergy for parish and other ministries, bishops throughout the world have had to choose between sharing existing priests between parishes, either through the clustering or merging of parishes; closing parishes; or assigning a non-ordained layperson/s the role of 'pastor'. The existing body of work on this emerging trend is small in nature and dominated by theological and liturgical approaches. The studies of this phenomenon in the Chilean Catholic Church by Katherine Gilfeather (1977) and in the United States by Zeni Fox (2002), Peter Gilmour (1986), Dean Hoge (1987), Philip Murnion and David DeLambo (1999) and Richard Schoenherr (2002) exemplify how the focus of much of the study of this emerging trend has been of who, where, when, why it has occurred in specific locations, rather than a broad contextualisation within a disciplinary framework, such as anthropology. In her two books, *They Call Her Pastor: A New Role for Catholic Women* (1992) and *They Call Him Pastor: Married Men in Charge*

of Catholic Parishes (2003), sociologist Ruth Wallace also examined this phenomenon over the past twenty years, in the U.S.A. Her work thus illustrates that the primary focus has been and continues to be the unfolding of this phenomenon in the Catholic Church of America, indicating a further gap in the present body of knowledge that this project also seeks to address.

While there exists a gap in the existing body of literature on the Catholic Church with reference to the *Australian* Catholic Church, it cannot be said that the Australian Church has not been examined; merely, that the *responses* to the priest shortage *in Australia* have not been examined. For the last twenty years established theologians and historians such as Paul Collins (2008, 1998, 1991, 1987), Michael Gilchrist (2006, 1987, 1986) and Christopher McGillion (2011, 2003) have looked at contemporary Australian Catholicism in an attempt to envisage its future.

Identity is a key marker of how an individual interacts with the world around them, with notions of identity being of great interest to many disciplines, including psychology, business administration, political science, sociology (Cerulo 1997), history (Buckser 1999, Friedman 1994), religious studies (Duderija 2008) and anthropology (Hoffstaedter 2011, Smedley 1998, Sökefield 1999). Multi-disciplinary approaches are typified by those of Polzer (2003) that includes business, business administration and psychology; Castells (2004) that focuses on technological approaches; and Rutherford (1990). The way in which identity is formulated, shaped, influenced and altered has been explored by each of these disciplines, as well as many more.

An aspect of identity-construction particularly relevant to this project is the process of 'othering'. 'Othering' refers to the way in which an individual distinguishes those

who are different from themself, whether ethnically, linguistically, culturally or ideologically. Among the body of work to look at 'othering' is that of Abu-Lughod (1991), Hage (1998), Saniotis (2004) and Said (2003). Also of relevance to this project is the way in which Christian identity, and within that Catholic identity, has been examined, particularly with reference to the impact (positive or negative) upon Catholic identity of the loss of a resident priest-pastor. Thus, the exploration of Catholic identity by historians (Greinacher 1994), experts on *Canon Law* (Provost 1994, Walf 1994), theologians (Dallen 1994, Donovan 1997, Muldoon 2009) and others (Birmelé 1994, Dillon 1999, King 1994) is of significance. These examples of the ways in which 'Catholic' identity have been examined range from personal explorations by young women, as elicited by Kate Dugan and Jennifer Owen's website/blog 'From the Pews in the Back' (2009); sociologist Michelle Dillon's examination of the creation of Catholic identity by marginalised American Catholics (1999); catechetical writings by a Catholic Archbishop, Rembert Weakland (1985), written for his 'flock'; a theological discussion of what Catholic identity is by Daniel Donovan (1997) and a discussion of the impact upon Catholic identity of the absence of a priest-pastor by James Dallen (1994).

 To address the issues surrounding the declining number of active clergy in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, including the increasing reliance upon lay leadership, Victor Turner's discussion of transitioning is utilised, particular his concepts of *liminality* and *communitas* (Lewis 2008; St John 2008b; Starkloff 1997; Turnbull 1990; Turner, E. 2008; Turner, V. 1992a, 1992b, 1982, 1969a, 1969b). These concepts are discussed alongside a number of anthropological approaches, including the 'anthropology of religion', the 'anthropology of Christianity' and the emerging 'anthropology *of* theology'.

Just as Turner suggests that the rites of passage of small-scale societies place *liminaries* into a social limbo betwixt-and-between the established, culturally recognised states they once held and the roles they are about to hold, the transitional nature of the experiences of Toowoomba's parishioners also make them neither-this-nor-that. Through the application of Victor Turner's notions of *liminality* and *communitas*, the transitional (and transformational) nature of these experiences is highlighted. Further, as the Catholic parishes and people of this diocese *transition* from what once was (normative leadership model of a parish priest) to something new (sharing a priest or lay leadership) new forms of communities – *communitas* and *normative communitas* – are emerging in this threshold place.

The anthropology of religion's early focus was on formulating a definition of 'religion' in analytical, functional, essentialist or other terms; and on categorising what was deemed to be 'religion' in evolutionary, functionalist, Marxist, interpretive, psychosocial and other terms. While this initial concentration upon the definition and classification of 'religion' provides an important foundation upon which to base study of any religious practice the anthropology of religion has more recently turned its interest towards identifying the purpose of religion and to examining the real-world beliefs, customs and rituals of religion through the development of theoretical frameworks, drawing on the evolutionary, functionalist, essentialist, phenomenological, structuralist, Marxist and Freudian theories of Tylor, Durkheim, Malinowski, Weber, Radcliffe-Brown, Geertz, Lévi-Strauss, Marx and Freud. It is this more recent interest that places this ethnographic case study of the lives and communities of several parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, that together represent an emerging leadership trend in the broader Catholic Church, within the framework of the anthropology of religion while also moving into the

more recent anthropology of Christianity, as proposed by the likes of Cannell (2006). The anthropology of Christianity seeks to redress an imbalance between anthropology's Judeo-Christian roots and its eschewing of the theological foundations upon which it developed. It is within this emergent anthropology of Christianity that this project can be placed; thus contributing further to the development of this field.

Anthropologists engaged in this emerging field of research are turning to specifically Christian topics, practices and fieldsites to examine its local and global enculturation, as well as the experiences of its adherents in numerous geographical, historical, ethnic and denomination settings. In doing so, the complex historical and theoretical relationship between anthropology and theology is being highlighted; what Robbins (2006) called an 'awkward relationship'. In this project the concerns of theologians regarding the declining numbers of priests ('priestless-ness') and the resultant loss of access to the Eucharist ('Eucharistless-ness') are merged with anthropological discourse on the formation, maintenance and transmission of 'identity' and the 'on-the-ground' insights of ethnographic fieldwork to ascertain what the impact of these experiences are upon the Catholic identity of the people of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. In bringing these disciplines together this project lays within the emerging anthropology of theology called for by Adams and Salamone (2000, 1997), Glazier (2000), Klass (2000, 1997), Milbank (2006), Taylor (2000), Turner (1997) and others. In examining a religious issue (Eucharistless-ness) in a religion (Catholicism) practiced in a modern population (regional Australia) (Adams 1997:13) while drawing on the insights of other disciplines (most notably theology) this project fulfils the definition given to the anthropology of theology.

In addition to contributing to the emerging anthropologies of Christianity and of theology, this research project can also be placed within the broad corpus related to the universal Catholic Church and the Australian Church in particular, the decline in the numbers of active clergy available to serve in parishes in Australia and elsewhere, Catholic identity and anthropological explorations of identity. In examining this literature a number of shortcomings were identified relating to the study of the phenomenon of the shortage of priests and resultant use of lay leadership in Catholic parishes in the Australian Catholic Church:

- That present studies of the laity and the shortage of priests do not include anthropological approaches.

- That the existing body of work on this emerging trend is small in nature and dominated by theological and liturgical approaches.

- That there exist few current works on the Australian Catholic Church.

- That there exists a paucity of literature on the Catholic Church within the emerging anthropology of Christianity and anthropology of theology.

Research questions

As stated, this research addresses one key research question: Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia? In asking this question, other questions arise relating to the creation and maintenance of identity, specifically the problem of maintaining an identity when a key component of identity construction is absent; the nature of the priesthood in the Catholic Church including the consequences of the present shortage for today's priests; and Church governance when the ecclesial model is being sustained by non-ordained laity. It is the *new* wine of lay leadership

being poured into the *old* wineskins of the normative clerical parish leadership model that is of particular significance to this research, as it is facilitating the development of new ways of being Catholic in twenty-first century Australia.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the background to this research into the way in which Catholics of the Diocese of Toowoomba are experiencing, and responding to, the present shortage of priests, explained the purpose of this investigation as examining the impact of this phenomenon on the Catholic identity of these individuals, identified the significance of the topic in light of literature and ethnographic fieldwork, and provided the key research questions addressed by this research. In the following chapters the question 'Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia?' is addressed.   In chapter two (Identifying the problem) the 'shortage of priests' is examined in light of the special significance that the ordained minister plays within Catholicism's ritual practice. In chapter three (Identity) Australian Catholic identity is defined in light of the Catholic Church's historically, theologically and legally developed definition of 'Catholic identity', Australian identityand anthropology's approaches to identity. The framework for the methodological practices engaged during the project's fieldwork research is outlined in chapter four (Methodology) and the theoretical framework applied to the data gathered therein is outlined in chapter five (Betwixt-and-Between). Chapter six provides a Discussion of Results, with chapter seven providing Conclusions and outlining future research directions.

Chapter two: Identifying the problem: a shortage of priests

Introduction

As a sacramental church, the Catholic Church requires that all sacraments, whenever possible, be celebrated within the context of a Eucharistic Mass, as it 'is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it' (*Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus, Acta Apostolicae Sedis: Code of Canon Law 1983*. 1983: canon 897). With such a heavy emphasis placed upon the ritual/liturgical life of the Church, an ordained priest as the means to adhere to this requirement is central. According to the Church's *Code of Canon Law*, the only person authorised to preside at this 'summit and source' of Christian life is a validly ordained priest. Therefore, his absence prevents a faith-community from celebrating Eucharist.

This distinction between 'priest' and the lay faithful/'priesthood of the baptised' developed over the history of the Church and led to a 'clergification' of its structures and practices. This high degree of clericalism existed throughout the universal Church as well as here in Australia. Also present across the universal Church was a swell in priestly numbers and the global Catholic population in the middle of the twentieth century, followed by an ongoing decline in the numbers of clergy available to serve the expanding Catholic population. In the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba this period of growth saw not only the number of priests swell, but also the establishment of numerous parishes, schools and Church agencies. Like elsewhere, however, since that time there has been a reduction in both vocations to the priesthood and the numbers of priests available to meet the needs of the diocese's faith communities. The consequences of being 'priestless' – without an ordained

minister as parish priest – for the ritual practices of these communities has seen the introduction of non-Eucharist worship services led by laypeople. The reliance upon these Lay-Led Liturgies is one aspect of the *Canon Law* options currently available to the episcopate when faced with a shortage of priests: the others being to combine faith-communities into 'mega-parishes', to have one priest serving two or more parishes, to assign a layperson to the everyday leadership of a community or to close a parish (an option not exercised in the Toowoomba diocese) (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 517.1, 517.2). Another option is the importing of priests from overseas, with the restoration of the permanent diaconate also available, though these ordained men are not priests so cannot meet the entire shortfall. Options widely discussed but forbidden by Church Law are the ending of mandatory celibacy, the welcoming of married men back to active ministry and the ordination of women.

Centrality of priest to Catholic ritual life: the importance of the Eucharist

Christianity's Great Schism of the sixteenth century Reformation saw the Catholic Church begin to place greater emphasis upon the central role of the sacraments, in order to distinguish itself from the new Protestant churches whose focus was on using the Word of God, the Bible, to form a personal relationship with God (Birmelé 1994, Donovan 1997:124, Rowthorn 1986). In the new churches the way to salvation was through personal effort and scriptural study rather than through the sacramental actions of the Church and its clergy as was the case in the Catholic Church of that time. At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church restored the importance of sacred scripture within its central sacramental celebration, a

Eucharistic Mass, laying equal emphasis on its two central components – the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In Catholic Church tradition, there are seven sacraments – the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Eucharist {Communion}), Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Orders (Ordination), Marriage, Anointing of the Sick (includes Viaticum {Last Rites}) – with all only able to be performed by an ordained minister – a priest or, for some sacraments, a deacon. In dioceses where the permanent diaconate has been restored (if not, seminarians are ordained deacons in the transitional diaconate as a step towards ordination) a deacon may confer baptism and marriage but only a priest can celebrate the Eucharist (Mass), confer absolution through Reconciliation and provide absolution through the Anointing of the Sick. Bishops confer ordination – to the diaconate, the priesthood, and to a bishop's seat (including the Bishop of Rome).

Thus, the Catholic Church has three levels of ordained person – deacon, priest and bishop (with 'cardinal' and 'pope' as honorific titles) – and two types of layperson – a professed religious sister or religious brother (for example, Sisters of Mercy, Christian Brothers) and a non-professed layperson (married or single men and women). Any baptised Catholic can administer baptism in an emergency (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 861.2) and a bishop has the authority to authorise a non-ordained layperson to perform the following duties that are otherwise restricted to an ordained person – confer baptism, preside at a Sunday Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service in the absence of a priest, proclaim the Gospel during a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word service and to be in charge of a Catholic parish in the absence of a priest (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 517.1, 517.2, 526.1). Canon 900.1 makes

it clear that *only* an ordained minister, that is a priest, can preside at a celebration of the Eucharist – 'The minister who is able to confect the sacrament of the Eucharist in the person of Christ is a validly ordained priest alone' (*Code of Canon Law*).

The gathering together of a faith community can take place in many ways – a parish fete, an annual dance, a Christmas barbeque – but it is only in the celebration of the Eucharist that its identity as a *Catholic* Christian community is truly signified. Today, it is a conscious choice to participate in a parish or worshipping community, in order to live out one's baptismal calling and to participate in, and receive, the Eucharist (Donovan 1997:193). Ordained priests are 'essential in the Catholic Tradition in the celebration of eucharist [*sic*]' (Ranger 2010:36) as the only individuals able to consecrate bread and wine, so that it is transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. In turn, coming forward to receive the Body and Blood of Christ (the blessed bread and wine of Communion) transforms parishioners *into* the Body and Blood of Christ in the world (Christ's followers active in the wider community).

'In one form or another, the eucharist (*sic*) or the Mass has always been at the centre of Catholic life' (Donovan 1997:105) with 'worship, Mass and the Sacraments, the very heart of the church, and a defining element of what it means to be Catholic' (Collins 2008:6). Whether deemed an orthodox or progressive Catholic or on the fringes of the Church 'the Eucharist is core to … Catholics, is personally salient to their major life events (weddings, funerals, reunion Masses, war experiences), and is *the* public and geographically global celebration of Catholicism which enacts the historical continuity of today's Catholics with an "unbroken" (but multifaceted) tradition' (Dillon 1999:216). Given the centrality of this liturgical action to Catholic

identity, many theologians argue that 'in no other way can [Catholics] experience their identity and mission so powerfully [with] … communities deprived of the eucharist ... deprived of the strongest sacrament of their source of life (Dallen 1994:71, 137).

Across the world Catholics gather together in communities large and small to participate in this central ritual of their faith because, through its liturgical action, they are united with the Catholics of the Church's twenty-two Catholic Churches and part of a communion of saints stretching back through time to the apostles and to Christ Himself. So important is the Eucharistic celebration that the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* says the 'eucharistic sacrifice … is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life …. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 897). Since the 'authentic Catholic tradition surely revolves around the regular, ideally weekly, celebration of eucharist [*sic*] *within* each community (Ranger 2010:46), the absence of 'a validly ordained priest' prevents a Catholic community from celebrating 'the summit and source' of their faith-life (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 897, 900).

> The eucharist [*sic*] clearly constitutes the centre of the liturgical life of the church. Everything else flows to it or flows from it [because] the Mass or the eucharist [*sic*] is at the heart of Catholic Christianity. Participation in it marks the culmination of the initiation process. Catholics have always put a great emphasis on the Mass even when it was celebrated in a language that most people did not understand in a way that emphasised the role of the clergy … [R]eflective and loving participation in the eucharist (*sic*) remains for most Catholics the single most important way in which [to] celebrate and renew and deepen [their] faith and [their] Christian life (Donovan 1997:105, 195).

As one parishioner of the Toowoomba diocese put it, 'I see the Mass as everything' (Glen, Interview 26th June 2011).

There is much more to the life of a Catholic community than its gathering to celebrate Eucharist, the vast majority of which is also dependent upon the presence of an ordained priest. The broader sacramental life of a parish is also impacted by his absence, including parishioners' access to the other sacraments of the church regularly accessed by individuals and families during their lifetimes – baptism, marriage and funerals. While the non-ordained laity are more and more accepting of the involvement of laypeople in these ministries, particularly in the preparation of parents and godparents for a child's baptism, couples for marriageand aiding the bereaved to prepare funeral liturgies respectively, the presence of an ordained minister is still preferred. While any baptised Catholic can perform the rite of baptism in an emergency (a life-threatening situation) (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 861.2) and a layperson can lead a funeral-like prayer service, the Church's norms and a common expectation of its adherents is to have these sacraments conferred by a priest because '[f]or its entire history Catholicism has always been a liturgical, worshipping community with the celebration of baptism, Eucharist and the sacraments at the centre of its life. The core ministry of the priest is to provide those celebrations' (Collins 2008:76).

History of priesthood

The first Christian writings are the epistles of Saul-Paul whose greetings in these letters – 'to all the beloved of God in Rome' (Romans 1:7), 'to the churches of Galatia' (Galatians 1:3), 'to the holy ones who are (in Ephesus) faithful in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 1:1-2), 'to all the holy ones in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and ministers' (Philippians 1:2), 'to Timothy, my true child in

faith' (1 Timothy 1:2) and 'to Philemon, our beloved and our co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church at your house' (Philemon 1:1-2) – indicates the lack of hierarchy and structure of the Church's early years. Thus, in the early Church there was no distinct class of people who would remotely resemble today's ordained ministers, for 'the priesthood as we know it today did not emerge as a separate ministry in the Church until the fourth century' (Collins 1987:79); rather, it was initially just one more sect within Judaism and operated within house-churches where the local faithful would gather to share stories of faith and break bread together. This priesthood of the community which began with St Paul led to the acknowledgement of presbyters from within the community as part of an apostolic succession (Rowthorn 1986:13-18). It was the late third/early fourth century development of a clerical class (Dallen 1994:109-111; Rowthorn 1986:7), as the Christian community began to spread through the then known world and to increase in numbers, that saw local leaders chosen within each community to guide and direct that community.

Over time, this distinct group began to form as 'presbyters', 'ministers' and 'episkopos' who were charged with the guidance and leadership of distinct Christian communities that were centred around a specific location – Rome, Antioch, Colossae – and would adhere to the rules established by these leaders. In the first century, Ignatius of Antioch distinguished *episkopos* from presbyters and deacons as the established centre of Church unity that was 'directly modelled on God's relationship with the world in Christ, with the Bishop (*episkopos*) corresponding to God, the deacons to Christ and the presbyters to the apostles' (McLaughlin 1998:141). The terms 'layperson' and 'priest' are first recorded as used by Clement of Rome in C.E. 95 to describe the ordinary membership of the church (Rowthorn 1986:7). 'The

division between cleric and layperson has no basis in the New Testament. It emerged in the late Roman period and it has led to the clergy subsuming the whole of ministry to themselves' (Collins 1987:60). Collegiality was the norm in the New Testament church where 'elders' were equal, with bishops (leaders of larger, local communities) also equal in a brotherly fellowship (Fox 2002:213). The foundation of ministry in the early New Testament Church was a charism or call by the Holy Spirit, with no strict demarcation of functions and nothing specifically reserved for one group (Collins 1998:140).

When the Roman Emperor Constantine became a Christian, these once-persecuted Christian communities were able to develop much more rapidly and in this period a distinct clerical class began to emerge, through absolute ordinations that separated clergy from laypeople (Rowthorn 1986:21). 'The development of a clerical class, as early as the fourth century, also resulted in the devaluation of the New Testament understanding of the "Priesthood of All Believers", the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ and the ministering community of the faithful without rank' (Rowthorn 1986:7). Thus house-church communities gave way to more clearly defined *C*hurches, including the construction of church buildings – chapels, shrines, basilicas and cathedrals throughout the then known world. Even so, mono-episcopacy (a single bishop in charge of an area) was not widespread, existing primarily in Syria and Asia Minor; instead, a group of presbyters would lead, as they did in Rome up until the middle of the second century (Swidler 1986:308). As the official church of the state, the Christian community became Romanised and increasingly hierarchical in structure (Rowthorn 1986) resulting in a division between clerics and laypeople, particularly in the late Roman period (Collins 1987:68, Collins 1998:140). That said, 'the election of bishops by clergy and people

remained in effect until the twelfth century – over half the present span of Christianity. … In fact, as late as the start of the twentieth century less than half the world's bishops were directly named by the pope' (Swidler 1986:310).

In the medieval period further development occurred in this distinctively Catholic understanding of the ordained ministry, with the category of priesthood, *sacerdotium* becoming increasingly central. Related to the sacraments and more specifically the Eucharist (Mass), by the Carolingian era liturgy became the work of the priest who then became *the* person empowered to offer Mass and the sacraments (Dallen 1994:114, Donovan 1997:124). This clergy-lay distinction continued to develop for the next thousand years, with the Council of Trent's reactions to the European Reformation solidifying this clergy-lay distinction, by emphasising the central importance and dominance of the ordained cleric over the laypeople.

The first Vatican Council was led by Pope Pius IX in 1869-1870 (Bokenkotter 1985:111-112, Donovan 1997:127) to respond to liberalism and modernism, and did so by focussing all three functions of the Church (teaching/doctrinal, *ordo*/ celebration of sacraments, jurisdiction/government) in the Pontiff and the curia (Collins 1998:63). There was no discussion of the laity at this time and there remained no serious discussion for more than a century (Muldoon 2008:3) until the Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959 (Collins 1998: 72, 1987:13). Also referred to as Vatican II, it opened on 11 October 1962 and brought together all the world's bishops and the superiors-general of all religious orders of priests in two sessions between October 1962 and December 1965, with the latter led by Pope Paul VI following the death of Pope John XXIII (Bokenkotter 1985: 29-30, 85-87; Collins 1998:74-81, 1987:18, 20, 49; Donovan

1997:51-52, 128-131, 145-147; Hill 1989:49-51). The Second Vatican Council was the largest council in the Church's history, with 2 640 voting participants, the vast majority of whom were bishops, including the 156 superiors general of clerical religious orders (Collins 1987:18-21, 1998:73-74). Four sessions over the next three years (13th October-5th December 1962, 29th September-4th December 1963, 14th September-21st November 1964, 14th September-8th December 1965) were overseen first by Pope John XXIII then, following his death on 3rd June 1963, Pope Paul VI (Bokenkotter 1985: 29-30, 85-87; Collins 1998:74-81, 1987:18, 20, 49; Donovan 1997:51-52, 128-131, 145-147; Hill 1989:49-51). During those years the issues discussed included reform of the liturgy, including the development of a vernacular liturgy; the nature of the Church, including the collegiality of bishops, the restoration of the permanent diaconate and the role of the laity; Christian unity and ecumenism; religious liberty, giving emphasis to the Church's historical anti-Semitism; the Church in the modern world; the ministry of priests and religious, including discussion of obligatory clerical celibacy; Christian education; the Eastern Churches; the sacrament of marriage, especially 'mixed marriages' (between Catholics and non-Catholics); and artificial contraception and birth control (Collins 1987, 1998).

The documents promulgated from Vatican II called for the 'fully conscious, and active participation' of the laity in the liturgy and life of the Catholic Church (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1963:14). Among these are the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*; the *Constitution on the Church*, the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, the *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, the *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*, the *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, the *Declaration on Relations With Non-Christian Religions*, *On Divine Revelation* and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the*

Modern World (Fox 2002:235-247). Also important are many of the post-conciliar

documents applying and expanding the reforms of the Second Vatican Council,

issued between 1963 and 1981, such as the *Constitution on the New Roman Missal* in

1969 and the *Constitution on the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick* in 1972

(Vatican 2009).   Theologians, sociologists, historians, clergy and various

commentators, both Catholic and non-Catholic have written about Vatican II. Its

historical development, its theological and liturgical ramifications, the role of

politics, and its impact upon the wider world, are but a few of the ways in which this

important event has been discussed. Both in the initial years following the Council's

conclusion through to the present day, the Second Vatican Council has been

examined by the likes of Berger (2008), Ebaugh (2009), Greeley (1982), Haight

(2008), Hughson (2008), Hoge (1986), Houtart (1968), Küng and Swidler (1986),

Lösel (2008), McGeoch (2009), Murphy (1987), Swidler (1986), Tanner (2009),

Walf (1986), Wicks (2009) and Williams (1987).

Terms like the 'priesthood of the faithful' were applied to *all* the baptised faithful,

not just those ordained, with all called to be 'priests, prophets and kings' (Donovan

1997:131, *Lumen Gentium* 1964:10). *Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the*

Apostolate of the Laity, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on

November 18, 1965, stated that the Catholic laity, the vast majority of the Church,

was to manifest the sacramental work of the Holy Spirit in the world through their

shared faith life (*Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity,*

Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965 1965,

Muldoon 2008:4). Another Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic*

Constitution on the Church, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on

November 21, 1964, refers to 'the common priesthood of the faithful and the

ministerial or hierarchical priesthood [as] nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ' (*Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964* 1964:10). Thus, 'the Council reclaimed for Catholics the "priesthood of all believers" … and reaffirmed that all the baptised are called to holiness of life' (Groome 2002:118). Later, in 1988, Blessed Pope John Paul II's *Christifideles Laici: On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Bishops, to Priests and Deacons, to Women and Men Religious and to All the Lay Faithful* further discussed this by saying the laity were integral to the Church's mission in the world (John Paul II 1988, Muldoon 2008:5). In this sense, all baptised Catholics are priests, called to live out their baptismal calling within the faith-life of the Church, be it Latin, Melkite, Ukrainian, Ruthenian or one of the other Catholic Churches.

A key area of discussion of Vatican II has been the ways in which the hope it inspired in a generation of Catholics has been purportedly 'wasted' or 'squandered'. As the initial, visible reforms became settled, such as the move to celebrating the Eucharist in the vernacular language of the local church, people turned their attention to more specific changes that were suggested by the various documents of the Council. However, in the forty years since the Council's close, many of these hopes have soured, with these disappointments expressed in numerous works, as exemplified by Hans Küng and Leonard Swidler's *The Church in Anguish: Has the Vatican Betrayed Vatican II?*, in which the then 'new' pontificate of Blessed Pope John Paul II is discussed in light of the Second Vatican Council, questioning whether or not the spirit of the Council has/had been ignored or betrayed. In various essays

contributors discuss the way in which various (named) theologians had been vilified and punished, the disproportionate influence of the Roman Curia, the history of Catholic dissent and its role in dialogue, the 1983 new *Code of Canon Law* and other related topics. Swidler's concluding essay in this anthology of essays examines the way in which dissent has always been an acceptable part of Catholic moral and theological thought and that it is necessary in the process of dialogue. He begins with an historical overview of consensus decision making, from the New Testament/early Christian communities, and how that morphed, much later, into the autocratic, centralised process of today. Historical references to lay participation in this process provide some background to the present shift *back to* lay involvement as examined by this project.

Clergification

'The early Christian communities knew no distinction among their members that would remotely correspond to our contemporary understanding of the difference between ordained priests and the laity' (Wilson 2008:38). There is, therefore, a difference between 'clergy' and 'priesthood' and there are ways in which clericalism and 'clergification' (Wilson 2008) cause problems for the priesthood of the faithful. 'Priest' in the Catholic tradition refers to a man who has entered Holy Orders, who is the community leader for a body of the faithful, usually in a parish faith-community, whose responsibilities include liturgical presiding as the canonically designated leader with the church community (Wilson 2008:41-42). It is 'a religious term, pointing us to the transcendent or numinous or sacred dimension of life, to the holy' (Wilson 2008:xv). It is differentiated from the 'priest' encompassed within the

'priesthood of the faithful' by also being deemed a member of the 'clergy', 'a sociological term that names the fact that society recognises a certain segment of its members as having recognisable social features and norms that distinguish them from the rest of society' (Wilson 2008:xv). Possessing 'sound doctrine and integrity of morals' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 521.2) Catholic clergy are distinguished from the Catholic laity by virtue of their consecrated life, including celibacy and the responsibility/authority to preside at Eucharist.

Ordination to Holy Orders 'establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers through an *indelible character* (my emphasis) which marks them' as 'able to confect the sacrament of the Eucharist in the person of Christ' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 1008, 900.1). Hence, ordained 'is essentially different from baptismal, not by reason of honour or status, but because of the unique service to the Church that only those ordained can perform' (Weakland 1985:22).

> There are, it seems, two conflicting and not easily reconciled theologies of priesthood in the contemporary church. One theology, officially espoused at Vatican II, gives primacy to the pastoral role of bishops and priests. Bishops and priests are pastors, and their sacramental role flows from their role as pastors.
>
> … The other theology, a holdover from the past, regards priests as cultic functionaries (with the power of orders) who may incidentally have a pastoral role (with the power of jurisdiction). Lay pastors are distinguished from priest pastors only by the fact that lay pastors lack the power to preside at the eucharist [*sic*] and at reconciliation. They are denied ordination – prescinding from the issue of women's ordination – because they are not celibate.
>
> … Admittedly, the two mutually inconsistent theologies can both be found in the compromise documents of Vatican II. … In subsequent ecclesiastical documents, however, this "power of orders" or cultic theology has again been emphasised, and, as an expression of clericalism, it is at the root of a dilemma (Dallen 1994:120-121).

Today, the ordained minister continues to be a separate class of 'clergy' as distinct from 'priest' – bearing in mind that ordained ministers in the Catholic Church are called priests – due to the 'powers' to consecrate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ through transubstantiation in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, while all Catholics can be priestly people, only the ordained minister can preside at the Church's central action of its faith – the Eucharist – with the absence of an ordained minister preventing a community from doing so.

> Pope Paul VI's celebrated decree on the ministry and life of priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, issued in 1965 … explained that through ordination priests "are signed with a special character and are conformed to Christ in such a way that they can act in the person of Christ the Head". The most obvious way in which the priest so acts is his celebration of the Mass (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:21).

In fact, the Catholic Church has been described as 'unrivalled for making its clergy a favoured elite – clericalism – with complete power in all matters of sanctifying, teaching, and ruling' (Groome 2002:117). Thus, over time 'priest' from the Greek *presbyteros*, referring to an elder either by age or status, has come to equal the Latin *sacerdos*, the Greek *hiereus* and the Hebrew *kohon*, which all refer to religious, sacred, cultic functions (Lane 2005:12).

History of the Catholic Church in Australia

The Catholic Church in Australia has its roots in the Irish convicts and priest-convicts whose presence in the new European colony was numerically significant but whose religious practice was not given status, as was the Church of England (Kociumbas 1992:59). From these convict origins there was a steady increase in Irish/Catholic numbers through the ensuing century through both further transportation of convicts and free settlers. Later, an influx of Irish missionaries

(ordained priests, religious sisters and religious brothers) sent to minister to these Catholic communities created something of an Irish Church in exile, with the numbers of priests meeting the needs of the ever-increasing Catholic population (Macintyre 2001:66-67).

During the turmoil of the first half of the twentieth century, there continued to be sufficient priests to meet the needs of Australia's Catholics, and the post-World War Two influx of migrants from around the world saw a diversification of Catholic practices away from the Irish influence to be more multicultural, aided by the arrival of both lay and ordained Catholics among the migrants (Bolton 2001:113). Indeed, the 1950s saw a boom in vocations and religious practice across all the mainstream denominations and was a period of great religious observance throughout the country, with sixty-three per cent of Australia's Catholics attending Mass regularly in 1947, for example (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:119). Many scholars, from varying disciplines (Gaede 1977, Mueller & Johnson 1975, Nash 1968, Schoenherr 2002, Wuthnow 1999, Zeller 2011) have discussed the causes of such an increase in adherence and suggested several causes – a response to the horrors and deprivations of the Great Depression and two World Wars, including the massive loss of life; a re-centring of life in response to the emergence of the competing ideologies of the two 'superpowers', the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.) and America (U.S.A.), in a 'Cold War' and their combined ability to annihilate the world; and a response to the post-war demographic shift within Australia resulting from both the 'baby boom', post-war migration and socio-economic status – though these discussions and suggestions lay outside the scope of this project.

While Australia's broader population underwent rapid expansion during the post-World War Two waves of migration in the 1950s and 1960s (Gilchrist 1986:94) so, too, did its Catholic population from one-fifth of the population in 1947 to more than one-quarter of the 2001 national population (Catholic Australia 2005; Collins1987:183, 211; Collins 2008:43: see Table 2.1). By the 2001 Census there were over five million Catholics in Australia (Gilchrist 2006:98, Catholic Australia 2005).

Year	1947	1971	1981	1986	1987	1991	2001
Percentage	20.7	27	25.7	26	~26-27	26.1	26.6

Table 2.1: Australian Catholic population 1947-2001

Of these, up to forty-five per cent of Australia's Catholics were migrants or the children of migrants, again reflecting wider trends within Australia (Collins 1987:213, Dixon 1996:62). At the end of this period of booming religious adherence, Mass attendance within the Catholic population reached up to sixty-nine per cent (Collins 1991:127 and 1987:183). Like the rest of the Australian population, the Catholic population is ageing, with a current median age of fifty-eight years and rising (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:119); with the exception of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics whose age profile is significantly younger than the general Catholic population (Dixon 1996:61-62).

In this same period there was something of a local 'boom' in vocations to the priesthood that has been attributed to several factors – large families with lots of sons to meet the labour needs of agriculture, manufacturing and the priesthood (Schoenherr 2002:187); the priesthood (and religious life, for women) as a means to gain a higher education and social mobility (Schoenherr 2002:188) and the presence of large numbers of clergy of Irish origin (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:14).

McGillion and O'Carroll (2011:15) call 1968 'the cusp year' because up until then there had been a boom in vocations to the seminaries of Australia; which they illustrate using the Springwood Seminary. Up until 1968, the average intake of young men entering the seminary was sixty but in 1968 this figure was halved to thirty, and has been in steady decline ever since (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:15); a situation recurring across the country and to which I will turn shortly.

Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba

As the Catholic community of the Darling Downs grew, predominantly with Irish Catholics, faith communities were founded to meet their needs. These were part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane until the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba by the Holy See on May 28th 1929, with James Byrne as its first Bishop (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010, Moore 2010:23). At that time there were fifteen parishes and twenty priests, with these numbers fluctuating since then to a maximum of thirty-eight parishes at one time and currently served by twenty-three priests in full-time ministry (Ranger 2010:4).

As the Catholic population swelled so too did the number of parishes, schools and other Catholic services. Toowoomba was no exception, with numerous parishes being created in this period, including three in Toowoomba city and three others throughout its territory (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). Today, the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba encompasses fifty communities in thirty-five parishes, as well as thirty-two schools (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010, Catholic Education Office 2011).

Post-conciliar decline in priest numbers and vocations, and an ageing priesthood

The 1960s was a period of great social upheaval in the wider world including the Civil Rights movement in the United States as well as here in Australia, the Women's Rights (Women's Liberation) movement and anti-war protests against involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Within the Catholic Church its pontiff Pope John XXIII called for the 'windows to be opened to the world' and announced his intention to hold an ecumenical Council – the Second Vatican Council – which opened in 1962 and ended in 1965 under his successor Pope Paul VI (Bokenkotter 1985: 29-30, 85-87; Collins 1987:18, 20, 49; Donovan 1997:51-52, 128-131, 145-147; Hill 1989:49-51). Following Vatican II there was a sharp decline in vocations to the priesthood coupled with an increase in the numbers of priests leaving active ministry, which many have laid at the feet of the Second Vatican Council while others have pointed to these broader societal trends as the cause.

Again, the causes of this phenomena have been dealt with extensively by others, among them Campion (2008, 2009a, 2009b), Collins (1987, 1991, 1998, 2008), Gilchrist (1986), Hoge (1987), Long-García (2011), McGillion and O'Carroll (2011), Schoenherr (2002), and Stark and Finke (2000), so I will not endeavour to replicate their work, other than to refer to my later discussion of the possible 'options' available to bishops – the bringing in of priests from overseas to minister in Australian dioceses and the restoration of the permanent diaconate within dioceses – that has already occurred in some Australian dioceses. Although currently outside the present *Code of Canon Law*, I will also later discuss the issue of *who* is currently eligible for ordination and who is *not*, in terms of mandatory celibacy, the return to active ministry of married priests and the ordination of women. What is of

importance to this discussion is the impact of the overall downward trend in priestly

numbers within the Australian Church and the Diocese of Toowoomba especially.

Global decline in priestly numbers

The present shortage of ordained priests in Australia is not unique to this continent;

rather, it is being experienced in dioceses and countries across the world. Globally

there was a 'drop in the number of recruits to the Catholic priesthood by twenty-five

percent [*sic*]in the period 1967-1984, with this decline fifty to seventy-five per cent

in Western/developed countries' (Gilchrist 1986:139). In the United States, for

example, in the years between 1966 and 1984 15 000 men entered the priesthood,

vastly outnumbered by the 22 000 priests who left active ministry (Schoenherr

2002:15). In the same period the 35 000 active diocesan priests of 1966 underwent a

twenty per cent decline to 28 000 in 1985 (Schoenherr 2002:15). As a consequence,

by 1987 two hundred Catholic parishes in the United States were led day-to-day by a

non-ordained 'pastoral associate' (Gilchrist 1987:32). These 'congregations are now

served by pastoral teams with more lay than clerical members, while some are facing

the prospects of either an all-lay staff or no parish at all' (Schoenherr 2002:84).

In developing countries where the number of priests is increasing, there is also an

increase in the number of Catholics often outstripping vocations (Hoge 1987:15).

For example, in 1970, there were 111.5 major seminarians per million Catholics

worldwide, which declined to only 95.6 major seminarians per million Catholics by

1984 (Hoge 1987:15). Minor seminarians are not included as they are children

completing their education in 'feeder' institutions attached to seminaries but are not

yet counted among those undergoing formation for the priesthood. For example, in

Australia there were less than 2 100 diocesan priests in 2003 to serve five million nominal Catholics (McGillion 2003b:xvii) so that '[e]ven if the conservative coalition finds a successful programme for improving recruitment and retention of priests, it would take several decades to decelerate and reverse the downward trend' (Schoenherr 2002:185). As it stands today, the worldwide community of 1.098 billion Catholics is served by 405 891 priests, including 4 600 bishops (Collins 2008:127).

Richard Schoenherr's *Goodbye Father: The Celibate Male Priesthood and the Future of the Catholic Church* (2002) summarises his life's work studying the Catholic Church. He provides useful data on the origins and history of priestly celibacy, the decline in clergy numbers and seminary recruitment, the impact of broader socio-historical trends (such as the feminist movement) and the increasing influence of the lay movement on the future of the celibate, exclusively male, priesthood. 'Since Christianity is the world's largest organised religion and Catholicism the largest body in Christianity, a crisis affecting the core structures of Catholicism cannot help but spill over into the wider society' (Schoenherr 2002:141). 'Growing numbers of congregations are now served by pastoral teams with more lay than clerical members, while some are facing the prospects of either an all-lay staff or no parish at all' (Schoenherr 2002:84, 185). Providing a similar global background to this 'downward trend' is Dean Hoge's *The Future of Catholic Leadership: Responses to the Priest Shortage* (1987) in which he provides some very useful data (through tables, graphs, and so on) on worldwide trends, discusses the state of leadership today in the Catholic Church and goes on to discuss a number of approaches to dealing with the priest shortage as well as the issues and problems related to each of these responses.

Australia

Like much of the world there has been a steady decline in religious observance, decreasing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and increasing numbers of priests (and lay religious {brothers and sisters}) leaving active ministry since the peak of religiosity in the 1950s. Since that time the ratio of priests to Catholics here in Australia has undergone a steady increase (see Table 2.2).

Year	1941	1976	1991	2003
Ratio of priests to Catholics	1:1 760	1:1 769	1:2 327	1:2 381

Table 2.2: Ratio of priests to Catholics in Australia 1941-2003

> The ratio of diocesan and religious priests to the Australian Catholic population in the 1980s was about half that of the 1950s, with a similar decline for religious brothers and a sharper one for religious sisters to one-third of the 1950s numbers … Given the broad population growth of the 1950s and 1960s this decline was much worse than it appears (Gilchrist 1986:94).

Over the thirty-five year 'period 1950-1985 the number of priests, seminarians and nuns per 10, 000 of the Catholic population declined markedly' (Gilchrist 1986:94) with this sharp decline exemplified in the year 1997 by the absence of any ordinations anywhere in Australia that year (McGillion 2003b:xvii). By that time the number of vocations was being far outstripped by the numbers of priests leaving active ministry through retirement or death, let alone addressing the numbers leaving the priesthood. For example, by 1990 'Australia's 221 diocesan seminarians and 152 clerical religious seminarians were insufficient to replace the priests entering retirement or dying' (Collins 1991:132). Similarly, the numbers of religious order

priests has dropped from 12 000 in 1981 to 10 000 in 1997, with this decline ongoing

(McGillion 2003b:xvii).

As 'there are fewer and fewer priests to go around and the median age of the clergy

is rising rapidly' (Collins 1991:70) those priests who remain in active ministry are

being called upon to minister to geographic areas that are becoming steadily larger.

The Church in Australia currently operates 1 363 local parishes throughout Australia,

spread across twenty-eight western-rite dioceses, four eastern-rite dioceses and one

diocese covering the armed forces (Collins 2008:25, Schultz 2009). Some are

metropolitan, such as the archdioceses of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, whilst

others are vast country dioceses (and within them parishes) that are geographically

large in size with small, scattered populations (Collins 2008:25).

> For instance, the diocese of Geraldton with one bishop and 17 priests in
> parishes covers 1.318 million square kilometres and comprises one-seventh
> of Australia's land surface and is over twice the size of France. The diocese
> of Darwin at 1.295 million square kilometres is larger in area than South
> Africa, the western New South Wales diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is one
> and a half times the size of the United Kingdom, and the diocese of Cairns is
> bigger than Germany. Parish priests in these remote areas have to cover
> enormous distances: Broome, for instance, has only 11 priests, Townsville
> has 26 parishes and 19 priests with parochial appointments, and Port Pirie,
> which is three-and-a-half times the size of Italy, has 23 parishes and 21
> active priests (Collins 2008:25-26).

Clearly, 'there are far fewer ordained priests than there are communities of people'

here in both rural and urban Australia (Ranger 2010:45).

While there exists a gap in the existing body of literature on the Catholic Church

with reference to the *Australian* Catholic Church, it cannot be said that the

Australian Church has not been examined; merely, that the *responses* to the priest

shortage *in Australia* have not been examined. For the last twenty years established

theologians and historians such as Paul Collins, Michael Gilchrist and Christopher

McGillion have looked at contemporary Australian Catholicism and tried to envisage its future.

Mixed Blessings: John Paul II and the Church of the eighties is Paul Collins' first book exploring the state of the Catholic Church in Australia. The title *Mixed Blessings* refers to the data Collins cites for the growth in the Catholic population and its rising socio-economic circumstances coupled with a decline in the numbers of clergy, seminarians and retention rates such that while 'the number of laity has increased, the number of priests has decreased' (Collins 1987:74). This information provides a description of the Australian Catholic Church and indicates where this project fits because '[w]e know very little about Catholic parishes in Australia, there is little research available' (Collins 1999:69). Collins' follow-up to *Mixed Blessings, No Set Agenda: Australia's Catholic Church Faces an Uncertain Future* continues to discuss the crises facing the Australian Catholic Church, placing the blame with the traditional/orthodox (conservative) Catholics who are 'holding back' the enactment of Vatican II. He also discusses the place of cultural Catholics, irregular practitioners and regular, practicing Catholics by defining each group and their contribution to the future of the Australian Catholic Church. Not only does Collins discuss the priest shortage in terms of 'priest-less' parishes (he uses the term 'eucharist-less') but in terms of the increased roles for the laity and for women in particular, which is of particular relevance to this project. According to Collins (1991:70, 72, 73),

> …there are fewer and fewer priests to go around and the median age of the clergy is rising rapidly... [which] from one perspective...is a golden opportunity for the many women and men in the church who want to participate in ministry. The shortage of priests creates the ministerial space where gifted and trained lay people [*sic*] can begin to exercise all types of service.

Collins' third book, written from an historical perspective, discusses the present state of the Catholic Church, *Papal Power: A Proposal for Change in Catholicism's Third Millennium*, focuses on the papacy and suggests its increasing primacy has led to many of the current problems.

A polarity exists between Paul Collins' work and Michael Gilchrist's works because the former blames the traditional/orthodox (conservative) Catholics for present problems whereas Gilchrist suggests that the 'new church' (liberal/progressive) people are at fault. In *Rome or the Bush: The Choice For Australian Catholics* Gilchrist looks at the problems facing the Australian Catholic Church post-Vatican II and places the blame for all its woes squarely at the feet of the 'new church' people who, in his opinion, have taken 'the spirit of Vatican II' far beyond what the actual documents say. Gilchrist's follow-up to *Rome or the Bush* is *New Church or True Church: Australian Catholicism Today and Tomorrow* in which he continues to discuss negative trends in the Australian Catholic Church (such as the ageing priesthood, decline in seminary entrants and high drop-out rate, and the women's ordination movement) but focuses more on the dioceses and bishops who have 'bucked the trend' and are re-establishing orthodoxy because Gilchrist believes this 'true church' will restore the Church. *LOST! Australia's Catholics Today* is Gilchrist's third book looking at the Australian Catholic Church, in which he again discusses the problems in liturgy, schools and other Catholic institutions caused by the 'liberal'/'new church' Catholics.

Christopher McGillion's *A Long Way from Rome: Why the Australian Catholic Church is in Crisis* also discusses the crisis in the Australian Catholic Church, particularly the declining numbers of vocations to the priesthood and religious orders

(both male and female) and the consequences of this decline. In *Our fathers: what Australian Catholic priests really think about their lives and their church*, McGillion joins with John O'Carroll to survey Australia's diocesan priests to find out what they think about the Australian Catholic Church, the broader Catholic Church, and their lives as priests in the twenty-first century. This book presents the findings of the survey responses and follow-up in-depth interviews with Australian priests, while placing the priests' responses within the broader context of cultural and historical trends, as well as against the trends *within* the global Catholic Church – such as priestly numbers, workload, seminaries, bishops, Benedict XVI and lapsed Catholics. Together with the works of Paul Collins and Michael Gilchrist, it can be seen that the current state of the Catholic Church in Australia has been examined in terms of declining numbers of clergy, increasing priest-parishioner ratios and declining active participation by Catholics. However, these historical and theological approaches have not explored the various *responses* that dioceses and parishes are taking to cope with this 'downward trend' from the perspective of parishioners. It is this absence that this project seeks to address, by examining the experiences of one of Australia's dioceses – the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba

In Toowoomba, the number of priests has undergone similar shifts to those of the wider Australian Church, with numbers increasing from the diocese's formation in 1929 to a peak in 1979 with a steady decline to the present number of twenty-three in active ministry. serving fifty faith-communities in thirty-five parishes (see Table 2.3). Today, there are twenty-one parishes without an ordained minister as parish

priest. During this same period, the numbers of Catholics has increased steadily, leading to an increase in the priest-to-parishioner ratio.

Year	1929	1939	1949	1959	1969	1979	1989	1999	2009	2011
Priest Numbers	29	37	43	63	74	88	63	52	47	23

Table 2.3: Priest numbers in Diocese of Toowoomba 1929-2011

Within the Toowoomba diocese, I have identified no similar work on the post-conciliar decline in broad religious observance and vocations to the priesthood. Apart from a discussion of the interruption of the intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity in chapter six (Discussion of Results), this research is unable to include a discussion of this phenomenon at this time.

Consequences of insufficient active clergy

In response to these shortages of active clergy for parish and other ministries, bishops throughout the world have had to choose between sharing existing priests between parishes, either through the clustering or merging of parishes; closing parishes; or assigning a non-ordained layperson/s the role of 'pastor'. The existing body of work on this emerging trend is small in nature and dominated by theological and liturgical approaches.

Having reached this crisis point earlier, the Chilean Catholic Church's use of female laity in parish leadership roles was explored by Katherine Gilfeather in her 1977 paper 'The Changing Role of Women in the Catholic Church in Chile'. According to Gilfeather the Chilean Catholic Church faced a decreasing number of priests three

decades ago and she outlined the roles that women were taking up at that time. Her work provides insight into the kinds of roles lay women (and men) may undertake in the Australian Catholic Church today. Also insightful may be Gilfeather's discussion of both the support of, and the resistance to, this laicisation by Chile's bishops. More recently, the increasingly frequent presence of non-ordained lay 'pastors' in parishes throughout the U.S. has been examined by Peter Gilmour (1986) in *The Emerging Pastor: Non-ordained Catholic Pastors*, Philip Murnion and David DeLambo (1999) in *Parishes and Parish Ministers: A Study of Parish Lay Ministry* and in Zeni Fox's doctoral project that was published as *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church* (2002).

Gilmour's book recounts the experiences of 'Emerging Pastors' (his term) in several dioceses of the United States, focussing on individuals' experiences – priest-pastors, parishioners, non-ordained pastors – to demonstrate how this 'experience of non-ordained people pastoring Catholic parishes having no resident priests is calling into question traditional concepts of pastor, pastoral activity, ordination and priesthood, and the Eucharist and the other sacraments (Gilmour 1986:103). Philip Murnion and David DeLambo's book reports the results of a follow-up study to *New Parish Ministers*, a study by the National Pastoral Life Centre in 1992, which looked at the growing number of laypersons and lay religious serving in parish pastoral ministries in the U.S. This book reports the five-year follow-up to the original survey research, suggesting

> that the practice of pastoral ministry that led to engaging more and more laypeople in parish ministry outstrips the theology and church policy regarding lay ministry [with] the need to continue theological reflection, ministerial clarification, and church policy development ... evident if we are to make the most of the gifts to the church represented by these parish ministers and provide the kind of support for them and their pastors that

fosters appropriate and effective collaboration (Murnion & DeLambo 1999:74).

Primarily detailing the aspects of *Canon Law* regarding lay leadership/ministry and Parish Pastoral Councils, and collecting demographic data on the parish ministers, the ministries they perform and parishioners' evaluation of them, this work exemplifies how the focus of much of the study of this emerging trend has been of 'who', 'where', 'when', 'why' in specific locations, rather than broad contextualisation within a disciplinary framework, such as anthropology. Following a realisation that her young pastoral ministry students, in the past, would have been in seminaries and convents, Zeni Fox explored lay ministry in her doctoral thesis. *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professionals Serving the Church* (2002) is a revision of that dissertation and explores, theologically, the origins of ministry and the ways in which the laity now exercise this ministry in the Catholic Church in the United States. She explores the various notions and definitions of 'ministry', the Church's recent approaches to lay involvement (especially post-Vatican II), as well as the Church and Council documents that outline the ways in which non-ordained Catholics may 'minister' to the Church.

This project seeks to explore the ways in which the Australian Catholic Church responds to the decreasing availability of active clergy to meet the needs of parishes, paying particular attention to the increasingly frequent use of non-ordained lay leaders in parishes. Looking at this phenomena over the past twenty years in the United States are Ruth Wallace's two books, *They Call Her Pastor: A New Role for Catholic Women* (1992) and *They Call Him Pastor: Married Men in Charge of Catholic Parishes* (2003). Ruth Wallace is a Catholic woman who attended the Second Vatican Council and has a long-term interest in the future of the Catholic Church in the United States. She is a sociologist and lecturer at Georgetown

University. *They Call Her Pastor* is the result of a study of twenty Catholic parishes in the U.S. under the pastoral care and direction of a lay woman in the early 1990s. *They Call Him Pastor* is a follow-up to *They Call Her Pastor* and is again the result of a study of twenty Catholic parishes in the U.S., this time parishes under the pastoral care and direction of a married man, either a deacon or lay man, in the early 2000s. Both studies seek to identify how women's and then married men's leadership differs from that of clergy and how parishioners 'on-the-ground' view this development.

Wallace finds, in both studies, that laypeople's leadership is more collaborative and nurturing than that of priests and that the advent of 'circuit-riding' sacramental ministers also impacts on parishes and the lay 'pastors', with one such priest stating, 'We're going to kill the priests that we do have because we're going to need more and more Masses and they're getting older' and 'the added stress of serving as pastors in their own parishes and travelling to another parish (or two) each weekend – the burnout syndrome – [is] taking its toll on these priests' (Wallace 2003:186, 251). Wallace finds that 'the category with the largest number of non-priests entrusted to head parishes are [*sic*] laypeople. Though religious sisters are the second largest group to head parishes, their numbers are dwindling, so we can expect that the numbers of parishes headed by laity will continue to increase' (2003:108).

'Priestless' is a term used to describe Catholic communities, such as those discussed by Wallace and others, that are without a resident priest-pastor. While some of these communities may never have had a parish priest due to their location between larger townships or due to the size of the local community, many are well-established parishes in urban and rural locations that have, in the past, had parish priests and

who are now without a permanent priestly presence within their parish or town. Also referred to as 'priestless-ness' the greater concern for many of the Catholic faithful of these communities is the resultant loss of regular celebrations of the Eucharist, the 'summit and source' of all Christian life – called the more serious 'Eucharistless-ness' by James Dallen (1994) and Paul Collins (1991). For a Christian organisation in which this ritual action is central to the identity and adherence of its members, the loss of the means by which to celebrate Mass – that is, the ordained minister – is a significant stumbling block to be overcome. Although the liturgical rules of the Catholic Church permit the faith-community to gather in worship using other ritual actions – most commonly a Liturgy of the Word service – the inability to regularly celebrate Eucharist 'in communion' with the universal Church poses theological consequences.

Toowoomba's Catholic Diocese covers over 490 000 square kilometres and encompasses fifty communities in thirty-five parishes and is presently served by twenty-three priests in full-time ministry, only three of whom are under fifty years of age (Ranger 2010:4). Following the first Diocesan Gathering of representatives of every parish, school and church organisation in 1998 a Diocesan Pastoral Plan was formulated, which included the formation of Parish Pastoral Councils in each community and an outline of the priestly staffing of parishes from that time onwards. A nine-year Pastoral Plan currently in effect was then issued by Bishop Emeritus William Morris and is due to end at Easter 2014 (Morris 2006). At the time it was issued the projected priestly numbers in 2014 were eight priests in parish-based ministry aged sixty-six to seventy (with the option to retire as per the Australian retirement age) and six priests sixty-five or younger (three of whom would be in the sixty-one to sixty-five year group). A further number of priests would be in diocesan

ministry; one bishop between seventy-one and seventy-five years, two priests in the sixty-six to seventy year age group (also with the option to retire) and only two priests aged under sixty-five years (see Table 2.4). However, two of the priests listed in those numbers have subsequently died including one of the diocese's youngest ministers and the Bishop entered early retirement in May 2011 (see my discussion in chapter six, Discussion of Results).

Age	Parish ministry	Diocesan ministry	Total priest numbers
Younger than 65	6	2	8
66-70 years	8	2	10
71-75	-	1	1

Table 2.4: Projected 2014 age of priests in Diocese of Toowoomba

At the time of writing, there are thirty-five parishes in the diocese, serviced by twenty-three ordained ministers, leaving twenty-one communities without a resident priest-pastor, effectively 'priestless'. It must be noted, however, that no Catholic community is ever considered to be without a priest-as-leader according to *Canon Law* as each parish, by definition is 'a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 515.1). Moreover, every community without a resident priest-pastor is appointed what is called a 'Priest Director' in Toowoomba. According to *Canon Law*, this Priest Director is either a 'moderator' or the one assigned 'to direct the pastoral care' of the community as outlined in Canons 517.1 and 517.2,

> Can. 517 §1. When circumstances require it, the pastoral care of a parish or of different parishes together can be entrusted to several priests *in solidum*, with the requirement, however, that in exercising pastoral care one of them must be the moderator, namely, the one who is to direct the joint action and to answer for it to the bishop.
>
> §2. If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care (*Code of Canon Law* 1983).

In practice in the Toowoomba Diocese these Priest Directors are from a neighbouring parish as geographically close as possible in a diocese of this size to the community without a resident priest. The ongoing spiritual and pastoral guidance assigned to a Priest Director does not mean that he is available to celebrate Eucharist with a community daily, or even weekly, as would a parish priest. For example, two of the communities I visited in the mid-west and south of the diocese have been sharing the one priest (as parish priest of one parish and Priest Director of the other) since Easter 2011. Together, the priest and communities have decided that he will function as a 'parish priest' in each parish for two weeks of the month, leaving each community 'priestless' the other half of each month. Thus, he is only able to celebrate Eucharist in each parish twice a month (in the main churches, less frequently in the satellite communities within each of these rural parishes) and Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services take place on the remaining Sundays. As calculated by one parishioner he is now travelling approximately 1 800 kilometres per month (Fieldnotes 19th June 2011). Such distances travelled and alterations to liturgical practice are typical of the situation in diocese across Australia and for priests in the diocese of Toowoomba.

Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest

While *Canon Law* recommends 'that the faithful receive holy communion during the eucharistic [*sic*] celebration itself' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 918) other options are necessary to enable the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. When unable to celebrate Eucharist together due to the absence of an ordained priest Catholic communities may still gather together to worship following the rules for Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest (SWAP). The guidelines for SWAP services are usually formulated by each country's national conference of Catholic bishops, in Australia the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) drew upon various Church documents and the *Directory for a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 1988). These celebrations have been called 'Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest' (SWAP services) or Sunday-Assembly-in-the-Absence-of-a-Priest (SAAP services) (Collins 1987:135; Collins 2008:76, 83).

The most commonly utilised form of worship when a priest is absent is a Liturgy of the Word service, in effect the first half of a Mass in which the Word of God is proclaimed and the petitions of the community are made as 'Prayers of the Faithful'. In most cases, 'with Communion' is incorporated into these Lay-Led Liturgies of the Word (LLL) plus Communion services with Eucharist (consecrated Hosts) that was held in reserve from a previous celebration of the Eucharist (Mass), or brought to this service from another community, being distributed by the Lay Leader after the Liturgy of the Word. 'As fewer clergy are available for Mass, more laypeople – mainly women – preside at liturgies of the Word and communion [*sic*]' (Schoenherr 2002:85).

Less commonly used in the Toowoomba Diocese is the Liturgy of the Hours (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 1173-1175), a service of prayers and song that may be led by either an ordained minister or layperson that is similar to the prayer-life of monastic tradition in which monks (or religious sisters, in the case of cloistered convents) pray hourly throughout the day focussing on sacred scripture that is spoken or perhaps sung. As it does not usually include the distribution of the Blessed Sacrament it is not favoured by those communities seeking an alternative form of worship when Sunday Eucharist is not available. In both the use of a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word service and the Liturgy of the Hours when a priest is absent, it is the local lay members of a community fulfilling the role of 'presider' (though this term only applies to ordained ministers presiding at a Eucharist) usually held by a priest necessitating skills and knowledge that is provided to a priest through his seminary formation but not usually within the experience of a Mass-going lay Catholic. While some parishes create teams of people responsible for organising and leading these Lay-Led services, it is quite common for these individuals to also be responsible for the day-to-day running of the parish in terms of administration, pastoral outreach and so on, in place of a resident priest as pastor.

Canon Law options available to episcopate

A bishop's 'primary responsibility is the provision of Mass and the sacraments. This must come before all other responsibilities' (Collins 2008:92). 'The management of a diocese by the bishop and his staff is particularly problematic in areas where there are long-established parishes with histories of priest pastors, and now not enough priests to pastor these parishes (Gilmour 1986:47). The way in which any bishop

fulfils this responsibility is set out in the Church's *Canon Law*. According to the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* of the Catholic Church, the following formal parish reorganisation alternatives are recognised – a grouping of two or more parishes pastored by a team of priests, several neighbouring parishes administered by a single pastor and appointing someone other than a priest to participate in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 517.1, 517.2, 526.1).

Canon 517.1 allows for a team of priests to share the pastorate of several parishes in a team ministry, with one priest as team *moderator* co-ordinating the team's activities and serving as liaison to the diocese (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). Each priest has the obligations and responsibilities of pastor in each of the parishes but Canon 517.1 is vague about what circumstances warrant a team ministry and specifically does *not* identify a shortage of priests as justification. When two or more parishes are 'clustered' together sharing one priest-pastor, under Canon 526.1, each parish maintains its own canonical identity, with its own lay staff (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). While Canon 517.2 authorises bishops to entrust the pastoral care of a parish to someone other than a priest (a deacon, vowed religious or layperson), it is to be implemented only in extraordinary situations where a serious shortage of priests exists in the diocese, in the judgement of that diocese's bishop (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). However, *Canon Law* is not clear in providing a well-defined plan for implementing Canon 517.2, meaning there are no consistent titles, position descriptions, qualifications or expectations for ministers operating under this model (Cusack and Sullivan 1995:xi, cited Zech and Gautier 2004:143).

In the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, under the stewardship of Bishop Emeritus William Morris, D.D., the first three of these options has been taken, with no

parishes having been closed. At present there are three overseas priests ministering in the Toowoomba Diocese – two Indian priests from the religious order, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who have been serving the Diocese for approximately fifteen and twenty years respectively; and a Kenyan priest, also from a religious order, who has been in Toowoomba for several years. Due to the vast area of the Toowoomba Diocese and the absence of a restored, permanent diaconate, clustering and merging parishes is only feasible in the more geographically close parishes in the east. Further west, parishes are significantly larger necessitating the more frequent use of the third option – assigning the day-to-day pastoral care and 'on-the-ground' administration to a non-ordained layperson, be it a professed religious sister/brother or a single/married lay man or woman, or to a group of laypeople in a Leadership Team. In these circumstances, one or more visiting sacramental ministers are assigned to meet the sacramental needs of a parish.

In Church tradition clergy (with the exception of the Pope) are to retire at the age of seventy-five (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 538.3) and in Toowoomba the numbers of priests approaching that age far outnumbers the number of seminarians studying for the priesthood. At present, there is only one candidate for the priesthood from Toowoomba in the Holy Spirit seminary at Banyo in Brisbane (where all of Queensland's priests are trained), with the diocese's fifty communities in thirty-five parishes currently served by twenty-three priests in full-time ministry, only three of whom are under fifty years of age (Ranger 2010:4). At present, there are twenty-one faith communities without a resident priest-pastor.

As explained above, in the Toowoomba diocese every parish without a resident priest-pastor is appointed what is called a 'Priest Director', usually from a

neighbouring faith-community that is as geographically close as possible in a diocese of this size. Irrespective of how frequently this Priest Director is able to visit the communities he is assigned or if another priest provides sacramental services, including presiding at celebrations of Eucharist, it is this priest who is responsible under *Canon Law* for the activities of, and within, that parish community. 'In all juridic affairs the pastor represents the parish according to the norm of law' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 532). Nonetheless, the 'imbalance between lay ministers and priests is destined to grow under even the most wildly optimistic projections about a possible recovery in priestly vocations' (Allen 2009:193).

In addition to the four options available to a bishop under *Canon Law* for the restructuring of parishes, there are alternatives being enacted by some bishops within Australia that are permitted under the Church's *Canon Law*, including inviting priests from outside the diocese to minister in the diocese or restoring the permanent diaconate. No other options are currently available; however, extensive discussions of possible alternatives are being made by theologians, historians, commentators and regular Catholics regarding who is eligible for ordination.

Importing priests from overseas

In several dioceses of Australia priests from outside the respective diocesan borders have been invited to minister to the parishes of that diocese. These priests may be from religious orders, such as the Salesians, Dominicans, and Jesuits and so on. More frequently, however, they have been priests from overseas, some of whom have completed their seminary training and formation in the priesthood here in Australia and many who have not. As already mentioned, three overseas priests

currently minister in the Toowoomba diocese, with all having been present for over a decade. However, Bishop Emeritus Morris did not extend this invitation to any other overseas or religious order priests. Therefore, while the future of the diocese under its next bishop *may* include the presence of an increasing number of overseas priests, as is the case elsewhere in Australia, this possible future lays outside the scope of this project.

Restored permanent diaconate

The word 'deacon' comes from the Greek *diakonia*, meaning ministry or service; while serving at table is one meaning in the Christian context *diakonia* refers to broader service to all by extending the Spirit to the whole world (Dillon 1999:18; Fox 2002:210). In the past there were 'eight orders in the church – bishop, priest, deacon, subdeacon, acolyte, lector, porter and exorcist' (Murnion & DeLambo 1999:69). Although this role existed in the early Church, over the ensuing centuries it was relegated to a 'transitional phase' for candidates for the priesthood as they moved from being laity to being ordained. One of the many reforms of the Second Vatican Council was the restoration of a permanent diaconate, allowing men to be ordained deacons without it being considered a step towards ordination. This long evolution illustrates that 'the present Catholic bishop-priest-deacon model of ministry cannot be said to be apostolically normative' (Collins 1998:140).

Today, the Church's *Code of Canon Law* is relatively vague in its discussion of the diaconate, whether transitional or permanent. It makes clear that Holy Orders includes the diaconate (Canon 1009.1); that this is only open to a baptised male (Canon 1024) and that candidates are to undergo formation and training in

philosophical and theological studies (Canons 1027, 1032.1 and 1032.3). Ages at which ordination to the permanent diaconate are set for those who are married (at least thirty-five, 'and with the consent of his wife') and at least twenty-five for unmarried men (Canon 1031.2), with unmarried men to 'have assumed the obligation of celibacy in the prescribed rite publicly before God and the Church or have made perpetual vows in a religious institute' (Canon 1037). 'Before anyone is promoted to the permanent or transitional diaconate, he is required to have received the ministries of lector and acolyte and to have exercised them for a suitable period of time' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 1035.1). Thus, ordination to Holy Orders 'represents a continuum, ranging from deacons (the lowest ranking) to priests, and finally to bishops (a category that includes archbishops, cardinals, and popes)' (Wallace 2003:42-43).

For much of its history, the Catholic Church in Australia has consisted of only the ranks of priest and bishop, with most deacons being part of the transitional diaconate and serving their pastoral duties period prior to ordination to the presbyterate. In 1995, there were thirty-seven men in the restored permanent diaconate in the diocese of Bunbury in Western Australia (Dixon 1996:101). Since that time, the permanent diaconate has been restored in many of the country's dioceses including the dioceses of Broken Bay, Maitland-Newcastle, Ballarat, Broome, Canberra and Goulburn, Rockhampton and the archdioceses of Sydney, Brisbane and Perth (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 2011b). They form part of the ordained ministry, with the authority to baptise, proclaim the Gospel, confer Viaticum and conduct funerals and burial services (Wallace 2003:41). Therefore, 'apart from marriages, baptisms, and preaching at Mass, most of the work currently being done by parish priests could be re-assigned to deacons or lay persons [*sic*]' (Hoge 1987:186). Although the role

has not been adequately defined deacons are able to at least take over these liturgical roles. They do <u>not</u> have the authority to preside at a celebration of the Eucharist nor are they able to provide Anointing of the Sick or Reconciliation (Confession) as they are not empowered to absolve sins, so are not able to 'fill in' for a priest in parishes that are without a resident priest-pastor (Dixon 1996:101, Wallace 2003:48). As mentioned above, married men are able to be ordained to the permanent diaconate but single men who become deacons are required to make the same vow of celibacy that is made by those ordained to the transitional diaconate in preparation for becoming priests. *Canon Law* will permit a bishop to entrust the pastoral care of a parish to a deacon 'due to a dearth of priests' making this a viable option when a diocese is facing a shortage of priests (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 517.2, Wallace 1992:7).

As a parishioner within the Toowoomba diocese I am aware that investigations were undertaken regarding the introduction of a restored diaconate but am unable to comment either on that discussion or on the reasons for its continued absence from the diocese. As the restored permanent diaconate does not exist in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba it, too, lays outside the scope of this project.

Celibacy/married priests/ordination of women

Although not currently permissible under the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law*, there are many people throughout the world discussing the Church's mandatory celibacy, the return to active ministry of married priests and the ordination of women. The history of mandatory celibacy has been dealt with extensively by others, by those for and against celibacy and in light of sexual abuse revelations

(such as Anderson 2007; Collins 2008; Ditewig 2009; Donovan 1997; Doyle 2007, 2006; Frazee 1988, 1972; Greeley 2004; Hastings 2008; Hoge 1987; McGillion & O'Carroll 2011; Schoenherr 2002; Sipe 2008; Stephey 2009; and Worcester 2011) so I will provide only a brief outline here.

In the early Church, as discussed earlier, the leadership of Christian communities fell to members of those communities, with the development of a distinct clerical class not taking place until the late-third or early fourth century (Collins 1987:79, Dallen 1994: 109-111, Rowthorn 1986:7). This emerging clerical role increasingly came to be held by men, with rules regarding sexual abstinence connected to liturgical services beginning to be introduced by the fourth century and vows of celibacy chosen as a form of piety by some (most often within monastic settings) but not by all (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:32). It was not until the eleventh century that the hierarchical Church mandated celibacy for all ordained ministers, primarily in response to inheritance/property issues. Under the Gregorian Reform celibacy became mandatory for Latin-rite priests circa 1050-1150 C.E. with compliance increasing from 1139 C.E. onwards following the Second Lateran Council and again after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 C.E. Following the Council of Trent in 1575 C.E. celibacy became universal, though clerical marriage and concubinage continued to be tolerated until at least the end of the European Middle Ages (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:32; Schoenherr 2002:199, 201). Mandatory celibacy is a key organisational difference between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, with the prohibition against the ordination of women a further separation (Schoenherr 2002:19). Today, many people are calling for a relaxation of the mandatory nature of celibacy as a means to encourage more vocations to the

priesthood (Collins 2008, Crosby 2011, Daly 2010, McGillion & O'Carroll 2011, O'Loughlin 2004, Schoenherr 2002, Schoenherr & Greeley 1974).

As discussed previously, a large number of priests have left active ministry in the decades since the Second Vatican Council, with many of these then marrying. Within the context of the shortage of ordained priests available to minister to Catholic communities many are also calling for these men to be invited back to serve the Church. For those Catholics denied access to the 'summit and source' of their Christian life, the Eucharist, this would provide an influx of ordained ministers able to serve immediately. Again, this discussion about 'married priests' is taking place throughout the world involving many Catholics, ordained and lay (Collins 2008, Garvey 2002, Hoge 1987, McGillion & O'Carroll 2011, New Oxford Review 2010, Schoenherr 2002) but lays outside the scope of this project as it is, at the time of writing, *not* an option permissible under *Canon Law*.

The most controversial discussion taking place at present is the ordination of women, fully half of the Church's membership, who are currently forbidden from Holy Orders. In fact the '1917 code of Canon Law [*sic*] equated women with minors and systematically excluded them from holding any office in the Church' (Collins 1987:79), a situation not addressed in the revised *Code of Canon Law* in 1983. Discussions, both for and against this ban, by theologians, historians and others, include the likes of Aldridge (1994), Chaves (1997), Collins (1991, 1987), Gilchrist (2006, 1987), Hoge (1987), Hutchinson (1994), Hutchinson and Campion (1994), Raab (2000), Rue (2008), Schoenherr (2002) and Zagano (2011, 2010, 2008, 2005), often using the experiences of non-Catholic female clergy in other Christian denominations as a model (Aldridge 1992; Chaves 1997; Donovan 1988; Piggin

1994; Zikmund, Lummis & Chang 1998), with each providing greater detail than is possible here. For others, this discussion is insufficient so they are actively campaigning for the ordination of women. Examples of such groups are the Women's Ordination Conference WOC (Hoge 1987:166-173) and Women and the Australian Church WATAC (Gilchrist 1987:38-39). As an historian, Paul Collins (1987:79) points out that women held 'important roles in the early Church – and the priesthood as we know it today did not emerge as a separate ministry in the Church until the fourth century'. As a sociologist and Jesuit priest, Richard Schoenherr suggests that 'demeaning women by excluding them from positions of full power makes no political or economic sense in a voluntary organisation whose membership is predominantly female' (2002:197).

However, Blessed Pope John Paul II declared the discussion effectively 'over' in 1994 in his *Apostolic Letter, Ordinatio Sacerdotalis, of John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone*, in which he said '[p]riestly ordination … has in the Catholic Church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone' (John Paul II 1994:1) and that the Church does not have the authority to ordain women (Gilchrist 2006:110-111, John Paul II 1994) as the ordained minister acts 'in the person of Christ the Head' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 1008). Canon 1024 puts it succinctly, 'A baptized [*sic*] male alone receives sacred ordination validly' while Canon 1042.1 declares as 'simply impeded from receiving orders: 1/ a man who has a wife, unless he is legitimately destined to the permanent diaconate' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). While each episcopal see (bishop) may issue dispensations regarding various canonical norms Canon 1047.2 reserves dispensation from the delict of the abovementioned Canon 1042.2 to the Apostolic See alone, that is, to the Pope (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). That means,

only the Pope can alter Canon 1024's proscription against the ordination of a baptised woman.

As is the case with the abovementioned discussion about the ending of mandatory celibacy, discussion about the ordination of women, both in support of women's ordination and opposing it, is taking place throughout the world (Collins 2008, 1987; Gilchrist 2006; Hoge 1987; Rue 2008; Schoenherr 2002; Zagano 2011, 2010, 2008, 2005). Although involving many Catholics, ordained and lay, this discussion also lays outside the scope of this project as the ordination of women is, at the time of writing, *not* permissible under the Church's *Code of Canon Law*.

Conclusion

The Catholic Church is a sacramental Church in which the central action of its faith-life is the celebration of the Eucharist, through which all of its sacraments are, whenever possible, to be celebrated. With the only person able to preside at a Mass being an ordained minister, the absence of a Catholic priest from a parish restricts that faith community's ability to participate in 'the summit and source' of their Catholic life. 'Priests are ordained into a unique relationship with Christ and with Christ's church [whose] specific ministry is indispensable. It cannot be substituted for by any other ministry. It cannot be parcelled out to or delegated to those in other ministries' (Lane 2005:38).

This clear distinction between the 'priest' and the 'priesthood of the baptised' encompassing all Catholics arose through the Church's history, leading to a high degree of clericalism throughout the universal Church, including Australia; a

'clergification' of its structures and practices. Following the tumultuous events of the early twentieth century, the universal Church saw its population swell along with the ranks of its ordained priests, a growth that was echoed in the Catholic Church in Australia and in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. Following this period of growth the universal Church and the Church in Australia has undergone a sustained period of decline in the numbers of priests in active ministry able to meet the needs of the expanding Catholic population. Like elsewhere, the consequence of this reduction in vocations to the priesthood and the numbers of priests still in active ministry has been the phenomenon of 'priestless' parishes – faith communities that are without an ordained priest as pastor.

The ritual and sacramental life of these parishes has been fundamentally altered by the need to introduce non-Eucharist forms of worship, primarily Lay-Led Liturgies. In addition to this liturgical variation of the normative practice the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* provides other options to bishops who are facing a shortage of priests. These are, the merging of once separate faith communities into single parishes, having one priest serve two or more parishes, assigning a layperson (or a team of laypeople) the day-to-day leadership/administration of a parish or to close parishes (an option not exercises in this diocese). Other options available to the episcopate are to invite priests from outside the diocese, frequently from overseas, to minister in their diocese; and the restoration of the permanent diaconate, although these ordained men are not able to preside at Eucharist so cannot meet the entire shortfall in priestly ministry. Other options being widely canvassed by theologians, historians and everyday Catholics, though currently forbidden by Church Law from being enacted, are relaxing or ending compulsory celibacy, inviting priests who have

left active ministry and are now married to return to active ministry, and to open

Holy Orders to women.

Chapter three: Identity

Introduction

In many ways 'identity' is a very personal thing, with each individual's identity formed through a complex interaction of a variety of factors – personal, interpersonal, communal and external. It is something that can be self-defined or defined by others, but always it is in relation to an *other* – one (either an individual or a group) who is somehow not me, not I, not we, not us. Each person may identify themselves in a variety of ways and may alter that identity, or at least amend it, in different circumstances and in response to different experiences, to include self-identification related to familial or kin relationships or clans (family identity); ethnicity, language, culture or shared history (indigenous, Australian-born, migrant or refugee descent); territory or locale (neighbourhood, town, state, nation); occupation (professional associations, place of employment); political, sporting or cultural involvement (membership/support of political party or sporting team, member of local civic organisation); or totemic or religious affiliations (denomination, faith community or level of participation) (Buckser 1999, Cerulo 1997, Duderija 2008, Smedley 1998, Sökefield 1999). This 'other' is in a dichotomous relationship with the shared 'identity' of 'we-ness' or 'same-ness' (Cerulo 1997:286, Sökefield 1999:417). The process by which this 'othering' takes place is based upon the markers of *difference* that allows for the differentiation of the 'self' from the 'other' (either individually or as a group) (Abu-Lughod 1991, Hage 1998, Hoffstaedter 2011, Said 2003, Saniotis 2004, Sökefield1999).

For Australian Catholics who reside within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba their individual identity is as varied as that of any other person and may be further mitigated by their experiences of the Catholic Church (born and raised in the pre-

conciliar Church, or in the decades since the Second Vatican Council) and of the Australian Catholic Church (historical sectarianism). For all, though, it has its basis in recognition of, and self-identification as, a Catholic Christian of the geographically-bounded entity that is the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, with this 'Catholic' identity acknowledged by the formal structures and legal code of the Catholic Church, particularly the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* provides a formal definition of what it is to be 'Catholic', which itself has undergone historical development over the two thousand year history of Christianity and the formation/development of the formal hierarchical Church. This historical identity has also undergone theological development during this time, with external events such as the Reformation and the Church's Counter-Reformation altering Catholic identity in a way that Australian Catholics continued to experience and express up until the Second Vatican Council in the mid-twentieth century. A significant shift in the post-conciliar Church accompanied a similar change in Catholic identity throughout the world, including Australia, with Australian Catholic identity today entailing several key elements – the sacramental nature of the Church itself, the centrality of the ordained priesthood to its ritual practice and the communality of practice and identity – centred primarily on the local faith community though embracing of the wider global Church.

As the twenty-first century continues to unfold, however, the Catholic Church, and its identity, is responding to many of the same forces and events that are playing out across the world's communities and organisations. While, to a certain extent, the Church's responses are universal, the way in which they are experienced by various national, ethnic and regional Catholic communities and individuals, including Australia, is more a product of the socio-cultural and historical backgrounds of each.

The history of the Catholic Church in Australia, with its dominance by the Irish and experience of a long period of sectarianism, influenced the Catholic 'identity' of Australian Catholics up until the post-Vatican II period, when the Council's impact as well as other global trends led to a more eclectic identity than in previous generations, such as that represented by myself – a 'cradle' Catholic of the post-Vatican II generation of Australian Catholics.

One of anthropology's principal concerns is with the 'other' and its canon provides a useful framework for the discussion of notions of 'identity', be it related to kin, ethnicity, religiosity or otherwise (Buckser 1999, Cerulo 1997, Duderija 2008, Smedley 1998, Sökefield 1999). Anthropology's interest in religion (Durkheim 1912, Geertz 1966, Malinowski 1926, Tylor 1871, Winzeler 2008), boundary-markers (Friedman 1994, Hoffstaedter 2011, Mercer 1990, Weeks 1990) and identity (Abu-Lughod 1991; Borsboom, Buskens, Kommers & Notermanns 2003; Hage 1998; Hall 1990; Hoffstaedter 2011; Pratt 2003; Said 2003; Saniotis 2004; Sökefield1999; Wagner 2002) provides useful signposts in the formulation of a baseline definition of 'Catholic Christian identity' within the Australian context. This baseline definition will form the basis of discussions in later chapters of the impact of the shortage of resident priest-pastors upon the people of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

Canon Law

1983 Code of Canon Law

Catholic identity is defined first, and foremost, by the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* as one who has received baptism. This ritual 'initiates people into the

Body of Christ – the Church – to live as disciples of Jesus toward the reign of God'
(Groome 2002:86). The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* defines a member of the Christian
faithful as:

> those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through
> baptism, have been constituted as the people of God (Canon 204.1). This
> Church, constituted and organised in this world as a society, subsists in the
> Catholic Church governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in
> communion with him (Canon 204.2). Those baptised are fully in the
> communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in
> its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and
> ecclesiastical governance (Canon 205). (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons
> 204-205).

Thus, Catholic identity is defined first, and foremost, by the Catholic Church's *Code
of Canon Law*. An edited volume by James Provost and Knut Walf *Catholic Identity*
(1994) draws contributors together who contribute to a canonical discussions of
identity framed by the Catholic Church's 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. In 'Approaches
to Catholic Identity in Church Law' Provost (1994) explains the role of baptism to
the legal identification of an individual as 'Catholic', the differences between the
different *sui iuris* Churches, the important distinctions between being in full
communion or partial communion with the Catholic Church, the use of intention in
the definition of identity and the way in which Catholic identity may be assigned to
groups (schools, hospitals, institutions, movements, and so on). In the same volume,
Walf discusses the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* in terms of the 1917 Code, outlining
what has been retained (both good and bad) in the new Code and what has been
omitted (again, both good and bad).

Dixon (1996:27) defines a *Catholic* as '[a]ny person who has been baptised a
Catholic and who has not declared that he or she no longer wishes to be considered a
Catholic is, according to canon law [*sic*], a member of the Catholic Church'.
'Identity' is thus defined by *Canon Law* and 'the competent church authority

establishes who and what is 'Catholic' by virtue of the rules and rubrics of the Rite

of Baptism' (Walf 1994:128).

> Thus present church law recognises a two-fold dimension to Catholic identity: first, the basic identity of being a Christian, common to all the baptised; next, specific Catholic identity, which is dealt with in terms of 'full communion' based on the three-fold bonds of profession of faith, sacraments and ecclesial governance (Provost 1994:20).

Although the Catholic Church may be viewed as a single entity it actually consists of

twenty-two Churches that are divided into two groups: the Western or Latin Church

and the Eastern Churches that are *sui uris* (literally of their own law) (Schultz 2009:

see Table 3.1). 'Each of these Churches has its own liturgy and language and its

own hierarchical structure: some are headed by Patriarchs while others are governed

by Major Archbishops. Together they share one code of Canon Law that is different

to that of the Western Churches' (Schultz 2009).

The Alexandrian Rite:	Coptic Church (Patriarchate) Ethiopian Church
The Antiochean Rite:	Syrian Church (Patriarchate) Malankara Church Maronite Church (Patriarchate)
The Armenian Rite:	Armenian Church (Patriarchate)
The Chaldean Rite:	Chaldean Church (Patriarchate) Sylo-Malabar Church
The Constantinopolitan or Byzantine Rite:	Albanian Church Byelorussian Church Bulgarian Church Greek Church Hungarian Church Italo-Albanian Church Romanian Church Russian Church Rutherian Church Slovakian Church Ukrainian Church Jugoslavian Church Melkite Church (Patriarchate)

Table 3.1: Eastern Churches sui uris with Latin (Roman) Catholic Church

'There are now four Eparchies in Australia: the Ukrainian, Maronite, Melkite, and Chaldean Eparchies' (Schultz 2009). In the Toowoomba Diocese, members of the Maronite and Chaldean Churches currently worship in Latin (Roman) Catholic communities.

Other key components of *Canon Law's* definition of Catholic identity relate to the geographic territories in which Catholic ritual practice takes place, in particular *dioceses* and *parishes*. The Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* defines a diocese as 'a portion of the people of God ... entrusted to a bishop for him to shepherd with the cooperation of the presbyterium, so that ... it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 369). Thus a diocese is 'a section of the Church entrusted to the leadership of a bishop (Dixon 1996:27). Further, '[a]s a rule, a portion of the people of God which constitutes a diocese or other particular church is limited to a definite territory so that it includes all the faithful living in the territory' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 372.1). Thus, a Catholic is able to identify themselves as a member of their diocese, for example, a Toowoomba Catholic, a Maitland-Newcastle Catholic or a Broome Catholic. However, as a 'diocese or other particular church is to be divided into distinct parts or parishes' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 374.1) it is more likely that a Catholic will self-identify themselves as a St Peter Damian's parishioner, a St Adalbert's parishioner or a Lady of the Angels parishioner.

Canon 515.1 of *Canon Law* defines a parish as 'a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 515.1). Although parishes *may* be established to serve a language community or to serve the needs of members of one of the other twenty-one *sui uris* Churches of the East that form part of the Catholic Church (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 518, Schultz 2009), most of the parishes of Australia are territorial/geographic territories. That said, the revised *Code of*

Canon Law promulgated in 1983 'no longer defines a parish in exclusive terms of either priest or territory. Rather, the new *Code of Canon Law* defines a parish in terms of *community*' (Gilmour 1986:3). The parishes of the Diocese of Toowoomba each encompass a bounded, geographic territory, with this sense of regional belonging contributing to a person's self-definition of their Catholic identity. The parish's group identity is further supported by a parish's shared history, often celebrated in anniversary celebrations, and an individual's membership of a scriptural study group, choir, or other in-parish group, such as a St Vincent de Paul conference or Care and Concern group. However, the prime function of a parish is as 'a definite community of the Christian faithful' where 'the Christian faithful are nourished through the devout celebration of the sacraments and, in a special way, the Most Holy Eucharist' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 516.1 and 528.2, Harrington 2009:17).

Historical development

> Catholicism is 'a living community of faith, a community with its own distinctive rituals and structures, its own patterns of individual and collective religious life. It is a community that has experienced a long and complex history, one reaching back now almost two thousand years. In the course of that history it has grown and developed; it has encountered and entered into complex relationships and historical situations, cultures and situations it has both influenced and been influenced by; it has known periods of extraordinary vitality and expansion, as well as periods of crisis and decline. What is true of the past remains true of the present. History continues (Donovan 1997:1-2).

Up until the 1054 C.E. Schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches (Phillips 2004) to be Christian was synonymous with being Catholic as there were no other Christian Churches. Even so, the matters of doctrine, religious practice and papal authority that caused the Schism did not divide Christianity in the same way as the later fifteenth-century Reformation did that saw the formation of distinctive

Christian Churches beyond that of Catholicism (Eastern or Western). Therefore, discussion of the historical development of 'Christian identity' until this time concerns the historical rootedness of Christianity and its early experiences of community in its first millennium. 'Christianity is a historical religion…because it believes that history itself is the medium in and through which God comes to us' (Donovan 1997:38). It is rooted in specific historical events including the history of Israel, with particular emphasis placed on those events of Jewish history that pertain to the life of Jesus the Nazarene (Donovan 1997:5). 'Explicit Christian faith was born with the experience of the resurrection of Jesus and with the gift of the Pentecostal Spirit' received in baptism (Donovan 1997:13).

Although having its origins in Judaism, it is the ritual of baptism and the 'community of faith' into which one was baptised that first distinguished Christian-Jews from the other Jews of their time. 'From the beginning baptism is not simply a ritual that relates individuals to the saving grace of Christ it is a means by which they enter into the community of faith' (Donovan 1997:14).

> For almost the first three hundred years of its history the church was
> largely made up of relatively small, predominantly urban communities
> spread through the countries bordering on, and east of, the Mediterranean
> …Once Christianity was given legal status by the Roman emperors and
> then became the official religion of the empire all this began to change
> …What are now known as parishes began to emerge (Donovan 1997:22-
> 23).

The historical development of the Catholic Church from these geographically dispersed groups to a hierarchical institution has been discussed elsewhere by theologians, historians and others, as has the historical-theological impact of the sixteenth century Reformation (Birmelé 1994, Bokenkotter 1985, Collins 1998, Donovan 1997, Hill 1989). Key to this historical development of an 'identity' that was distinctively Catholic, especially post-Reformation, was the way in which

Catholic identity was regularly defined by its (purported) differences from Protestantism, with 'a tendency to contrast Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity by describing the former as sacramental and the latter as more focussed on the word' (Donovan 1997:87). Birmelé (1994:119) summarises Catholic identity as encompassing an individual's relationship to the Church; dependent on one's relation to the Church; including ethnic differences, such as the Latin (Roman) Church; features priests, cults and sacrifices; sacraments as things that one is 'doing and seeing' (by the nineteenth century); and the 'church as sacrament' (by the twentieth century). Using the common Catholic-Protestant dichotomy used in this definition of 'identity' he places this description against Protestant identity as encompassing an individual's relationship to the church; dependent on one's relation to Christ; less inclusive of ethnic difference as it was based on German culture; features critical and prophetic thought; the word of God as that which one is 'hearing' (by the nineteenth century); and the 'church as word' (by the twentieth century).

It can be seen that Catholic identity up until the sixteenth century evolved as the Church itself underwent significant developments from its historical origins in first century Palestine to an important institution in the European/Western world in the sixteenth century. However, to 'become a Christian is never just a personal decision and action. It involves entry into a community of faith … in which also they are invited to contribute in some fashion to the community's life and mission' (Donovan 1997:21). What constitutes entry into this community, as aforementioned, is baptism. While the Catholic Church has maintained its own legal structure since its emergence as an institution, it is the definition as outlined in the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* and its revised 1983 *Code of Canon Law* that is the officially recognised

method of assigning Catholic 'identity' to an individual. How this relatively simplistic 'identity' is lived and relates to the broader world has been discussed extensively by theologians.

Theologians

Historical development

In the period from the Reformation to the Council of Trent, distinctive of Catholicism 'was the emphasis that the Catholic tradition gave to the sacraments and to involvement in the sacramental life of the church … The sacramental system touched on all aspects of the life of individuals and of the church community' (Donovan 1997:87). While Collins (1998), writing from an historical perspective, outlines the origins and development of the papacy (from Peter and Paul to 'Bishop of Rome' and modern pontificates up to John Paul II), suggesting it as a component of Catholic identity, it is the Tridentine Catholic identity that developed during the Counter-Reformation that is most relevant to this research project as it is the form of Catholicism in which most of those encountered or formally interviewed were raised and whose after-effects continue to be felt within the universal, Australian and Toowoomba Churches. A gathering of bishops at the Council of Trent, in three sessions between 1545 and 1563, made sacramental theology a priority and 'basically reaffirmed in a solemn way the sacramental synthesis that had been formally taught in the medieval period' (Donovan 1997:89-90).

> Because Trent set the tone for the renewal of Catholic life for the next four hundred years, its anti-reformation emphases had a profound influence on modern Catholic identity … Tridentine Catholicism … put a considerable emphasis on a distinctively Catholic understanding of the sacraments and on the responsibility of the laity to participate regularly in them [and] committed

> Catholics were those who took the sacramental life of the church seriously and who participated regularly in it (Donovan 1997:90).

Following the Council of Trent three hundred years passed before the Church's leaders gathered again in the mid-nineteenth century 'and in that time the whole face of Europe had altered and the New World had been occupied, not to mention the religious diversification that occurred in the wake of the Reformation' (Hill 1989:48-49). Responding to the perceived threats of liberalism and modernism Pope Pius IX convened the first Vatican Council in 1869-1870 (Bokenkotter 1985:111-112, Donovan 1997:127). The council concentrated all three functions of the Church (doctrinal, celebration of sacraments and government) in the Pontiff and the curia (Collins 1998:63). Thus, prior to the Second Vatican Council in the mid-twentieth century, most Catholics continued to hold a Tridentine identity.

Pre-Vatican II Catholic identity

'[B]efore the Council there was an amazingly comprehensive, at least implicitly, agreement among *all* Catholics, men and women, clergy and laity, Magisterium and believers, on what was Catholic' (Greinacher 1994:6). The Catholic Church was seen as a perfect society, *societas perfecta*, with membership in that society, acquired through baptism, guaranteeing salvation (Greinacher 1994: 6-7). For today's Catholics in their seventies, eighties and older, it was the community to which one belonged in their childhood and youth. This Church was an inner-city, or rural, largely ethnic parish or small faith community, which encompassed much of their everyday life (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008) – local parish church where the family attended Sunday Mass, children underwent their sacraments of initiation, family members were married and family funerals were held; the parochial

schools where children were educated in the faith and for the community; and the surrounding neighbourhood/community of fellow believers. The 1950s, in particular, saw booms across Australia in terms of religious practice and had the highest rates of religious participation (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:119). As there were few cars in Australia at that time and the population was far less mobile than it is today, being involved in Church was as much a social as a religious experience, with Church sporting clubs (Catholic tennis club, Catholic cricket club), organisations for each parish segment (young girls, young boys, young men, young women, married men, married women) and parish social events (picnics, dances) (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). With less individual mobility than is the case across the broader Australian community today it was quite common for the physical church building to be the centre of the local Catholic community (or of any Christian denomination) with the life of that parish community revolving around the rituals, organisations and social groups of that faith-community.

Great emphasis was placed on the visible signs of Catholic identity, especially where Catholics were a minority, such as the eating of meat on Fridays, attending Sunday Mass, men wearing a jacket and tie to services or women wearing hats and gloves to church (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008; Weakland 1985:5-6). To be Catholic was to follow Christ and to recognise the Pope as the chief shepherd, along with bishops, with one's parish being part of this Catholic identity because 'no local community of faith can be separated from the whole' (Weakland 1985:6-7, 24).

> Good Catholics had their children baptised as soon as possible after birth.
> They saw to it that they were confirmed at the appropriate time and that they
> made their first communion. Regular attendance at the Sunday Mass was a
> mark of serious commitment to the church. In the twentieth century an
> increasing emphasis was put on weekly communion and therefore on a more
> regular practice of the sacrament of penance. Catholics took for granted that
> their marriage would receive a church blessing and that it would be recognised

> as a sacrament. Death and its immediate preparation involved the presence of the priest and the administration of extreme unction and the other last rites (Donovan 1997:90).

The opening sequence of Paramount Pictures' 1944 film *Going My Way*, starring Bing Crosby, anecdotally shows this form of Catholic community – the new curate (assistant priest) for the inner-city parish of St Dominic's, Fr O'Malley (Crosby) is walking along the street, identifiable by his black clothing and priestly collar. Children playing ball in the street say hello, with one asking, "Father, can you step in? I have to go do something in the house". After the game disperses, several neighbourhood women tell him about his new parish before giving him directions to St Dominic's. In this sequence, you can see that the parishioners live within walking distance of their parish church, reside in the same apartment buildings alongside one another and raise their children together. A Catholic priest is shown respect and considered a community-member, even when unknown to the locals. Although fictional, the people and community of St Dominic's presents a form of Catholic identity that would be familiar to many of today's older Catholics, in much of the Catholic world. 'In pre-Vatican II days, there seemed to be a thousand practices and "real things" that distinguished Catholic Christians … the nightly Rosary … and the vivid picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus … [a] picture of a kindly Jesus presiding over [the] kitchen – *realia* of Catholic identity' (Groome 2002:32).

However, '[b]eginning in the 1930s, a great movement of renewal swept through Catholic Christianity, reaching a crescendo with the Second Vatican Council (1962-65)' (Groome 2002:xx).

Post-conciliar Catholic identity

'The Second Vatican Council is recognised as the great seedbed for many developments in the Church today. The theological self-understanding of the new ministers and the response to these ministers by the larger Church ... are rooted in perspectives and ideals proclaimed by the council' (Fox 2002:235). Vatican II's historical development, theological and liturgical ramifications; the role of politics; and its impact upon the wider world, are but a few of the ways in which this important event has been discussed by theologians, sociologists, historians, clergy and various commentators, both Catholic and non-Catholic (Berger 2008, Ebaugh 2009, Greeley 1982, Haight 2008, Hughson 2008, Hoge 1986, Houtart 1968, Küng & Swidler 1986, Lösel 2008, McGeoch 2009, Murphy 1987, Swidler 1986, Tanner 2009, Walf 1986, Wicks 2009, Williams 1987). Relevant to this project is the Conciliar Catholic identity that emerged when the 'Church defined itself and Christian faith in a completely new way, both internally and externally (Greinacher 1994:9).

On January 25, 1959 Pope John XXIII called for a second Vatican Council. This took place in two sessions between October 1962 and December 1965, with the latter led by Pope Paul VI following the death of Pope John XXIII (Bokenkotter 1985: 29-30, 85-87; Collins 1987:20, 49; Donovan 1997:51-52, 128-131, 145-147; Hill 1989:49-51). Bringing together all bishops, which in 1959 numbered 2 594 in attendance, and the superiors-general of all religious orders of priests, numbering 156 (Collins 1987:18), in 'sheer numbers and in the variety of national, ethnic, and linguistic traditions that its members represented, Vatican II was the most universal council of church history (Donovan 1997:145). 'The Council opened on 11 October 1962 … the largest council in the history of the Church' (Collins 1987:20-21,

1998:73). Also present were Orthodox and Protestant observers whose 'presence and psychological influence' was 'profoundly important' (Collins 1987:21; Collins 1998:74).

The consequences and influences of the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, have been wide-reaching and continue to be felt today. Much has been written about the forces at work within the Church, and without, that led to Pope John XXIII calling for Vatican II, the development of the framework under which it would operate, the topics and themes to be discussed and addressed, the documents promulgated then and in the years immediately after, and the way in which the change of pontificate to that of Pope Paul VI may have shaped its conclusions. There is far too much to be included here and these areas have been dealt with extensively by many others (Berger 2008; Collins 1998, 1987; Ebaugh 2009; Fox 2002; Greeley 1982; Haight 2008; Hughson 2008; Hoge 1986; Houtart 1968; Küng & Swidler 1986; Lösel 2008; McGeoch 2009; Murphy 1987; Swidler 1986; Tanner 2009; Walf 1986; Wicks 2009; William 1987).

Taking an historical approach Greinacher (1994) discusses how Catholic identity has changed over the last century by providing descriptions for the periods before, during, and after the Second Vatican Council in 'Catholic Identity in the Third Epoch of Church History'. He suggests that 'Catholic identity' post-Vatican II has four key components – first, that all Catholics are obliged to compare their personal faith to the Church's faith; second, that respect for other religions, including Judaism, would emerge through the fruitful co-operation of ecumenism; third, that all Catholics are brothers and sisters, irrespective of cultures; and, fourth, that '[b]eing Catholic means believing that God is active throughout the world, not only

in the Church, for this world is God's world' (Greinacher 1994:11-12). Thus,

Catholic Christians adopted an identity that was broader and more encompassing

than they had hitherto encountered, especially for those whose lived experience had

been in ghetto-like communities of 'we' Catholics who stood in solidarity against the

'others' (Protestants, non-Christians, 'non-believers'). This newly emerging

'Catholic identity is *sought* within a Christian community, as an individual making

an enquiry of the world' (Greinacher 1994:12-13). Following centuries of insular

experiences and personal devotions 'Vatican II championed a communal

understanding of the Church, insisting that its primary nature is to be "a people of

God" rather than hierarchical institution' (Groome 2002:118). 'As important an

achievement as Vatican II was in itself, its real meaning for the life of the church

depended and continues to depend upon the way that its decisions and

recommendations are understood and given concrete form in local communities

around the world' (Donovan 1997:149).

Sacramental

Due to the heavy emphasis placed upon liturgy and the seven sacraments of the

Catholic Church, it has often been described as a sacramental, or Eucharistic, church.

All aspects of the life of individuals and of the church community is touched by the

Church's sacramental system because the 'whole life of the church and not just its

liturgical activity has a sacramental character' (Donovan 1997:87, 99). Catholic

tradition places great emphasis on the Church's sacraments and the sacramental life

of the Church, paying particular emphasis to the participation in the seven formal

sacraments of the Church by its members. In Catholic Church tradition, there are

seven sacraments – the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Eucharist {Communion}), Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Orders (Ordination), Marriage and Anointing of the Sick (includes Viaticum {Last Rites}). 'Catholic Christianity has long cherished the celebration of Eucharist as the apex of the seven sacraments and, indeed, of the whole sacramentality of life … For Catholic Christians, Mass is the central symbol of divine-human encounter, the most sacred event at which God and people come together' (Groome 2002:101). This sacramental theology was made a priority at the Council of Trent in response to the reformers led by Luther, with this *sacramental principal* then becoming one of Catholicism's most distinctive features (Donovan 1997:89-91). 'The liturgy is the more fundamental and all-embracing reality of which the sacraments are to be understood as key elements' (Donovan 1997:102). Experiencing the Church's sacraments, through liturgy, is crucial for the communication and reinforcing of Catholic identity with said liturgy at the heart of Catholic identity, both subjectively and objectively (Donovan 1997:102).

The Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* makes it clear that the Eucharistic Mass 'is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 897). As a sacramental church, the Catholic Church requires that all sacraments, whenever possible, be celebrated within the context of a Eucharistic Mass. Therefore, '[i]n one form or another, the eucharist [*sic*] or the Mass has always been at the centre of Catholic life. The eucharist [*sic*] clearly constitutes the centre of the liturgical life of the church. Everything else flows to it or flows from it' (Donovan 1997:105). It is through the Eucharist that Catholic belief and practice is

experienced by the bulk of its adherents, with this liturgical ritual providing a means by which individuals and communities are able to maintain and transmit their Catholic identity. As the 'centre, the apex of … spiritual life, must be the liturgy, especially the Eucharist' (Weakland 1985:88), 'the Eucharist is core to … Catholics, is personally salient to their major life events (weddings, funerals, reunion Masses, war experiences), and is *the* public and geographically global celebration of Catholicism which enacts the historical continuity of today's Catholics with an "unbroken" (but multifaceted) tradition' (Dillon 1999:216).

Although 'Roman Catholic identity is now far more complex and pluralistic than in the past [it] remains recognisably Catholic' simply because that identity is grounded in a Church that entails a 'sacramental envisionment of all reality' (Tracy 1994:115, 116).

Priesthood

The early Church, as outlined above, was a Jewish sect within the Mediterranean world composed of small groups of believers in communities spread throughout the region. In the New Testament and early Church most decision-making was by consensus (Swidler 1986:307), with local leaders, or presbyters, arising from within a community (Rowthorn 1986:13-18) to guide it in daily interactions with outsiders but these leaders were not considered to be distinct from other members of the community. The term 'layperson' and 'priest' are first recorded as being used by Clement of Rome, circa 95 CE, to describe the ordinary membership of the church (Rowthorn 1986:7). In the second century, the lay-ordained difference began to emerge (Pope 2004b:4), with local communities electing deacons, priests and

bishops, with the people's right to elect, or reject, bishops continuing for centuries (Swidler 1986:308-309). The

> election of bishops by clergy and people remained in effect until the twelfth century – over half the present span of Christianity. … In fact, as late as the start of the twentieth century less than half the world's bishops were directly named by the pope… It was not only on the local and regional levels that the laity were actively involved in ecclesiastical decision making; from the beginning that was also true on the church universal level as well (Swidler 1986:310).

Thus, there arose two 'kinds' of Christians – the ordained presbyters (deacons, priests and bishops) and the non-ordained laity. 'By divine institution, there are among the Christian faithful in the Church sacred ministers who in law are also called clerics; the other members of the Christian faithful are called lay persons [*sic*]' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 207.1). Later, as the Catholic Church developed as a distinct institution three forms of ordained minister became recognised – deacon, priest, and bishop. 'Ordination in the Roman Catholic Church represents a continuum, ranging from deacons (the lowest ranking) to priests, and finally to bishops (a category that includes archbishops, cardinals, and popes)' (Wallace 2003:42-43). Thus, the Catholic Church has three levels of ordained person – deacon, priest and bishop (with 'cardinal' and 'pope' as honorific titles) – and two types of layperson – a professed, or vowed, religious sister or religious brother (for example, Sisters of Mercy or Christian Brothers) and a non-professed layperson (married or single men and women). 'Those who belong to the ordained status (bishops, priests, deacons) are placed in a category of authority while the laity (married and single nonordained [*sic*] men and all married and single women) are situated in a nonauthoritative [*sic*] position in the church' (Wallace 2003:51).

Following the nearly complete absence of lay participation in the First Vatican Council in 1870 (Swidler 1986:311) for 'nearly a century there was no extended

magisterial treatment of the laity (Muldoon 2008:3). "The faithful" were defined in *Canon Law* as being "not clergy" and as those who receive the faith from the teachings of the episcopate (Muldoon 2008:3). Wilson (2008:41-42) explains this vision of "priest" as 'a man in holy orders[; a] cultic and community leader of a body of the faithful [responsible for] liturgical presiding [and the] canonically designated leader within the church community' and that 'clergy' is 'a sociological term that names the fact that society recognises a certain segment of its members as having recognisable social features and norms that distinguish them from the rest of society' (Wilson 2008:xv). Clericalism forms part of the institutional identity of the Catholic Church. Indeed, the Church 'is unrivalled for making its clergy a favoured elite – clericalism – with complete power in all matters of sanctifying, teaching, and ruling' (Groome 2002:117). Ordination provides 'entry into a single, spiritual service exercised by a corporate body of specially certified and empowered men' (Wilson 2008:54) who are thus distinguished from the majority of the faithful who are lay.

In contrast, 'the Second Vatican Council represented the culmination of extended reflection on the laity' resulting in the promulgation of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, in 1965 (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1965, Muldoon 2008:4). This acknowledged that it is through the everyday life of Catholic laypeople that the shared faith of Catholicism is shown to the world and through which the Holy Spirit is revealed (John Paul II 1988, Muldoon 2008:4). Building upon the re-claiming of the 'priesthood of all believers' by the Council, Blessed Pope John Paul II further acknowledged the importance of the laity to the work of the Church in the world in his 1988 encyclical *Christifideles Laici*, On the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World (Muldoon 2008:5).

Despite these developments to rectify some of the overbalance between the ordained and non-ordained members of the Catholic Church, the role of the ordained ministers in the Church's liturgical and ritual life remains central. Under the Church's *Canon Law*, ordained ministers are responsible for the administration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Viaticum and the Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and nuptial blessings, Funerals, and the Eucharistic celebration on Sundays and holy days of obligation (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 530). All sacraments are to be administered by an 'ordained minister', a priest or, for some sacraments, a deacon. In dioceses where the permanent diaconate has been restored (if not, seminarians are ordained transitional deacons as a step towards ordination) a deacon may confer baptism and marriage but only a priest can preside at Eucharist, confer absolution through Reconciliation and provide absolution through the Anointing of the Sick. Bishops confer ordination – to the diaconate, the priesthood and to a bishop's seat (including the Bishop of Rome). Therefore, 'the ordained ministry is at the heart of Catholic life' (Donovan 1997:136).

According to Groome (2002:86) 'Eucharist is "the sacrament of sacraments' (Aquinas' phrase) – for Christian faith the most eminent instance of divine-human encounter', a sentiment echoed by Donovan (1997:195) who suggests 'Sunday and the eucharist (*sic*) have been central to Catholic life from its very beginning'. With the Eucharist, colloquially termed 'Mass', so central to the liturgical life of parishes, there is a great reliance on the presence of an active priesthood in order for parishioners in Catholic communities to experience and 'practice' their faith identity. While for these individuals their own Catholic identity is defined in *Canon Law* as being 'lay' or 'clerical', it is their regular participation in the Sunday Eucharist in a faith community that is the measure by which most judge themselves to be observing

their obligations or practising their faith because 'reflective and loving participation in the eucharist (*sic*) remains for most Catholics the single most important way in which we celebrate and renew and deepen our faith and our Christian life' (Donovan 1997:195).

Communal

Although the simplest definition of Catholic identity is the Catholic Church's official definition as one who has received Baptism, many individuals self-define their Catholicity as a 'cultural Catholic', an 'irregular practitioner' or as a 'practising Catholic'. A cultural Catholic is one whose involvement in the ritual life of the Church has waned but who continues to identify themselves as 'Catholic', have an historical and cultural interest in the Church and acknowledge the influence of Catholic education upon their ethos and worldview (Collins 1991:53). These are 'people who have ceased practising as Catholics and "whose ethos and attitudes remain generically Catholic, even though their personal adherence to the Church may be minimal"' (Collins 2004:78, cited Collins 2008:105). Those who view their faith as important and want their children baptised and educated in Catholic schools but who only attend Mass on a semi-regular basis (for Easter/Christmas and family occasions) but have no further involvement in a parish or faith community may be termed irregular practitioners. This faith may be linked to an ethnic identity, so forms part of their self- and community- identification (Collins 1991:54), with participation in the beliefs and rites of Catholicism the means to express this collective reality and to maintain social unity through this shared faith (Durkheim 1912:38, 43). 'Practising', or 'active' Catholics attend Mass and/or other religious

services regularly, make financial contribution to a parish community and/or participate in the parish's social life. For these committed Catholics 'active faith forms the core element and the basic meaning structure of their lives' (Collins 1991:54) and 'active' Catholics would agree with Durkheim's suggestion that religious practice is 'an eminently social thing' that takes place within a 'moral community' (1912:38, 44).

As can be seen, the self-definition of those who are regular parishioners in a local community relies on their regular participation in the spiritual and social life of that *community*, again echoing Durkheim's suggestion that religious belief and an adherence to that belief is 'inseparable from the idea of Church [because] a Church is a moral *community*' (Durkheim 1912:44, my emphasis). Although Catholics may self-identify in these different ways, this project's use of parish fieldsites will rely primarily on the collective, communal definition of 'Catholic' within a parish setting where all who adhere to the unified beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church are united into one single moral community (Durkheim 1912:45). Canon 515.1 of the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* defines a parish as 'a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 515.1).

Although parishes *may* be established to serve a language community or to serve the needs of members of one of the other twenty-one *sui uris* Churches of the East that form part of the Catholic Church (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 518, Schultz 2009), the parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba each encompass a bounded, geographic territory, with this sense of regional belonging contributing to a

person's self-definition of their Catholic identity. The parish's group identity is

further supported by a parish's shared history, often celebrated in anniversary

celebrations (fiftieth, centennial), and an individual's membership of a scriptural

study group, choir, or other in-parish group, such as a St Vincent de Paul conference,

Baptismal Team or Care and Concern group. However, the prime function of a

parish is as 'a definite community of the Christian faithful' where 'the Christian

faithful are nourished through the devout celebration of the sacraments and, in a

special way, the Most Holy Eucharist' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 516.1,

528.2; Harrington 2009:17). Therefore, one's membership of a Catholic parish

community and self-identification as a Catholic is linked to access to, and reception

of, the sacraments, again reflecting the sacramental nature of Catholicism, as well as

the way in which its 'doctrinal and communal tradition provides [Catholics] with the

framework infusing their sense of what comprises a "legitimate" identity' (Dillon

1999:118).

The Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, under the stewardship of Bishop Emeritus of

Toowoomba William Morris, D.D. until 1st May 2011 and currently administered by

Apostolic Administrator Bishop Brian Finnigan, covering over 490 000 square

kilometres (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2009) contains fifty Catholic

communities in thirty-five parishes. Their sacramental needs are served by forty-six

priests, twenty-three of whom are available for full-time ministry, only three of

whom are under fifty years of age (Ranger 2010:8). At the time of writing, there are

twenty-one faith communities without a resident priest-pastor.

Although an individual's membership of a parish community was once limited to the

one within whose border you resided, in the post-conciliar Church Australian

Catholics regularly 'parish shop' in much the same way that they 'shop around' for a school or a doctor. For example, when I was a child my family changed parishes due to an interpersonal clash between my father and the parish priest; and as an adult I now worship at this diocese's Cathedral parish rather than in the parish to which I geographically belong. Although such 'parish shopping' may take place, people's Catholic identity continues to be communal because 'without a real sense of community, without a shared faith and a common religious life, there really is no Catholicism' (Donovan 1997:167). Just as Durkheim (1912:45) suggested that the beliefs and practices of religions unite 'into one single moral community … all those who adhere' to those beliefs and practices so, too, does the finding of a specific community of Catholic believers in which to do so ('parish shopping') permit the development of social togetherness. Creating and maintaining harmony within the broader society in which it exists, the Catholic Church's legal codes and accepted or normal cultural and ritual practices express the collective consciousness of its individual members through this social togetherness (Durkheim 1915, cited Bennett1996:75). The *communion* of the Catholic Church (*communio*) again exemplifies Durkheim's assertion that collective representations express collective realities; with religion an 'eminently social thing' (Durkheim 1912:38) and a communal religious identity 'capable of holding together a social order' (Wagner 2002:37).

This sense of community, and communal identity, encompasses self-identification with the Catholic tradition, and active participation in the Church's shared sacramental and liturgical practices, particularly in regular attendance at the celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass) (Dillon 1999:227). The Eucharist is the act of a community, not of individuals, so regular participation in this central Catholic

ritual creates the communal identity of the Catholic Church. In receiving Eucharist together, colloquially called 'Communion', the individual Catholic is *in communion with* their fellow parishioners in that time and place; *in communion with* the wider diocesan Church; *in communion with* the universal Church; and *in communion with* God, the saints, the martyrs and the ever-present Church of the past (and the future). An inherently affirmative notion, this sense of community (being 'in communion with') is not only an expression of an existing social order (with the Church, at least) it actively *shapes* that order while providing people with ultimate answers regarding the nature of existence, moral paradox and suffering; thus fulfilling Geertz's suggested function of religion (Geertz 1966). Consequently, 'a complex geometry emerges in the relationship between [the Church,] the state, social classes, social groups, and identities present in civil society. In each community [parish] and in each region [diocese], the social alliances … are specific, corresponding to the existing local/regional power relationships' (Castells 2004:333) that are themselves in a complex global relationship with the institutional Church. 'Most Catholics are conscious of themselves as belonging to a great worldwide community of common Christian identity, sharing core patterns of belief, ethics and worship' (Groome 2002:250). Thus, this community of believers and community of saints is both local and parochial while at the same time global in nature, reaching even beyond death. The 'faith community reaches beyond the grave, that even death does not break the bond of baptism … the saints remain bonded with the living in the Body of Christ and are now in the eternal presence of God' (Groome 2002:129).

This sense of 'community' identity is not synonymous with the institutional identity, with many Catholics supportive of their local parish community (its various ministries within the parish, its outreach to marginal groups) while simultaneously

disagreeing with aspects of the broader Catholic Church (teachings on artificial contraception, mandatory priestly celibacy). 'Identities [therefore] are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire' (Weeks 1990:89). In disagreeing with the institutional Church, Catholics are actively engaging in identity construction.

Sociologist Michelle Dillon studied the way in which marginalised American Catholics constructed their identity, while remaining within the institutional Church. She included three groups in her research – *Dignity*, a group for gay and lesbian Catholics and their families; *Women's Ordination Conference* (*WOC*); and *Catholics For a Free Choice* (*CFFC*), who hold a pro-choice stance on abortion (Dillon 1999:78-83, 85-95, 103-113). These 'pro-change Catholics' as she called them, are actively re-negotiating what it is to be Catholic in light of lifestyles, life experiences and choices that are in conflict with official Catholic doctrines and/or teachings. Although these Catholics are actively redrawing the boundaries of their Catholic identity or constructing an alternative Catholic identity, they specifically want to invoke Catholic identity as their overarching identity (Dillon 1999). For them, the pull of belonging to a larger culture, history and tradition of Catholicism is greater than the forces marginalising them, with 'their sense of identity … both nurtured and constrained by a strong consciousness that they are Catholic and thus part of a larger tradition' (Dillon 1999:118).

For these groups, a local 'parish' community is drawn around their group's marginalised status but still serves as a community of religious memory, where they desire to preserve the Catholic sacramental tradition through the public embracing of

the institutionalised symbols of the Eucharist because they, too, consider the core aspects of Catholicism to include global communality, the communal People of God and the Eucharist as a core sacramental ritual (Dillon 1999). Holding 'a deep personal attachment to the specificity of the Catholic Church's historical roots and global presence', Dillon's respondents (via detailed questionnaire) identify the same distinctive features of Catholicism discussed above – the Church's sacramental and liturgical system, public affirmations of Catholic identity and the Church's globalism and historical continuity (Dillon 1999:214, 215). As for all Catholics '"being Catholic" is an ongoing, personal and *collective* project' (Dillon 1999:251, my emphasis). A community of religious memory, Catholicism integrates these marginalised Catholics, together with all Catholics, into a larger *communal* tradition (Dillon 1999:123, my emphasis) by allowing them to be *in communion with* the global, trans-temporal Church. During the course of fieldwork in the Toowoomba diocese the distinction between the local parish/community and the institutional hierarchy/broader Church became more pronounced amongst Catholics due to local events, which are discussed in greater detail later.

This larger communal tradition embraces the thirty-five parishes and fifty communities of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. Its parishes are geographically defined, with the bulk of parishioners in each residing within the parish's borders. This is especially the case in the parishes outside the city of Toowoomba and its surrounding regions, due mostly to the vast distances between parishes. Within the Toowoomba environs Catholics may live within the borders of one parish, worship in another community and participate in the social or prayer groups with one or more other parishes. As one gentleman joked, 'here in Toowoomba, if there's a crash it'll be someone from St Ephram's going to St Pius V's hitting someone from St

Agatha's going to St Romuald's, with the crash in St Dam's Cathedral parish'
(Fieldnotes, 10th October 2010). However, 'no matter how wide the vision, nor how
universal the commitments, the Church is in the first place 'church' in the local
community where the eucharist [*sic*] and word are celebrated (Tracy 1994:114).

Thus, it is the parish in which one regularly worships that is considered to be a
person's parish, both by that individual and by that community. '[L]iving as a
Catholic Christian requires participating in a local faith community [because] the
baptismal vocation requires active participation in some local community [where]
every Christian is to contribute their time, talent, and treasure to the ministries of a
local parish or base community' (Groome 2002:127). These specific communal
attachments help to form "communities of memory" (Bellah 1985:153, cited Dillon
1999:119). The key participants and respondents within this project were identified
in each parish's broader life – its prayer group, craft group, social group, liturgy
committee, Parish Pastoral Council, scripture study group, music team,
Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Ministers of the Word (Readers) and so on
– because 'community [is] essential to being disciples and good citizens' within the
Catholic Church (Groome 2002:114).

Twenty-first century

In some ways Catholic identity today is in a state of flux, due to the increasing
fragmentation of communities, in a similar manner to global trends in other
communities and organisations. The globalised movement of people (transnational
migration, the greater ease of international travel), the advent of various technologies
(mobile telephones, the Internet) and the use of these technologies in new ways

(social networking sites) has led to a shifting of the notion of community to include 'online communities' or 'virtual worlds'. While the institutional Catholic Church has endeavoured to utilise some of these trends, such as the Vatican channel on YouTube, or 'apps' by which one can access Church documents, the Pope's statements and so on, the long term impact of these trends upon Catholic identity in the twenty-first century remains to be seen. '[B]eing a practicing Catholic has become much more of a voluntary phenomenon. This does not mean simply choosing to believe in Catholic doctrine and to follow Catholic moral teaching; rather, it involves a free and deliberate decision to become an active member of a parish or of some other worshipping community (Donovan 1997:193). Within the Catholic Church, including its parishes, this notion of 'community' is shifting, in some ways moving towards smaller communities within parishes (prayer group, scripture study group, family group) and, in others, shifting to a globalised identity, as local parish membership is replaced by 'transient' Catholics who attend the Eucharist at whatever parish they are able to get to (either for geographic or temporal reasons). 'Roman Catholic identity is now far more complex and pluralistic than in the past but remains recognisably Catholic' (Tracy 1994:116) due to the continuing claiming of the Church's ritual traditions and communal (albeit global) identity by Catholics.

'Being a Catholic means participating actively in the life of the church. This obviously involves a participation in the liturgy, but it also includes active participation in the mission of the church' (Donovan 1997:193). Increasing numbers of lay Catholics are undergoing formal studies in theology, liturgy and Canon Law. By 1992, one-quarter of the students in Roman Catholic theological schools in the United States were lay women (Wallace 1992:5). These 'Catholic laypersons are

gaining greater expertise in religious knowledge, pastoral care, and liturgical skills'
to enhance their active participation in the Church's ministries in the world
(Schoenherr 2002:119). 'The growth of lay theological education is also a sign of
increasing lay commitment to the ministry of the church' (Collins 1991:61). Fox
(2008:197-198) suggests that the heart of change in the Catholic Church today lays
in the increasing lay responsibility for the work of the Church, in various ministries
within its parishes as volunteers (thrift shop, catechetics, youth ministry) and on-staff
(directors of youth liturgy/religious education/liturgy, pastoral associates). Looking
at American parishes in the 1980s, Fox (2008:197) shows that an average of 208
parishioners provide 810 hours of service to their respective parishes each month, 'in
response to the practical reality that parishes and dioceses could not catechise new
converts, run small faith groups, plan liturgies, and administer facilities if they had to
rely exclusively upon priests to do so' (Allen 2009:184). A global phenomenon,
Germany's second largest employer after *Volkswagen* is the Catholic Church, due to
the rapidly growing number of laypeople being employed (Allen 2009:194).

Fox (2008:205) contends that 'the laity has an increased consciousness of their
responsibility for ministry and for Catholic identity today' due to this re-engagement
with their faith. 'Perhaps the most visible indicator of [these] expanding lay roles is
that there are more groups in the Church today whose explicit purpose is to
encourage lay activism than at any other point in Catholic history' (Allen 2009:187).
It is through this expanding 'on-the-ground' experiences of increasing numbers of
Catholic laity that a new, twenty-first identity is being formulated. In particular, as
the number of laypeople, especially the number of women, in ministerial roles
increases, at times outnumbering the traditionally clerical ministerial roles (Allen

2009:195-196) a concomitant re-defining of what it is to be 'Catholic' will continue to take place.

Lay Catholics are engaging with their faith in new ways, either re-embracing past practices using modern media (daily prayer by e-mail or text message) or creating other modern forms of faith practice. There will continue to be what Allen (2009:57) calls a 'creative response to modernity' that will reflect 'generational dynamics'. Thus, as 'Catholicism shifts to a stronger assertion of its identity, it's reasonable to expect an initially smaller but more committed membership, which will produce new energy and could lead over time to new growth' (Allen 2009:76) all the while re-creating what it is to be 'Catholic'.

Australian Catholic identity

Historical development – colonial Church

The first Catholics to enter Australia, like most of its first European inhabitants, were convicts (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). Although there were among them a few priest-convicts, the bulk of the Irish convicts were lay Catholics far from the institutional and structural Church. As the bulk of these Catholic convicts were Irish and transported for political crimes, viewed as a 'potentially disruptive group' of 'Irish radicals' (Kociumbas 1992:59) the beginnings of the Australian Catholic Church were grounded in being a distrusted minority. As convicts, they were disempowered and became used to this lack of power as they established the Catholic Church in Australia (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). Just as Europe was divided, these sectarian divisions were imported to Australia from Ireland and England (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). For example, land

regulations enacted in January 1825 required that 'No less than one-seventh of the land in each county was to be reserved for the support of Anglican churches and schools' whereas no similar provision was made for Catholics or other religious groups (Kociumbas 1992:135). As there were few clergy the Catholic communities in the developing colonies developed without the usual sacramental life of the broader Church, including the absence of a regular Eucharistic celebration.

Although Australia never developed the formally defined state church that exists in England and the United Kingdom, the first ministers of religion granted permission to enter the Australian colonies were Church of England ministers, to minister to the spiritual needs of the colony's governing 'class', 'to mend convict morals and promote marriage and reproduction' (Kociumbas 1992:144). Moreover, just as there existed laws in England that forbade Catholics from going to university or holding public offices, the English authorities in Australia were wary of giving Catholics positions of power (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). The ensuing dominance of Protestantism, especially Anglicanism, led to the development of a 'ghetto mentality' that was heightened by the influx of Irish migrants, including Catholics, during the Irish Diaspora of the mid-nineteenth century. Particularly in rural areas, 'these distinctions took on something of a tribal character (Irish against English)' (Bolton 2001:113) and by the late nineteenth century, '[s]ectarianism was endemic. Catholic and Protestant children would meet on the street and taunt each other with rhymes [– 'Convent, convent ring the bell, while the Protestants march to hell' and 'Catholics, Catholics, sitting on a log, eating maggots out of a frog' (Luke, Interview 27th June 2011)]; job advertisements advised 'No Catholics need apply'; [and] mixed marriages could result in ostracism' with such experiences continuing well into the twentieth century (Macintyre 2001:67; Interview 27th June 2011).

Pre-Vatican II Catholic identity – sectarianism and the Irish

In the nineteenth century, most of Australia's Catholic bishops were Irish, along with a majority of the clergy and by the twentieth century the 'great majority of Church members were of Irish descent; their bishops and many of their priests were trained in Ireland; since Ireland was in bondage to England, this conjunction of faith, class and nationality fostered an intense cohesion among the Catholics in Australia' (Macintyre 2001:66-67). 'The impact of Ireland was further felt through the orders of nuns imported initially to minister to the need for charity but, with the implementation of compulsory education, to provide teaching staff in hundreds of parochial schools' (Kingston 2001:82). Heavily influenced by Irish cultural and religious practices of the priests and religious sisters sent to Australia as missionaries, the Australian Church became noticeably defensive, insular and almost complete in its encompassing of a Catholic's entire life (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008). This led to 'an inward-looking self-absorption so that Catholics mixed as little as possible with the rest of the community, keeping to their own schools, sporting and social organisations. The church became a world in itself' (Kingston 2001:84).

Post-conciliar Catholic identity – post-World War Two and multiculturalism

The opening sequence of Paramount Pictures' *Going My Way*, as described above, could just as easily have been the streets of Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne. Thus, most Catholics today have a Church experience that is Irish in its 'flavour' due to the lasting effects of the educational systems and parish networks established by these

Irish missionaries. It was not until the post-World War Two period that its migrant influx brought European Catholicism to Australia, including non-Latin Churches with their emphasis on home-based Catholicism gathered around the family table; thus, Australian Catholic identity's entrenchment in Irish-ness began to yield to 'the influence of Catholic migrants from different backgrounds – Polish, Italian or Spanish – even before the Vatican councils [*sic*] of 1962-63 forced the pace of change' (Bolton 2001:113). Today, due to a combination of Australia's broader immigration policies, and the abovementioned globalisation of the movements of peoples, communications and communities, Australian Catholic identity is far more eclectic.

My Catholic identity

As mentioned previously, I am a full-initiated member of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, as were my parents and the three living grandparents of my childhood. I was born and raised in Queensland, educated at Catholic schools and taken to Mass on Sundays. Therefore, in many ways, I am a 'typical' Australian 'cradle' Catholic. I have been a member of several parishes during my life, as well as regularly attending the parishes of family or friends when visiting them. Hence, I have drawn upon my own experiences as an Australian Catholic as a baseline by which to observe the parishes that have been the fieldsites of my ethnographic research. To clarify, prior to commencing this fieldwork I asked myself two questions – 'What is a Catholic?' and a follow-up 'Why? How?' – in order to articulate for myself what I would be asking of others.

While my regular attendance at Eucharist and upbringing within the Church may be typical of many of Australia's Catholics, I am unable to speak for or from the perspective of converts to the faith, migrant Catholics or the generations of Australian Catholics whose experiences include the pre-Conciliar Church. As an active Catholic, I have at different times been part of various ministries in my parish (youth ministry, music, liturgy preparation, funeral team, social committee); attended workshops related to liturgy, music and youth ministry; and pursued formal certificate-level studies in theology. Living in an urban centre, I have always been a parishioner in parishes with a resident priest-pastor. As I pursue my doctoral studies and review theological, anthropological, sociological and historical literature about the Catholic Church, both globally and in the Australian context, I am perhaps more engaged with the Church's intellectual tradition than many of my peers.

The 'self' and the 'other'

Numerous disciplines have been, or currently are, interested in the notion of 'identity' at individual or collective level, including history, psychology, business administration, political science, education and sociology (Buckser 1999, Cerulo 1997, Friedman 1994, Polzer 2003). For example, psychology has long considered 'identity' to be an aspect of personality that is formed in childhood; and business administration is interested in smoothing over the differences between individuals in order to foster more efficient workplaces.

Representative of historical approaches to identity are the works of Buckser (1999) and Friedman (1994). Andrew Buckser uses the story of the rescue of Denmark's Jews in World War Two as the background for a discussion of how identity can be

created through a shared experience while Friedman explores 'identity' in terms of its historical development and the way in which one's self-definition of identity can be politicised. He also discusses self-definition of identity, ethnicity as a vehicle of identity, the contextual nature of identity definition and the constructed nature of identity as 'a complex temporal interaction of multiple practices of identification external and internal to a subject population' (Friedman 1994:853). Exemplifying sociology's approach is Cerulo's examination of the development of 'collective' definitions of identity that are focussed on 'we-ness' (1997:386) while also suggesting factors such as boundary, self-identification, shared social or linguistic factors, ethnicity and territory as being components of self-definition of 'identity'; however, she goes further in that she also discusses migrants (transnational identities), new social movements (identity movements – environmental activists), and virtual identities (world wide web/Internet).

Polzer's *Identity Issues in Groups* (2003), outlines the notion of 'identity' in groups, drawing contributors from business, business administration and psychology; the first volume of Castells' three-volume work, *The Power of Identity* (2004), discusses the impact of modern technologies, networks and communications upon the creation, maintenance and re-creation of identities from a technological perspective; and Rutherford's *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (1990), examines identity in terms of community, culture and difference and also draws contributors from several disciplines. Thus, there is widespread interest in the concept of 'identity' at present across numerous disciplines. Indeed, '[j]ust now everybody wants to talk about 'identity' [because] identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty (Mercer 1990:43, cited Hoffstaedter 2011:2).

Somewhat broader in its approach, anthropology's view of 'identity' encompasses both the notions of individuality and 'self', as well as ideas in which one's identity encompasses broader categories, such as kinship networks, clans, shared history, totemic or religious affiliations, language, culture or territory (Buckser 1999, Cerulo 1997, Duderija 2008, Smedley 1998, Sökefield 1999). 'Identity' is something that is self-defined, though not necessarily consciously defined, either at the individual or group level, based on notions of 'we-ness' or sameness, (Cerulo 1997:386, Sökefield 1999:417). Through shared characteristics, such as place of birth, village/territory, kinship, language, past/history or ethnicity (Buckser 1999:2, Cerulo 1997:390, Friedman 1994:846, Smedley 1998:691), and/or shared practices, such as religious belief, skills/crafts or occupation (Duderija 2008:374, Smedley 1998:691-693), 'clusters of people living in demarcated areas develop lifestyles and language features that distinguish them from others and they perceive themselves as being separate societies with distinct social histories' (Smedley 1998:691). That one 'belongs to a group because one is a bearer of a substance common to other members' (Friedman 1994:839) becomes the means by which an individual whose identity is perceived to be part of a collective identity is able to recognise another's 'we-ness' (Cerulo 1997:386). Due to the self-definition of identity, by individuals or groups, it is 'a deeply context-bound process in which the real continuities are present in the form of identities that are construed in relation to people's immediate conditions and everyday existences' (Friedman 1994:841) and 'are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall 1990:225).

The 'self'

The notion of the 'self' as a bounded, individual entity is a highly contested concept due to the very nature of 'self'. *Un*-natural, the 'self' is constructed when an individual (or a group) disregards socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, political or linguistic differences between themselves and other individuals (or groups) in order to define one 'self' as one specific thing and a different person as 'other'. Abu-Lughod (1991:140, 149) suggests that 'the self is always a construction, never a natural or found entity' that is created as an opposition to an 'Other' [*sic*], with 'the degree to which people in the communities … appear [as] "other" … a function of how anthropologists write about them'. She also stressed that these unnatural constructions, 'self' and 'other', entail the repression or ignoring of further differences in the formulation of the former and the freezing of differences and overemphasis of coherence, through the use of culture, in the creation of the latter (Abu-Lughod 1991:140, 143, 146). In identifying a religious 'self', specifically a Catholic self, differences of language, ethnicity, socio-economic background, level of education or other distinguishing features of adherents are overlooked in order to claim the shared membership of the Catholic Church through baptism as an identifier of our*selves*. Thus, the need to identify one*self* is of paramount importance to individuals, as it facilitates their identification of fellow 'selves' (in this instance, fellow Catholics) with whom they share important characteristics or beliefs; in opposition to 'others' (non-Catholics, non-believers and so on). Shared ritual or knowledge, such as Catholicism's celebration of Eucharist, can be used to maintain this artificial cohesion as well as to mark the 'other' as different (Abu-Lughod 1991:156), in the same way that Saniotis (2004:54) suggests that rituals of allegiance are used to measure the 'otherness' of those without this shared knowledge. To draw

upon Bourdieu's notions of 'cultural capital' and 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1977, cited in Hage 1998:53), it is through this shared ritual of the Church that this shared knowledge, or cultural capital, is transformed into symbolic capital, expressed as the recognition of an 'us'.

The 'other' and 'othering'

The conquest of the New World created for Europeans a model by which to constitute the 'other', particularly as a 'savage' or 'primitive' alternative to the 'civilised' West (Trouillot 1991:23, 28). Trouillot suggested a Janus analogy in which the 'West' and the 'other' are its two faces before suggesting that there is 'no Other [*sic*] but multitudes of others who are all others for different reasons' (Trouillot 1991:28, 39). 'Othering' refers to the way in which an individual distinguishes those who are different from themself, whether ethnically, linguistically, culturally or ideologically. The 'other' is believed to be physically, geographically, politically, linguistically, ethnically, intellectually or ideologically opposed to the 'self'. Among the body of work to look at 'othering' is that of Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), Ghassan Hage (1998), Edward Said (2003) and Arthur Saniotis (2004).

In 'Writing Against Culture' Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) outlines the way in which anthropologists construct the notion of 'other' and how the process of 'othering' underlies cultural anthropology and ethnography. Hage (1998:42) suggests that the objectification of the 'other' is a means for the 'self' to re-assert power, while Saniotis (2004:49) asserts that by constructing an 'other' a dominant group is able to restore control. Saniotis explores the way in which the 'power' of the 'other' is

considered undesirable by the dominant group (Saniotis 2004:50) beginning with a discussion of how 'otherness' is constructed and experienced inter-subjectively. By focussing on the identification of the 'other' and upon the ways to reduce its influence, an individual (or group) is able to remove a perceived threat. The encroaching 'other' is defined as undesirable through rituals of allegiance and is then controlled strategically through marginalisation (Saniotis 2004:51, 53).

Anthropology's early focus upon the 'other' has influenced the development of notions of 'identity', with the European/Western notion of 'self' as individualistic, autonomous and integrated being inverted in these 'others' whose notion of 'identity' is formed in relation to kinship, village and so on, as outlined above (Sökefield 1999:418). Hence, identity also exists in terms of *difference*, with the group one is a part of differentiated from the other through the sameness of insiders and difference of outsiders (Sökefield 1999:417-418, 422) and this identity 'usually referred to as a marker of difference' (Hoffstaedter 2011:2). Identities, therefore, 'are structures of signification that are subject to *différance*, that is, to the play of differences' (Sökefield 1999:423). Just as 'we-ness' may form to define the 'self', either individually or collectively, '*theyness* envelopes us and the way we see the world and ourselves' (Hoffstaedter 2011:3). 'Identity becomes relevant under conditions of boundary-setting and exclusion' (Wagner 2002:38) with the boundaries that mark this sameness or difference being a characteristic shared by a group and absent in an outsider, such as those abovementioned – language, culture, ethnicity, religion, class, occupation, history, socio-economic circumstances, political affiliation, regional belonging, clan, gender, kinship or sexual orientation. 'Difference, therefore, persists – in and alongside continuity' (Hall 1990:227). Identity 'is a complex temporal interaction of multiple practices of identification

external and internal to a subject population' (Friedman 1994:853) with self-identification 'a process that unfolds in relation to economic, historical, and political contexts' and these boundary distinctions then directing collective orientation and patterning behaviour (Cerulo 1997:395-396). Therefore, 'identity is a key to make sense of the world around oneself and to find a locus in time and space for the individual' (Hoffstaedter 2011:11).

Hiedrun Friese's collection, *Identities: Time, Difference, and Boundaries* (2002a) is an example of anthropological discussions of 'identity' and includes Peter Wagner's paper exploring anthropological discourse on the 'self'/'other', boundaries and exclusion, and self and/or collective identities. Stuart Hall's essay in Rutherford's cross-disciplinary discussion of 'identity', *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (1990), describes 'cultural' identities as the means by which identification is formed 'within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning'* (Hall 1990:226). Goddard and Van Heekeren use an ethnographic case-study of two Papua New Guinean villages to discuss the way in which 'Tradition' and Christian identity serves to form collective or group identity, as well as the way in which this may be modified through time by external and/or internal influences. In examining the relatively recent development of the 'race' idea Audrey Smedley contends its present embeddedness in ideas of 'identity' reflect historical events (slavery, colonialism) that required a permissive framework in which to take place (racial inferiority/superiority). In examining how 'identity' or 'ethnicity' were created to allow the development of us-them, insider-outsider, superior-inferior dichotomies she exemplifies anthropological interest in the historical development of 'identity' within the discipline. In a similar way, Martin Sökefield's discusses the way in which anthropology's focus on the 'other' has influenced the development of notions

of 'identity'. He demonstrates how anthropology looks at 'group identity' in terms of sameness, shared characteristics, social creation and modification, among other things before then discussing identity in terms of *difference*, with the group one is part of differentiated from the other through the sameness of insiders and difference of outsiders.

'Starting out from the presupposition of distinct identities of the 'Other' [*sic*] and of the 'Self' [*sic*], an attempt is made to bridge the gap between the two' (Shimada 2002:136), which may occur in the adoption of a relationship between any of these boundary-marker characteristics and identity, leading to the creation of ethnic identity, linguistic identity, class identity or religious identity, to name a few. 'The interconnectedness and interwovenness of people's lives and their perceptions of themselves and the world at large are instrumental in the processes of identity construction and its articulation' (Hoffstaedter 2011:11). The interdependence between religion and identity, as well as the means, by which religious identity is constructed, is of particular interest to this project.

'Self'/'other' boundary markers: Religious identity

Religion can serve the 'Self-Other [*sic*] mutual identity construction dichotomy' by creating 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', in much the same way as language, ethnicity or place of origin can (Duderija 2008:379, 382). A group boundary can be readily defined in terms of adherents to a religious tradition, with believing and/or belonging key in identity development (Duderija 2008:374) and performance of associated rituals 'a visible signifier of an ongoing commitment that goes beyond an inherited [identity]' (Hoffstaedter 2011:167). In many instances, '[p]eople use religion to

define collective identities' and 'in situation-specific ways to include or exclude others' (Lichterman 2008:83, 84). For Catholics, as mentioned above, their religious identity as Catholic Christians is defined by the institutional Church through reception of the sacrament of baptism (believing/belonging) and their ongoing participation in Church rituals, specifically Mass (a visible signifier of commitment).

Duderija discusses this socio-cultural use of religious identity in the construction of group boundaries, suggesting religion is the 'most salient source of personal and social identity' (2008:372, 375). The symbolic organisation of a religion creates a collectivity (Anderson 1983, cited Friedman 1994:849) that helps to form and manage 'communities of meaning' (Cerulo 1997:394) through which shared social representations signify the qualities of an identity to the self (or the group) and to others (Lichterman 2008:85). Symbolic boundaries (wearing of hijab or yarmulke, rituals of initiation) and structural barriers (parish boundary, segregated communities e.g. kibbutz) contribute to identity reproduction by promoting group cohesiveness, in-group co-operation and altruism, and emotional contagion and empathy (Cerulo 1997:395-396). In a similar manner religiosity 'becomes an ontological and performative identity experience' (Hoffstaedter 2011:168).

The interdependence of religion and identity can be seen in the formation of identity based on religious ethnicity, where the religious tradition of communities is shared by other ethnicities, as in the case of Mexican, Irish and Italian Catholics (Duderija 2008:372-373). In this way, one's self-defined identity may exist as an aspect of one's individuality, part of a local community (specific place of worship) or as part of a larger whole (nationally or transnationally). Therefore, '[t]he religious "Self" [*sic*] and the religious "Other" [*sic*] operate at both the individual and group levels

since religious identity encompasses both the sense of believing (individual) and that of belonging (to a broader religious community/civilisation)' (Duderija 2008:382). Gerhard Hoffstaedter (2011) discusses how Muslim Identity is formed in Malaysia and how it may be re-negotiated in light of global, glocal or external forces. This ethnographic study of the negotiation of a religious identity contains an examination of the formation, negotiation and historical development of, and anthropological approaches towards the idea of 'identity'. Hoffstaedter also speaks of difference, *theyness* (Hoffstaedter 2011:3), the context of self-identification and, relevant to this study, the role of the nation-state (in this case, the institutional Church) in the formation and maintenance of identity, specifically Muslim identity.

'Self'/'other' boundary markers: cultural identity

Formed when groups of people in a relationship negotiate other and self; negotiate the relationship between the other and the self (Shimada 2002:136-137) cultural identities 'are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning'* (Hall 1990:226). While this project does not include 'cultural Catholics' this broad group who may identify themselves as Catholic but no longer have regular contact with, or participation in, the institutional Church is an example of a cultural identity. They have *positioned* themselves within the history and culture of Catholicism while also *positioning* themselves outside the ritual culture of the Catholic Church. In this way, their cultural identity is 'subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power' (Hall 1990:225). As a broad identity applied to a group it constitutes a 'collective identity', which is a central, enduring and

distinctive identity that is different from, or a smaller subset of, a broader culture (Pratt 2003:163, 165, 168). Cultural identity encompasses ''one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of … actual history' (Hall 1990:223).

Similar to individual identity the features of 'collective identity' are that its members *share* a common history, language, beliefs, cultural codes, and solidarity (Wagner 2002:46, 51; Pratt 2003:168, 176). Their collective identity resides in an individual but refers to a collective, is contextual and inclusive (Wagner 2002:46, Pratt 2003:168) and is 'a form of connection between human beings that is in principle capable of holding together a social order' (Wagner 2002:37). Drawn from the same collectivity, members' self-definition of identity is influenced *by* their group membership, with this identity transmitted through symbolic devices and routinised behaviours (Pratt 2003:167, 176). Hence, the collective that is the Catholic Church draws together individuals who self-identify as Catholic Christians and its identity transmitted through the symbol-laden routines of Catholic ritual. Thus, 'sharedness' permeates collective identity and 'socialisation may play key roles in the sharing of collective identity through its use of specific media (for example, rites of passage for newcomers), or through its ability to shape members' behaviours' (Pratt 2003:175). As a relational identity in which who I am relates to who I am not (Pratt 2003:165) 'loyalties often run deep, fostering healthy and productive relationships among group members' (Polzer 2003b: ix).

Intergenerational transmission of 'self'/'other' identity

In order to identify oneself with another, thereby forming a collective identity – whether religious, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, sporting or otherwise – there needs to be a mechanism by which this collective identity can be transmitted to new members or those who have the potential to be transformed from an 'other' outsider to an insider 'self'. In the case of the religious identity under examination in this project – Australian Catholic identity – this transmission process takes place by-and-large across generations. The intergenerational transmission of any form of identity takes place when the shared characteristics and knowledge is imparted from the 'us' that exists today to the children or grandchildren who will be the 'us' of the future due to 'the perception or feeling of oneness with another generation (past and/or future)' (Wade-Benzoni 2003:260). As in the transmission of any identity it takes place through repeated exposure to the group's shared history, language, symbolic devices and routine behaviours and 'certain socialisation tactics [that] may serve to maintain collective identity' (Pratt 2003:176, 179). Successive generations make connections with (identify with) other generations, either those who have come before (the past) or those yet to come (the future), through a 'perception of oneness or belongingness to some human aggregate' (Wade-Benzoni 2003:260, 263).

Australian Catholic Christian identity in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba

Drawing on the insights of history, theology and anthropology it can be seen that Catholic Christian identity can be defined in almost as many ways as any other form of identity. However, the relative cultural and ethnic homogeneity of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba lends itself to the formation of a definition of Catholic

Christian identity that is relevant to an Australian Catholic of the Toowoomba Diocese as a Christian who self-identifies as a Catholic Christian and also exhibits the following characteristics:

- A baptised Catholic who is participating in a faith community on a regular basis, especially the celebration of Sunday Eucharist (Mass), and may also be part of a parish group (Family Group, prayer group, ministry team);
- When asked to define Catholicism or what it is to be Catholic, describes the sacramental tradition, specifically the Mass, as well as other sacramental and ritual markers of identity, with regular attendance at Mass as a measure of adherence;
- Will identify themselves as a parishioner of a specific parish/faith community, as the community in which they regularly participate in the Mass; and
- Will identify Catholic Christianity as distinct from other faith traditions be they Christian or non-Christian (though not necessarily in terms of exclusivity or superiority).

This definition of Australian Catholic identity will be used as the baseline against which the experiences and responses of the people who form the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba will be compared. It encompasses those with whom I was able to interact most frequently and from whom in-depth interviews were obtained – regular Mass-going Catholics of the parish communities of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

As I was only able to interact in an ongoing way with regular parishioners of the parishes in which I conducted fieldwork I am unable to speak to the way in which Catholic identity is experienced by those self-defined Catholics who are no longer actively engaged in a faith community (colloquially called 'lapsed Catholics') nor can I address the experiences of those who no longer define themselves as Catholic, though the thoughts, opinions and experiences of these two groups are worthy of future study.

Thus, the sameness and we-ness encountered during my research is that of the regular Church-goers residing within and worshipping at parishes and church-based communities of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. As suggested by my use of the term 'Church-goers' the shared characteristics of these Toowoomba Catholics is the ritual practise of the Church, specifically Sunday worship. In parishes with a parish priest or a regular sacramental minister Sunday worship is the normative form, the celebration of Eucharist (Mass), whereas those parishes without a parish priest use alternative forms of worship permissible under the Church's *Code of Canon Law* as outlined in chapter two (Identifying the problem), predominantly a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service. The primary form of 'self'/'other' distinction relevant to Toowoomba's Catholics is the identifiable parish community in which one worships as a parishioner, with this territorial loyalty measurable by Mass attendance, activity within that community (volunteering in some capacity) or through financial support of that parish (money on the plate). While not expressing it in terms of exclusivity or superiority, Toowoomba's Catholics also distinguish Catholicism from Christianity's other denominations (such as Anglicanism, Lutheranism or Methodism) and other non-Christian faith traditions (such as Hinduism, Islam or Judaism).

Conclusion

There are always many ways in which an individual's identity may be defined or measured with this identity able to be altered or modified in response to various experiences or circumstances (kin-networks, location, occupation, sociocultural

milieu, or religious belief). Either self-defined or assigned by others, identity exists

in relation to an 'other' (individual or group) who is not me, not I, not we, not us.

Catholic Christian identity, as a specific component of identity, exists within the

context of the formal Catholic Church, which defines this identity through its *Code

of Canon Law* in relation to the reception of the rite of Baptism. The historical and

theological development of this legal definition, as outlined in the Catholic Church's

Code of Canon Law, has taken place over Christianity's two thousand year history.

This formal definition of what it is to be 'Catholic' applies equally to the Australian

Catholics who reside within the geographically-bounded Catholic Diocese of

Toowoomba and whose Catholicity may be determined by their experiences of the

Latin (Roman) Catholic Church. Primarily, age is a determining factor in these

experiences of the Church as it indicates the period in which they were born and

raised – in the pre-conciliar Church or after the Second Vatican Council; and in the

pre-World War Two sectarian-divided Australia or the post-war multicultural

Australia.

The pre-conciliar Church was a Tridentine Church that reflected the historical

Reformation and Counter-Reformation and was a unifying force in the lives of the

world's Catholics, not just those in Australia. Vatican II in the 1960s together with

other global trends (mass migrations post-war) altered this global Catholic identity,

thus altering Australian Catholic identity as well. Today, key elements of Catholic

identity include the Church's sacramental nature, the reliance upon an ordained

priesthood for its ritual practice and the communal nature of that ritual practice,

specifically the local faith community (parish).

Just as both internal and external events shaped the twentieth century Church so, too, do the forces and events playing out across the world's communities and organisations influence the Catholic Church today, as the twenty-first century unfolds around us. The more eclectic Catholic identity that developed in the post-conciliar period following the earlier dominance of sectarianism and the Irish may now give way to new ways of being Catholic in Australia.

Having always been drawn to the 'other' anthropology provides a useful framework in which to discuss 'identity', particularly through its interest in religion and boundary-markers as signposts to the religious identity of Catholic Christians. Drawing on its insights a baseline definition of 'Catholic Christian identity' within the Australian context has been formulated. This new definition of Australian Catholic identity, as formulated within the Diocese of Toowoomba, will be utilised to determine the impact of a declining number of active clergy upon its people.

Chapter four: Methodology: 'what anthropologists do'

Introduction

In pursuit of this project's outcomes I drew upon the traditional methodology of anthropology – ethnography. Beginning with participant observation within faith communities I then used informal interviews to identify potential key informants before moving on to semi-structured interviews. Using parishes representative of each leadership model, this was a multi-sited ethnography and involved multilocale fieldwork. These were located in various geographic locations within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, rural and urban, large and small. The logistical constraints related to the size of the diocese led to the selection of these parishes (fieldsites) in that each represented one of the leadership models available to a bishop under the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law*, as outlined in chapter two (Identifying the problem).

Due to the nature of the research site and my status as a 'native' of that community, elements of reflexivity, auto ethnography and 'native' anthropology are encompassed in this methodological framework. This is particularly the case in the fieldsite that is also my place of worship and across the various already-established connections I have as a member of the diocese.

Events beyond my control intervened in the period of my fieldwork, most notably the Queensland floods of the summer of 2010-2011 and the forced early retirement of the Bishop of Toowoomba mid-2011, both of which affected my ability to continue said fieldwork and the responses garnered from parishioners. In an attempt to mitigate these and other methodological limitations additional fieldsites were

sought in more remote parts of the diocese, although not all of the restrictions were able to be redressed.

In formulating this methodological framework, several 'handbooks' or 'how to' guides were drawn upon, including those of H. Russell Bernard (2002), Giampietro Gobo (2008), Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy (2005), John and Lyn Lofland (1995), and Pertti Pelto (1970). Additional works focussing on specific components of ethnographic practice, critiquing elements of the ethnographic method or highlighting the 'highs and lows' of fieldwork were also consulted, such as Harvey's exploration of research in studies of religion (2004), Hume and Mulcock's anthology of case studies of participant observation (2004a), Johnson, Avenarius and Weatherford's construction of a selection process for the active participant observer (2006), and Pitchford, Bader and Stark's discussion of fieldwork in religious settings (2009).

Pertti Pelto's 'handbook' or 'how to' guide for anthropologists beginning fieldwork for the first time, *Anthropological Research: The Structure of Inquiry* (1970), provides some basic explanations of anthropological terms (such as 'emic') and methodologies (for example, participant observation and interviewing). Although not as exhaustive as later works, such as those of Bernard or Gobo, it nonetheless provides a good introduction to the methodologies of ethnography, participant observation and fieldwork, as seen in the following explanation of what anthropologists do – [t]ypically, anthropological fieldworkers combine the data from personal, eyewitness observation with information gained from informants' descriptions of behaviour (Pelto 1970:6). Like Pelto, John and Lyn Lofland's guide to conducting fieldwork, *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative*

Observation and Analysis (1995), specifically observing, provides explanations of participant observation, intensive interviewing and fieldnotes. H. Russell Bernard's handbook for anthropologists developing methodological framework before fieldwork, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods* (2002), includes extensive discussion of the key methodologies of ethnography – unstructured, semi-structured and in-depth interviews; direct and participant observation; fieldwork; fieldnotes; and the coding and analysis of data. Although Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy's handbook, *Qualitative Research Methods* (2005), is aimed primarily at conducting research in the health sector, it includes a great deal of information on interviews, ethnography, data analysis, and participant observation. According to Giampietro Gobo, '[f]rom the 1980s onwards, the term 'ethnography' came to refer to highly diverse practices, including the conversational interview and analysis of textual and visual documents' (2008:53). Reflecting this belief, his guide, *Doing Ethnography* (2008), contains many definitions of, and discussions about, various kinds of ethnography (including feminist, phenomenological and reflexive) and how to go about doing each. Like Bernard, Gobo includes discussion of research design, how to take notes (what to take notes about), interviews and fieldnotes.

Fieldwork methodology

Ethnography is the mainstay of anthropology and formulates a large part of 'what anthropologists do'. It is the means by which an outsider anthropologist attempts to grasp the 'native's' point of view by participating in people's lives over a long period of time (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:161, 167), using 'a grab bag of structured,

semi structured, and unstructured methods, both qualitative and quantitative'
(Johnson, Avenarius & Weatherford 2006:113). The simultaneous observation of,
and participation in, the everyday life of a Catholic – *participant observation* – was
utilised in this project.

Participant observation is a strategic method by which a researcher immerses
themselves in the everyday life of the community they are studying, by hanging out
with, learning the language of, living among and being with its people (Bernard
2002:325, Davies 1999:69, Johnson *et al* 2006:113, Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:169,
Lofland & Lofland 1995:16, Pelto 1970:91). It is about becoming inconspicuous by
'establishing rapport and learning to act so that people go about their business as
usual when you show up' (Bernard 2002:325, 423). 'The hallmark of participant
observation is long-term personal involvement with those being studied, including
participation in their lives to the extent that the researcher comes to understand the
culture as an insider (Bernard 2002:325, Davies 1999:71).

Lofland and Lofland (1995:18) further define participant observation as 'the process
in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-
term relationship with a human association in its natural setting'. 'Typically,
anthropological fieldworkers combine the data from personal, eyewitness
observation with information gained from informants' descriptions of behaviour'
(Pelto 1970:6). Through the taking of fieldnotes of observations, experiences and
reactions the researcher thus acquires a wealth of data on the life-world of the
community being studied (Bernard 2002, Davies 1999, Gobo 2008, Liamputtong &
Ezzy 2005, Lofland & Lofland 1995, Pelto 1970). Such fieldwork provides
meaningful and contextualised understanding of participants' views (Liamputtong &

Ezzy 2005:162,167) with the researcher becoming the instrument for data collection and analysis through their own experience (Bernard 2002:338).

The preparations necessary before commencing fieldwork consisted of meeting with the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, Bishop Emeritus William Morris, to gain his informed consent to conduct ethnographic fieldwork within the Toowoomba diocese (Appendix A). I then made contact with each of the Catholic parishes in which I intended to conduct fieldwork with an introductory letter outlining my proposed research in their community (Appendix B) to which I attached a Letter of Consent (Appendix C).

The initial fieldwork conducted *in the field* for this project involved attending the identified fieldsites – Catholic parishes representing each leadership model – and observing the activities and parishioners of that parish. At this stage, participant observation consisted of direct observation – watching and recording behaviour as faithfully as possible (Bernard 2002:391) – rather than *participant* observation, beyond being present at religious services and parish activities. This project did *not* involve covert observation, in which those being studied are unaware of the presence of a researcher, in that my presence and the purpose of my presence was introduced to each parish prior to the commencement of fieldwork through the insertion of a notice (Appendix D) in each parish's newsletter/bulletin in the week/s prior to my arrival. I provided this notice, which parishes either included verbatim or modified to fit within the available space within their respective bulletins. In addition, in four communities I was asked to introduce myself by standing in the sanctuary and speaking to the congregation. In four other parishes, the parish leader introduced me

and I stood up and acknowledged my presence to parishioners from my place in the assembly.

Although 'disguised field observation' (Bernard 2002:415) would have been possible at this stage – I could have pretended to be a new parishioner – it was never my intention to do so nor did I do so at any time. Rather, I endeavoured to be as unobtrusive as possible in both my presence at religious ceremonies, and other parish activities, and in the taking of fieldnotes. 'Hanging out' with parishioners helped me to build rapport and trust, resulting in more ordinary conversation and behaviour taking place in my presence, while also allowing me to identify, in Bernard's words, 'what exactly you want to know more about' (Bernard 2002:346-347). At this stage, my fieldnotes consisted of end-of-day memories, whatever jottings or scratch notes I had accumulated during the day and whatever recollections I had recorded on my digital note taker (Bernard 2002:367-368, Gobo 2008:209). This method, of direct observation, was for example, the first stage of Ruth Wallace's studies of Lay-Led Catholic parishes in the United States over the last twenty years. Much of Wallace's analysis of differences in leadership styles draws on observations she made during her attendance at religious services and parish social activities in each of the parishes chosen for her study (Wallace 1992, 2003).

Informal or unstructured interviews consist of chatting with participants in a way that closely mimics natural conversation (Davies 1999:94). '[E]xcellent for building initial rapport with people before moving to more formal interviews' (Bernard 2002:206), the researcher engages in direct conversation with questions/topics in mind and guides the respondent to these (Bernard 2002:210, Davies 1999:71 & 94). Relatively brief and focussed on specific topics, these informal 'interviews', which

Gobo (2008:23) calls 'discursive interviews' and Lofland and Lofland (1995:71) call 'casual interviews', are unscheduled, impromptu conversations that are a part of ongoing research in the field (Gobo 2008:191). Due to the nature of ethnographic fieldwork, researchers can conduct this kind of informal, unstructured interview as part of an ongoing relationship, knowing that future interviews (including in-depth interviews) are possible (Davies 1999:94). Although the researcher guides these 'conversations', using probing 'to stimulate a respondent to produce more information' (Bernard 2002:210) the interviewee uses their own words and the interviewer adapts the aims and pre-formed outline of questions/topics to the context in which the conversation takes place and in response to the information provided by the respondent (Gobo 2008:23)

After spending time 'getting to know' the parish and identifying parishioners who may become key informants, through direct observation, I moved on to informal interviews. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork it was envisaged that these may take place at social gatherings after religious services (post-Mass 'cuppas') or attendance at activities conducted by parish groups (*Lectio Divino* scripture reflection groups, parish choir, St Vincent de Paul conference meetings). Once called 'the meat and potatoes' of fieldwork by a fellow researcher (pers. comm. 2010) the bulk of my fieldwork data consists of such everyday conversations that took place at post-Mass cuppas, prayer groups, craft groups, ladies groups and so on. It is through these ongoing conversations that I expected to identify respondents who are 'gatekeepers' (those who control access to research sites) within the parish (Davies 1999:46). Although formal permission had been given by the then diocesan bishop, William Morris (Appendix A), and was obtained prior to fieldwork from the parish leader (parish priest, lay leader, Parish Pastoral Council) (Appendix C), it is

these parish gatekeepers, whose support or opposition impacts upon a project, who needed to be identified at this stage and whose further involvement was sought. These ongoing conversational interviews also identified the people in each parish most likely to provide insight into that community's life and culture, with these people then approached to participate in the project's next stage – in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

During the fifteen months in which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork my primary means of engaging with the broad parish community in each place was through attendance at, and participation in, their regular gatherings for worship. In many places I was able to attend celebrations of Eucharist (Mass) with communities as well as Lay-Led Liturgies of the Word plus Communion services on Sundays when a priest was unavailable (away, scheduled to celebrate in their home parish or another parish, or unable to attend for some other reason). When available I would participate in post-Mass social gatherings, the most common being morning tea. In this way I was able to speak with parishioners of all ages and genders, explain who I was and what I was doing, identify potential key informants and learn about the various parish activities, meetings and groups that existed. When possible, I would also attend any weekday services (Masses or Lay-Led Liturgies of the Word plus Communion) that occurred. Of the various parish groups that exist, I attended as many of these as I could, on an ongoing basis if they were weekly events, in order to develop interpersonal relationships with parishioners and, thereby, increase the likelihood of their participation in in-depth interviews as my fieldwork research progressed. The parish groups I participated in included prayer (and/or scripture study) groups, ladies groups, craft groups, parish choir, and Legion of Mary; and the

parish meetings I attended included Parish Pastoral Council, Lay Leadership Team, Liturgy Committee and Funeral Ministry Team.

Some one-off events that I was able to participate in included the 2010 Diocesan Gathering of representatives of each parish, school and agency in the Toowoomba diocese on the 12th-13th June 2010; one parish's bi-annual liturgical training of Extraordinary Ministers of Communion in 2010; a diocesan celebration for the canonisation of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop on October 17th 2010, including participating in several choir practices prior to the event, singing with the massed diocesan choir and attending the celebratory morning tea afterwards; the celebration of the anniversary of the Anglican-Catholic Covenant on the 17th February 2011 by the Anglican Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane and the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, including taking part in a choir practice beforehand, singing with the inter-diocesan choir and attending the celebratory supper afterwards; the diocese's annual Mass of Oils (Chrism Mass) through participation in the choir and attendance at the supper afterwards; and the diocesan Thanksgiving Celebration for the Ministry of Bishop Emeritus William Morris on the 28th August 2011, including attendance at two choir practices prior to the day and one choir practice on the morning of the event, singing with the massed diocesan choir and musicians, and participating in the massed diocesan picnic lunch afterwards.

Through attendance at, and participation in, the mass diocesan events, localised parish events and ongoing weekly parish groups/activities I was able to have a conversation of at least a few minutes duration with somewhere between 250 and 300 parishioners from throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, with longer

conversations of twenty-thirty minutes with ten to twelve of these individuals, with only two of these later participating in formal in-depth interviews. Some of these people with whom I had long conversations were from parishes other than those in which I conducted fieldwork including those from outside Toowoomba who were in attendance at the abovementioned diocesan events, others were unwilling to participate in interviews when asked to do so and a few were interested in being interviewed but unable to schedule time to do so.

In-depth, or semi-structured interviews, are more of a discussion between the interviewer and interviewee but are formally bracketed as an interview, with both aware of its status as such (Davies 1999:95). Interviewers again have a set of general topics/themes to discuss and may follow an interview schedule, which is a list of questions or topics to be addressed in that interview (Bernard 2002:205, Davies 1999:95, Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:62, Lofland & Lofland 1995:78-81, Pelto 1970:101). This interview guide is *not* a tightly structured set of questions; rather, it is a list of things to talk about with an informant during this guided conversation (Lofland & Lofland 1995:85). Although the researcher guides the discussion, they leave the respondent free to use their own words and themselves free to follow new leads that develop (Bernard 2002:205, Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:62). In-depth interviews are an open-ended, semi-structured, guided, two-way conversation in which the interviewer is actively involved, through careful listening, in focussing on other people's meaning contexts (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:55-56, 58; Lofland & Lofland 1995:18). Although conversational in style, the researcher will often use a variety of *probes* – follow-up question, clarification, non-verbal – to elicit additional information or to re-direct respondents to the topics being discussed (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:64-65). Due to the nature of ethnographic fieldwork

being ongoing, several such semi-structured interviews may take place over time, with data gathered in one informing the topics to be discussed in the next (Davies 1999:96). Most in-depth interviews are one-on-one, but may involve a small group (Davies 1999:96).

As mentioned already, after hanging out with parishioners during the first phase of fieldwork and identifying the parish's gatekeepers and other individuals who may become key informants, though informal interviews, I then began to conduct in-depth interviews with those so identified. Having identified potential informants, I then invited these individuals to participate in an in-depth, one-on-one interview that I later came to call 'a longer conversation'. At the outset, informed consent was gained, by explaining the purpose of the research project, their ability to participate voluntarily (or not to), that no negative consequences of participation or withdrawal would be experienced and that their responses would be anonymous if or when quoted. I provided parishioners with a Letter of Consent (Appendix E) outlining these details, with a 'Parish Survey 2010-2011' (Appendix F) attached that included some broad questions. Once informed consent was gained, I conducted semi-structured interviews, or longer conversations, throughout the duration of my fieldwork at each site with those who agreed to be interviewed and made time to be available for an interview. These interviews were scheduled at a time convenient for the parishioner/s, either individually or in small groups (maximum of three), at a location convenient for them – parish building (church, presbytery, grounds), café, restaurant, public library or private residence. Of those asked to be interviewed, forty-one individuals consented to participate in a 'longer conversation' with these individuals coming from seven of my fieldsites and one individual from outside my fieldsites whom I met in one parish group and later learned worshipped elsewhere.

The 'Parish Survey 2010-2011' (Appendix F) that was attached to each Letter of Consent endeavoured to encourage parishioners to think broadly about Catholicism and being Catholic prior to being interviewed. In addition to the demographic data and broad questions related to Catholic identity, parish leadership and lay involvement collected through the 'Parish Survey' I also asked broad questions related to forces acting today on the Church's future and what each individual pictured that future to be, as well as other common themes that will be discussed further in chapter six (Discussion of Results)

Multi-sited, multi-locale ethnography

In the mid-1990s George Marcus coined the term 'multi-sited ethnography' to name what he saw as anthropology's move away from traditional single-site ethnographic study to the emerging trend of mobile ethnography across and within multiple sites of activity (Marcus 1995:79-80). 'This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focussed on a single site of intensive investigation' (Marcus 1995:79-80) and has also been referred to as 'multi-locale ethnography' by Clifford (1997, cited Muir 2004:187) and Fischer (1999:455). In multi-sited, multi-locale ethnography the 'site' is reconfigured as 'delocalised, moving, and moveable – even as a multiplicity of sites' (D'Alisera 2008:11). Marcus (1995:83) further suggested that most standard ethnographic fieldwork already crosses potentially related sites of work but that the discipline's selection principles create bounded sites. Due to the immense social changes and upheavals of the late twentieth century, including decolonisation, civil wars, nation building, the collapse of the Soviet Union, technological innovations, religious

resurgence, toxic and environmental issues, and the emergence of biotechnology industries, '[n]o longer is it possible to speak of modernity in the singular' (Fischer 1999:470-471).

Consequently, anthropology is no longer able to study a single site as an exemplar of a life-world view because of the cross-connections and inter-connections of this increasingly globalised world (Marcus 1995:80-82). Therefore, multi-sited ethnography provides a way to 'effectively and coherently capture the complexity and historical dynamism of the relationships between different links' that transcend boundaries (Freidberg 2001:358). For example, in her study of the Francophone and Anglophone approaches to green bean production and marketing, Freidberg used 'comparative multi-site ethnography [to] illuminate the dynamic geographically dispersed activities and social relations that comprise transnational food commodity chains' (2001:354).

As this project seeks to make a comparative study of the impact of *different* modes of leadership experienced in different Catholic communities within the Toowoomba diocese, it falls within the methodology of Marcus' multi-sited ethnography. The inter-connections of Catholicity and Catholic identity move beyond the local parish to diocesan, national and universal aspects of the Catholic Church. Therefore, an exploration of the impact on these cross-connections by differing leadership choices will transcend those borders. However, as outlined above, for logistical reasons it has been decided that studying this emerging phenomenon within the universal Catholic Church or the Australian Catholic Church is beyond the time frame available for this project, so it will be examined at multiple sites (parishes) within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba only.

'Native' anthropology

The term 'native' anthropology encompasses the way in which ethnographic and anthropological inquiry is accomplished by researchers who are members of the community they are studying 'at home'. '"The field," conceived as a bounded set of distinct activities, informed by the notion of participant-observation, and framed in the context of a distant, faraway place separate from the rest of a fieldworker's life [comes] into question when … confronted with the field in [one's] own backyard' (D'Alisera 2008:11). Traditionally anthropologists are 'outsiders' who are trying to gain an 'insider's' understanding of the world; whereas in 'native' anthropology, the researcher is already an insider versant in the intricacies of everyday life that other researchers seek to adopt in order to become inconspicuous observers. 'As anthropologists turn to study their own societies, the notions of familiarity and distance shift' with the anthropological paradigm of making the foreign familiar inverted; 'the familiar [needs] to be made foreign' (D'Alisera 2008:16) by such 'native' anthropologists. However, the notion of being a 'native' however, has been problematised by its interchangeable use to refer to indigenous anthropologists studying their own community; overseas-trained anthropologists returning to the community of their birth; foreign-trained émigré anthropologists returning to the place of their, or their parents', birth; as well as any anthropologist (Western or otherwise) doing research within their own community (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984).

Examples of each of these kinds of 'native' anthropological studies are those of Val Colic-Peisker (2004), a member of the community being studied; Takami Kuwayama (2004), an indigenous anthropologist; and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney

(1984), an ethnic anthropologist studying people of her heritage. In *Native Anthropology: The Japanese Challenge to Western Academic Hegemony* (2004) Takami Kuwayama discusses how once studied 'natives' are now engaging with anthropology as more than just subjects – as collaborators, critics of ethnographies, anthropologists in their own right. He also discusses how the definition of 'native' may be adaptable to either 'primitives' (his term) now doing anthropology or members of the group being studied. Val Colic-Peisker's paper, 'Doing Ethnography in "One's Own Ethnic Community": The Experience of an Awkward Insider' (2004), discusses her experiences doing ethnography on Croatian migrants to Australia, given she herself is a Croatian migrant to Australia. Colic-Peisker explores the difficulty she experienced separating her private life from her ethnographic work and how her shared status turned 'fieldwork' into 'homework'. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's paper, '"Native" Anthropologists' (1984) is another discussion of the conflicting notions of 'self' and 'reflexivity' in relation to supposedly 'native' anthropologists, especially in terms of how to identify an anthropologist as a 'native'. She also discusses issues of 'distance', the potential advantages and disadvantages of a native anthropologists' ability to provide insider knowledge that outsider anthropologists cannot gain and the problem of being unable to maintain suitable 'distance' as a native anthropologist.

Even when defined in the latter, most broad way there are still difficulties associated with this form of research because 'the notions of familiarity and distance [collapse] in on each other in confusing and sometimes emotionally charged ways' (D'Alisera 2008:17). As Marilyn Strathern (1987:16, cited D'Alisera 2008:16) asked, when conducting research at home how does one *know* when one is at home, especially when 'the boundary between home and the field [has] completely dissolved'

(D'Alisera 2008:16). Colic-Peisker explores this dissolving of boundaries based on her own experience in which '*field*work' became '*home*work'(my emphasis) (Colic-Peisker 2004); when the researcher is neither an insider nor an outsider but somewhere in-between (Teaiwa 2004 225).

Both Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) and Colic-Peisker (2004) discuss 'positionality' and 'distance', with a native anthropologist able to provide insider knowledge due to a lack of distance but also having 'the task of somehow "distancing" themselves, both intellectually and emotively' from that being observed (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984:584). Colic-Peisker points out the 'fine shades of meaning' that can be obtained when the researcher is already a 'linguistic insider'; however, she also points out that what it means to be an 'insider' in a culture is an ongoing debate (2004:90). Conducting 'native' anthropology means the ethnographer, as an insider, is one of their own key informants; 'the ethnographer's individual self is also the observed other' (Davies 1999:181, 183, 189) and is 'in a far more advantageous position in understanding the emotive dimensions of behaviour' (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984:584). 'Insider status means constantly observing aspects of one's own experience, so that the autobiographical voice inevitably mixes with the participants' voices, requiring an acknowledgement and exploration of "positionality"' (Colic-Peisker 2004:91), an acknowledgement that is a form of reflexive practice.

Auto ethnography

As a result of the native researcher's parallel existence as insider and outsider, with *field*work becoming *home*work, they often experience some difficulty separating their private life from their ethnographic work, particularly when they are likely to

interact with those being studied outside 'the field'. The 'apparent tension between the roles of the detached observer and engaged participant' (Colic-Peisker 2004:83) may be modified by the use of 'auto ethnography'.

According to Gobo (2008:62) auto ethnography connects the personal to culture by placing self in a social context through highly analytical personal accounts about self/writer as part of the group or culture being studied, to both explain self to others and to analyse being different or an outsider. Davies (1999:179, 189) suggests that autobiography 'may also be more intimately a part of the research process when ethnographers are members of the collectivity they are researching'. This turning back on oneself, or process of self-reference, that occurs when a researcher considers their own role in the production of data and the implications of research 'at home' is called 'reflexivity' (Davies 1999:4, 8, 34) and is discussed by Gobo (2008), Hume and Mulcock (2004b) and Pelto (1970), with critiques of reflexivity appearing in the works of Marcus (1994) and Wolf (1999).

Examples of the works paying more attention to reflexivity and auto ethnography are those of Charlotte Aull Davies (1999), who provides an extensive guide to its use in *Reflexive Ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others*; and David Hufford (1999), who examines the way in which reflexivity may be of use to researchers in their attempts to find a balance between the scholarly voice used in their academic work and the personal voice of their lived experiences in 'The Scholarly Voice and the Personal Voice'. The ethnographic knowledge produced through reflexive auto ethnography is the product, in part, of the ethnographer's own social situation and reflexivity analyses the effects of fieldwork on the researcher themselves (Davies 1999:179). Of course, as Davies (1999:189) contends 'it is precisely in this process

of interaction between ethnographer as self and ethnographer as other that social knowledge of general interest and significance is produced'.

An anthropologist may face several issues when studying a group from one's own culture, or a group of which they are already a member, include those mentioned above related to maintaining appropriate distance (that is, remaining an 'observer'), keeping boundaries between roles (as researcher and as group member), and the blurring of boundaries when interacting with the people being studied outside 'the field'. Wagner (2003) suggests that these issues are particularly difficult to address when the 'normal' ethnographic 'barriers' of language, ethnicity, culture and so on are not present but are actually shared. She suggests that when conducting an 'anthropology of the familiar, the ethnographer corrects for being a participant and is more rigorous about observation' (Wagner 2003:92).

In examining Clifford Geertz's contributions to the anthropology of religion Segal explores the difference between the 'thin' description of behaviour and the 'thick' description of intent plus behaviour or the meaning expressed by the behaviour as the difference between interpreters and explainers (Segal 2003:26). 'Most interpreters seek to determine why the actor believes and practices what the actor does, and most explainers start, whether or not end, with the actor's own view of why the actor believes and practices what the actor does' (Segal 2003:18). As a member *of* the group being studied a 'native' researcher is able to be both an interpreter (outsider's view of why Catholics believe and do what 'they' do) *and* an explainer (insider's view of why Catholics believe and do what 'we' do). Consequently, the resultant research 'should reflect a kind of biculturalism in which

the ethnographer understands cultural phenomenon in both emic (native) and etic
(outsider) ways' (Wagner 2003:90).

Reflexivity

An awareness of one's status as insider/self/explainer necessitates a level of
reflexivity in the researcher's anthropological and ethnographic practice in order to
ensure an appropriate balance is maintained between ethnographic observation of
others and auto ethnography of oneself, lest one falls into the trap lamented by
Margery Wolf in a critique of reflexivity as the likelihood of focussing on the 'self'
to the exclusion of those being studied (1999). While reflexivity is necessarily a part
of this research project in all its stages it 'is not the end purpose of the research;
[rather] it is the means through which knowledge of a social reality outside [myself]
can be approached' (Davies 1999:222) when this researcher's social reality is that of
the people being studied. As outlined earlier, my own Catholic identity, and the way
in which I articulate it, contributed to the formation of a baseline definition of
Catholic Christian identity.

As discussed, reflexivity demonstrates 'the self aware [*sic*] analysis of the dynamics
between researcher and participants, the critical capacity to make explicit the
position assumed by the observer in the field, and the way in which the researcher's
positioning impacts on the research process' (Gobo 2008:43). David Hufford (1999)
suggests that reflexivity may also be of use to researchers in their attempts to find a
balance between the scholarly voice used in their academic work and the personal
voice of their lived experiences. This notion of a researcher's two voices is of
particular relevance to interactions with the parishioners of the Catholic Diocese of

Toowoomba as both a researcher (scholarly voice) and as a fellow parishioner (personal voice). Since impartiality in this research project could not 'consist of having no personal beliefs, then impartiality [is] a methodological stance in which one acknowledges one's personal beliefs but [set] them aside for scholarly purposes' (Hufford 1999:297). Hufford's (1999) suggestion that the correct identification of which voice is being used at any moment being needed to allow both the speaker and hearer to correctly identify the distinction was critically important during the events of May 2011 when the Bishop of Toowoomba entered early retirement (see chapter six, Discussion of Results).

As I am a fully initiated Catholic of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, I meet the definition of a 'native' anthropologist (or explainer using personal voice), as a researcher conducting ethnographic fieldwork in my own community 'at home'. Given that I have been actively involved in many ministries within my present parish community, as well as in diocesan groups, retreats and in-service days, and other diocesan celebrations and events, it was always likely that I would already be known to at least some of the parishioners in *any* parish of this diocese. In most cases, however, I expected to be a familiar face or a familiar name only. Of the ten parishes contacted, the nine who gave approval for me to conduct fieldwork within themand the eight in which I did so; one is the faith community I am presently a part of, one is the parish of family members and one is where a close friend worships. Of the parishioners in the communities other than my own parish, I encountered, on more than one occasion, the following comments – 'you went to school with my daughter', 'my son went to school with your brother', 'I was in <Church organisation> with your father', 'are you related to Barrie Ryan (my father)?'. In addition, I encountered a person with whom I had studied theology, someone from

my childhood neighbourhood, a former family veterinarian (for a childhood dog),
my former teachers, the spouse of a former teaching colleague, and the childhood
school friend of one of my parents. Thus, the 'field'/'home' boundaries were blurred
before I began fieldwork and continued to be so throughout the fifteen months in
which I was both a 'researcher' *in* the diocese and a 'parishioner' *of* the diocese. As
a 'native' anthropologist with such already-established interconnections, it was,
therefore, always likely that this project would include auto ethnography and
reflexivity.

Fieldsites

The Catholic Church of Australia is a broad overarching term that encompasses all
the Catholics of Australia, from whichever of the twenty-two Catholic Churches,
who reside within the Commonwealth of Australia. The Catholic Church in
Australia is divided into twenty-eight dioceses, including seven archdioceses, each of
which is a geographically bounded territory within Australia (Australian Catholic
Bishops Conference 2011b). Five other administrative non-geographical sections of
the Church also exist – 'the Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite and Ukrainian Rites, and
the Military Ordinariate, which is responsible for those in the Australian Defence
Forces' (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 2011a).

Rather than trying to conduct in-depth ethnographic fieldwork over such a vast area
it was decided to conduct research within one diocese only, the Catholic Diocese of
Toowoomba. This local diocese 'covers more than 490 000 square kilometres, from
below the Great Dividing Range at Toowoomba/Helidon in the east, north to the
areas including Taroom and Cracow, south to the New South Wales border, and west

to the Northern Territory and South Australian borders' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). It encompasses fifty communities in thirty-five parishes, as well as thirty-two schools (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; Catholic Education Office 2011).

The area now known as the Darling Downs including Toowoomba, was originally inhabited by indigenous peoples of the Barunggam, Jarowair, Giabul, Keinjan and other language/tribal groups (Albion 2010:5). Following the arrival of Europeans its Catholic population was served by priests from Brisbane as it was part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The first priest in Toowoomba in 1861 was Fr Michael Renehan, with the first priest officially appointed to Toowoomba and Drayton, Fr Fulgentius Hodebourg, arriving in 1862 (Moore 2010:9). As the Catholic community expanded over the following years, predominantly with Irish Catholics, more communities were founded and continued to be part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane until the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba by the Holy See on May 28th 1929, with James Byrne as its first Bishop (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010, Moore 2010:23). At that time the diocese covered an equally vast territory, in fact 'all the territory in the southern part of Queensland south of the twenty-fifth degree of south latitude and west of the Auburn and Great Dividing Ranges' with a further area east of the Great Dividing Range added later (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). In 1929 there were fifteen parishes and twenty priests, with these numbers fluctuating since then to a maximum of thirty-eight parishes at one time and currently served by twenty-three priests in full-time ministry, only three of whom are under fifty years of age (Ranger 2010:4).

Given the vastness of this area, which is twice the size of Great Britain, one-and-a-half times the size of Italy, an area larger than the state of California (name withheld, pers. comm. 1st March 2010), and one-and-a-half times the area of Germany (Collins 2008:83) it was not possible to visit the fifty communities in thirty-five parishes; rather, for logistical reasons I chose a number of parishes that were representative of the four leadership models available to a Bishop under the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* when there are insufficient ordained clergy to meet the needs of parishes – an ordained minister, or parish priest, in a single parish; the sharing of a priest between faith communities or the merging of two or three parishes into a single parish with a parish priest; or a layperson/s (a religious sister, religious brother or other lay man or woman) leading a parish day-to-day (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canons 517.1 and 517.2). The selected communities I visited each represent one of the three options taken by the Bishop Emeritus of Toowoomba, William Morris, who did not exercise the fourth option, to close parishes.

For logistical reasons, these chosen parishes were close to, or within the city of Toowoomba, so that I would be able to spend a minimum of eight weeks in each, with the likelihood of a significant amount of ongoing participation in the groups and activities of these parishes. I initially chose six parishes, three within the city of Toowoomba and three in rural areas outside, though near to, the city. I planned to spend two four-week periods in all six parishes, though for reasons explained later, I was only able to spend these combined eight weeks in five of the parishes. In an effort to gain the broadest spectrum of Catholic responses to these leadership choices I contacted at least one parish that is acknowledged by members of the diocese (and during fieldwork by its parishioners) to be orthodox (conservative) and another that is considered to be progressive (liberal). I chose three that I believed had a resident

parish priest and three that were under the day-to-day leadership of a layperson/s, with two of those with priests in the city and one elsewhere and two parishes with lay leadership outside of Toowoomba and the other in the city. However, the lack of precise terminology to distinguish between a resident priest-pastor (parish priest) and another form of leadership (Moderator, Priest Director, Pastoral Presence, Pastoral Associate, Chair of Parish Pastoral Council, Chair of Leadership Team) was confusing and I inadvertently chose four parishes with non-ordained leadership (one urban, three rural) and two with parish priests (both in Toowoomba).

Given the time constraints of my doctoral research I made a conscious choice to include my own worship community as a fieldsite, given that I was before fieldwork, would be during fieldwork and would continue to be after fieldwork a member of the diocese. Since I would, thus, always be a 'native' anthropologist, I felt that conducting fieldwork in my own faith community would enhance the insights I would be able to gain, in the time I had available. I chose to conduct fieldwork in two four-week stints in order to: one, spend time getting to know people and establishing my 'identity' as a researcher (difficult, but crucial in my own parish); two, learn and develop ethnographic skills; and, three, be able to make comparisons between sites in an ongoing manner. In now detailing the parishes that were my fieldsites it must be noted that I have changed the names of all parishes, towns and individuals, with the exception of the Diocese of Toowoomba, the city of Toowoomba, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, Bishop Emeritus William Morris and Apostolic Administrator of the Toowoomba Diocese Bishop Brian Finnigan.

Parish 1 – St Damian's Cathedral, Toowoomba

This parish is believed to be home to the first church built in Toowoomba, as a church/school, in November 1863 (Moore 2010:9, Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). There have since been several buildings in the vicinity of the present Cathedral building, beginning with an original wooden building, which the community outgrew; the expansion of that wooden building and its destruction by fire on 12th June 1880, and its subsequent replacement within a few weeks by another wooden church (Moore 2010:9-12). The present stone structure was then erected, then consecrated and opened by the bishops of Brisbane, Armidale and Wilcannia on 17th March 1889 (Moore 2010:20-21). When the Diocese of Toowoomba was created in 1929, with Toowoomba as its centre, this stone church became a Cathedral with the installation of the bishop's Cathedra, or chair (Moore 2010:23). Following fundraising, the commissioning of a design and tendering for contractors, extensions to turn St Damian's stone church into a Cathedral commenced early in March 1932 and were completed in 1935, with the Cathedral's blessing and opening taking place in a Pontifical High Mass on 24th March 1935 (Moore 2010:24-27). While standing 'proudly displaying her [*sic*] magnificent architecture for all to see … [St Damian's] offers warmth, peace and quietness where one can come close to [the] creator in true prayerfulness' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010).

As a Cathedral parish St Damian's 'is the heart of the Diocese, holds the Cathedra and is the centre of worship for Diocesan Liturgical Celebrations' so 'is never just a parish Church, it belongs to everyone' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; 2009). St Damian's could be defined as the 'Mother Church' or heart of the diocese as it is the Cathedral Church (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2009). As the largest

church in the diocese with seating to hold over twelve hundred people, it lends itself well to large scale liturgies, such as ordinations or other diocesan events of great importance (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). However, St Damian's is also a faith community like any other parish with a variety of parish groups and organisations within it, including those responsible for aspects of liturgical celebration (choir, Liturgy Committee), sacramental life (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults {R.C.I.A.}, Sacramental Preparation Team), spirituality (Mother's Group, Prayer Group), social activities (Family Groups, Craft Group) and pastoral outreach (Care and Concern, Funeral Team). One aspect of a Cathedral parish is that 'many people choose to worship within its walls in order to remain anonymous' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010), with a significant number of people who choose not to engage in broader parish activities beyond attendance at a Sunday Eucharist.

This parish's current Mission Statement reflects the more diverse nature of its community:

> Our Cathedral parish of Saint Damian's is a life-giving sanctuary for all people. Our community welcomes and involves parishioners and visitors at the varying stages of their faith journey. We share a common goal of living our baptismal promises and embracing the mission of Jesus (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010).

As a Cathedral holds the bishop's seat, literally the *Cathedra*, *Canon Law* defines the parish priest of a Cathedral parish to be the diocesan bishop. In practice an Administrator is assigned to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Cathedral parish. There is commonly another priest assigned to be an assistant to the Administrator as an Associate Pastor. In this parish, at the time of writing there is no 'parish priest' due to the early retirement of the bishop, although there is an Administrator (ordained minister) and a retired priest-in-residence acting as an Associate Pastor. I chose this parish for two reasons – first, that the presence of a

priest as Administrator places this parish within the normative model of parish leadership, that is, having a parish priest; and, second, because this is my own faith community, in which I have worshipped for sixteen years. During that time I have been involved in various committees and ministries, including the Social Committee, Youth Ministry Team, liturgy preparation group, choir, state school catechetics (religion classes in government schools), family group and youth music group, to name a few. Therefore, before beginning fieldwork I already had established relationships with people in this community who range in age, educational background, employment and level of involvement in the parish.

Parish 2 – St Finian's, Davidsfield and St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead

Celebrating, in 2011, a hundred years since the parish church was built (Colin, Interview 12th August 2011), the rural parish of St Finian's is located in the small town of Davidsfield, south of Toowoomba. Part way between Toowoomba and Jacksford, this parish is surrounded by agricultural lands and is the faith community of farmers and other agriculturalists and includes a smaller faith community within its borders, St Raphael the Archangel in Evanshead. Although Davidsfield is currently home to less than a thousand people (Lawler 2011) it contains churches from the Lutheran, Methodist, Scots Presbyterian, Anglican and Uniting traditions, in addition to this Latin (Roman) Catholic parish. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's Sisters of St Joseph have been a continuous presence in this parish since their arrival in 1916, one of only two places in Australia to have had a continuous 'Joey' presence (Fieldnotes, 30th July 2010), giving this parish a special link to Australia's

first saint, as seen in their celebration of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop's canonisation in October 2010.

Self-described on the diocesan website as a conservative, rural community valuing the history of the area and the traditions of the Catholic faith, St Finian's community also describes itself as open to the 'signs of the times' and the call to renewal. This description reflects the choice made by the community in 2005 when faced with the prospect of being without a resident priest-pastor. 'We could either amalgamate with a neighbouring parish that still had a resident priest, or we could strive to maintain our own identity by accepting the challenge of lay leadership (Briffa 2010, 2011:13). Choosing to retain their parish identity, this parish 'faced a *transition*, from having a fulltime parish priest to becoming a 'self sustaining [*sic*] pastoral community', in the absence of a resident priest' (Briffa 2010, 2011:13). To do so, the parish established a Pastoral Leadership Team to work alongside its Parish Pastoral Council and in partnership with its Priest Director.

This leadership structure – of a Leadership Team comprised of laypeople, *in addition to* a Parish Pastoral Council of laypeople, and a Priest Director – was, at the time, unique in the diocese and a reason why I chose to conduct fieldwork in this parish community. Also, at the start of fieldwork I learnt that this community was only able to celebrate Eucharist three times *per month*, with these Masses all being on Sunday *night*, due to this being the only time that a priest from a nearby community was able to be present to preside at Eucharist. With a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service on the Sunday morning of the other Sundays of the month; I was also keen to see how such an arrangement impacted on the parishioners, particularly in terms of Mass-going numbers. Sadly, their Priest Director had

recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness and would die weeks before I

commenced the first of my two four-week visits to this community, leaving St

Finian's parish without a priest 'in-charge' and was preparing for their new Priest

Director's arrival at the end of this first visit.

Parish 3 – St Agatha's, Toowoomba

St Agatha's parish first opened as a church/school in 1905, and the present building

in 1921, with its first appointed parish priest arriving in 1923 (Catholic Diocese of

Toowoomba 2010). This faith community was incorporated into the Cathedral

parish in 1929 by the diocese's first bishop and did not become a separate parish

again until 1951 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). At first, mainly working

class families lived there, whose life and faith intertwined, proudly proclaiming the

parish motto, "Nec Aliud Nomen" (No other name) on banners, uniforms and

letterheads in public displays of faith, such as *Corpus Christi* processions (Catholic

Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). St Agatha's is located close to the centre of the city

and is surrounded predominantly by residential suburbs and some now-disused

manufacturing plants.

Its present priest-pastor, Fr Lee, has been in this parish continuously for a quarter of

a century, since 1987 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010) and is one of three

priests not to have been re-assigned to new parishes during my adulthood. With a

lay religious sister as Pastoral Assistant since 1993 (Catholic Diocese of

Toowoomba 2010) this parish represents the normative model of parish leadership

with a resident priest-pastor. The parish priest, Fr Lee, is in his early eighties

(Fieldnotes, 1st August 2010), well past the retirement age of seventy-five as required

by the Catholic Church (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 538.3), but was re-appointed as St Agatha's 'administrator' during my fieldwork. This parish is one of two parishes within the diocese that would be identified as being orthodox (conservative) describing its community as conforming 'our lives to Christ by fidelity to the Roman Catholic Faith as defined by Christ Himself through His Church … and with love for the Church witnessed to by a true effort for fidelity, and an effort to appreciate and conform to the rituals prescribed by Her [*sic*]' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). Further, the parish priest and religious sister are described as 'two servants of God, always in religious dress' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010).

As one of the orthodox (conservative) parishes within the diocese I included St Agatha's parish as a fieldsite in order to be as representative as possible of the spectrum of responses elicited during my research. Further, the presence of the same parish priest for such an extended period of time, well beyond the age at which he could choose to retire from active ministry, suggested that the people of this faith community might have useful insights into how Catholics prepare for, or consider, a potential future without a resident parish priest.

Parish 4 – St Hilary's, Cedar Falls; St Dymphna's, Treefuldom; St Michael's, Wyndesom

This parish north-east of Toowoomba consists of three faith communities, two of which have existed for over a century. The Catholic communities of this district have always been attended by the Toowoomba community even though the district has not always been part of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

The first of these three communities, St Hilary's in Cedar Falls, is the 'mother' church of this greater Catholic parish and contains the oldest of the three churches. As early as the 1880s-1890s the Catholics of the township of Cedar Falls were gathering together with visiting priests from Toowoomba, with the entire region still part of the Brisbane diocese, with home Masses in country homes common in the formative days (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; Smith 1958, cited Gossow 2000:2). With a donation of land by a generous benefactor, Hilary, after whom the church was named, the church was constructed in 1900 and was made a separate parish, with its first parish priest, in 1916 (Gossow 2000:2-3). St Hilary's church was dedicated by Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane on September 22nd 1922 (Gossow 2000:4).

When the Toowoomba diocese was proclaimed in 1929 the district was divided, with two-thirds of it, including this community, remaining part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane and the remainder within the new Toowoomba diocese (Kruger 2002:6-7). This remained the case until 1942, with administrative and sacramental needs continuing to be provided for by Toowoomba (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; Gossow 2000:4). Bishop Roper applied to have the boundary of the Toowoomba diocese altered to include the Cedar Falls area and was able to declare St Hilary's parish part of Toowoomba in 1950 (Wiemers, cited Gossow 2000:7). The church building was extended and refurbished in 1960, with further additions, such as a landscaped garden, re-stumping and re-painting taking place in 1976 and the late 1990s respectively (Gossow 2000:11, 13).

The second community within this parish, St Dymphna's in Treefuldom, has its beginnings in 1889 when the Catholics gathering in Redfern House, or other private

homes in the district, to celebrate Eucharist increased to such an extent that they needed a church building (Kruger 2002:3-4, 15). Served at that time by a Toowoomba priest, a church building committee was formed in 1900, plans drawn up and a builder engaged on May 24th 1901 (Kruger 2002:5). Constructed with local timber from a nearby mill St Dymphna's church was opened on 20th April 1902, with extensions including stained glass gothic windows added sometime between 1910 and 1914 (Kruger 2002: v, 1, 5, 24). When the neighbouring community became a separate parish in 1916, albeit in the Brisbane archdiocese, St Dymphna's community was included and was part of the two-thirds of the district to remain in the Brisbane archdiocese in 1929 when the Toowoomba diocese was formed (Kruger 2002:6-7).

St Dymphna's also became part of the Diocese of Toowoomba in 1950, along with the two other communities of this greater parish (Wiemers, cited Gossow 2000:7). The church building underwent further additions (marble work on the high altar) in the 1960s, celebrated a rededication Mass on 18th December 1991, and underwent further refurbishments in 2001 (repainting, re-wiring, new cupboards) through a generous bequest (Kruger 2002:12-13). Nonetheless St Dymphna's has always been the gathering place of a small, rural community of agriculturalists, as typified by the 'yard mowers' over the years including cows and sheep (Kruger 2002:10).

St Michael's in Wyndesom, the smallest of the three communities that form this larger Catholic parish, formed in the early years of the twentieth century when a distance of eight to ten kilometres could take more than an hour to traverse due to the area's long, steep hills being a heavy strain on a horse (Kruger 2002:18). Even motor vehicles could be bogged in the black soil roads of the district during wet

weather, necessitating a closer gathering place (Kruger 2001:19). St Michael's small wooden church, capable of seating thirty to forty people, opened in 1931 and continues to be the spiritual home for many of its original parishioners' descendants, with one proudly boasting that the 10.00 a.m. Mass has been going since 1930 'and I'll keep it going until the day I die' (Kruger 2002:19; Fieldnotes, 5th September 2010).

Having been without a parish priest since Easter 2007, this parish represents the leadership model that is most common when a parish is without a resident priest-pastor in that its Parish *Pastoral* Council has become the day-to-day leadership of the parish, under the guidance of a Priest Director. What is unusual is that its Priest Director performs no sacramental functions within the parish; rather, a retired priest from outside the district, Fr Julian, travels to the parish's communities weekly to preside at Eucharist. In choosing this parish I was able to compare the Parish Pastoral Council *plus* Leadership Team structure of St Finian's parish south of Toowoomba to this parish's structure of a Parish Pastoral Council only. During my fieldwork the membership of the Parish Pastoral Council changed and I was able to observe this transition from one style of lay leadership to another.

Parish 5 – St Ephram's, Toowoomba

The then Bishop of Toowoomba, Bishop Roper, organised the purchase of a house and farmland on the outskirts of Toowoomba in 1951 for a new parish with a growing community gathering there for Mass throughout the subsequent decade (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). His successor, Bishop Brennan, officially proclaimed the community of St Ephram's a new parish on 4th September 1960 with

the old farm house serving as a church-school until the first church building was obtained, renovated and extended for use in 1965 and opened for use as a church in 1971 (Albion 2010:7, Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). As the old church building was being stretched by the increasing population of surrounding areas, a new physical church building was required.

Following much consultation over design and other preparations for a new church building construction began in 1990 and was completed in October 1991 (Albion 2010:30-31). 'Celebrations for the opening of the new Church on Sunday morning, 3rd November 1991, centred around the Mass which was celebrated by Bishop Kelly' (Albion 2010:38). Having only ever had two parish priests, St Ephram's has always been progressive in its acceptance of Church teachings and rules, being one of the first parishes to have a Parish Pastoral Council in 1982, to involve laypeople in the preparation of adults who wished to become members of the Catholic Church through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (R.C.I.A.), to enact the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* changes when 'official guidelines for the establishment of Finance Committees in parishes across the diocese were issued by Bishop Kelly in 1985' and to encourage lay involvement in the liturgy from the early 1980s, in roles such as Extraordinary Minister of Communion (Albion 2010:24 and 29).

The community's second parish priest/last parish priest retired on 29th July 1999, with declining numbers of priests meaning St Ephram's parish would be without a resident priest pastor (Albion 2010:43). To give the parish 'time to rest, pause and to prepare for the new directions to be taken' an Administrator rather than parish priest was appointed on December 30th 1999 from a neighbouring community (Albion 2010:45-46). Rather than losing their own identity '[i]t was agreed that the two

parishes should retain their individual identities rather than merge as a single mega-parish, and that there would be some sharing of resources and rationalisation of Mass times' (Albion 2010:46). Although plans were underway for the hiring of a layperson as Pastoral Leader from 2001, through advertising in the Queensland Catholic newspaper *The Catholic Leader*, the Administrator was appointed Priest Director and St Ephram's began to be served by a visiting priest as sacramental minister (Albion 2010:46). A lay religious sister, Sr Mary David, arrived in 2003 to be the parish's non-ordained leader with the title of 'Pastoral Leader' and enacted collaborative leadership with the parish's community and Priest Director (Albion 2010:48-49). A new Priest Director, Fr David, was assigned in 2008 and around this time Sr Mary David began to provide the Homily at the celebration of Eucharist on the first Sunday of each month (Albion 2010:52).

When asked for comments for the compilation of a parish history, the following comment was made: 'As far as I am concerned, [this] Parish has always been a forward looking parish, always ready to accept change and to step up and accept responsibility' (name withheld, cited Albion 2010:59). This is a fairly accurate description of this parish community as it has a reputation within the wider diocese of being a fairly progressive (liberal) community, which is one of the reasons why I chose it as a fieldsite. As I said above about the orthodox (conservative) parish I included this faith community in order to be as representative as possible of the spectrum of responses elicited during my research. I also felt that the experiences of a *city* parish with a lay leader would likely be quite different to that of a rural parish, given the physical proximity of a priest if needed in a crisis and the availability of ordained ministers to preside at Sunday Eucharist *each* weekend.

Parish 6 – St Justin's, Bluefield; St Bridget's, Ploverton

It is believed that the first Mass on the Darling Downs was probably said in the vicinity of this parish when Dr John Bede Polding, Archbishop of Australia, visited Eton Vale Station in July 1843 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). From the late 1860s onwards Eucharist was celebrated in homes, halls, hotels or government buildings until the first church was built in the area in 1884, with a parish church built in this rural township, by its parishioners, in 1909 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; 2009). March 5th 1951 saw the Bluefield community of St Justin's declared a parish in combination with the Catholic community of St Bridget's in the neighbouring district of Ploverton (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). Just as rural communities began to decline 'the exodus to the city was hitting [this] area pretty hard' and their then-parish priest prepared the two communities for the time when they would be without a resident parish priest (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). Since the departure of their last resident priest-pastor in 1996 St Justin's parish has been administered by the Parish Pastoral Council under the leadership of its Chair, a lay man Frank, with the parish priest of the neighbouring two-district parish of Redlea-Gemfield, Fr Aaron, appointed their Priest Director (or 'parish priest' according to the history they provided to the diocesan website in 2004) in 2001 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010).

Surrounded by croplands, dairy farms and other agricultural pursuits, the small town of Bluefield lies between Toowoomba and Jacksford. This greater parish's existence as a dual community (two communities, two physical churches, one parish) sharing its parish priest/Priest Director with the neighbouring dual community of Redlea-

Gemfield shares some similarities with the above-mentioned Lay-Led community of St Finian's, while at the same time being different in this duality. I chose St Bridget's community for this variation in lay leadership structure, as well as the absence of the aforementioned separate Lay Leadership Team from this community's leadership structure. The priest assigned to shepherd this community at that time, Fr Aaron, was listed variously as either their 'parish priest' or Priest Director. Fr Aaron was also listed as the 'parish priest' of another neighbouring dual community (Redlea-Gemfield) and given the additional role of Priest Director of St Finian's (Parish 2) just prior to the end of my first four-week visit there. This sharing of a single ordained minister across three parishes that encompassed six communities was also of interest.

Parish 7 – Sts Joachim and Anne's, Graemefeld; St Margaret's, Barrington; Arrowshead; Gullyland

Located in an agricultural area in southern Queensland is a Catholic parish that encompasses *four* faith communities of varying sizes spread across a large district bordering New South Wales. There are physical churches in two of the towns, with Eucharist celebrated in all four places on a varying schedule.

The largest of these four faith communities, Sts Joachim and Anne's, is located in the rural town of Graemefeld that was first established in 1846 by the New South Wales Surveyor-General Sr Thomas Mitchell (Centre for the Government of Queensland 2011). Soon an established grazing area, the local Catholic population built its first church in the 1870s and the Sts Joachim and Anne's community was made a parish in the 1930s (Centre for the Government of Queensland 2011;

Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). Its present church was built in the mid-twentieth century as the district's population increased significantly following the expansion of cotton growing (Centre for the Government of Queensland 2011).

This parish's second community, St Margaret's in Barrington, was originally part of what is now a separate parish entirely. This small town's Catholic community first made plans to build its own Catholic church in 1919, with the St Margaret's church building completed in 1925 (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). The celebration of Eucharist in Barrington has always been intermittent increasing from once or twice a year initially with the arrival of the railway in 1913 allowing it to be more frequent (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). In the 1930s, when the Catholic community of the nearby township of Graemefeld was declared a parish, the smaller Barrington community was included in that parish, with its parish priest travelling over the unsealed roads – impassable during rains – once a month, with Mass also celebrated at outlying country homesteads during these years (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). Although St Margaret's was made a parish on its own in 1957, its sacramental needs have always been served by the priest of the nearby Sts Joachim and Anne's parish, with additional pastoral duties undertaken by laypeople – a religious sister for a number of years in the 1990s and a religious brother as well (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). Today St Margaret's, Barrington, is once again part of the larger Catholic parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's administered from the nearby township of Graemefeld with Eucharist celebrated monthly once more.

Established in 1889 is the third community, the small town of Arrowshead on the Western Downs typical of many small towns across Australia. Arrowshead includes

a store/dance hall and hotel, both built in the late 1890s, and is surrounded by agricultural land (About Australia 2011d). Its Catholic residents are visited monthly by the parish priest, Fr Oliver, as he travels from the small community/formerly separate parish of St Margaret's, Barrington, back to the 'mother' parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's in the larger township of Graemefeld. The last of the four communities within this larger parish, Gullyland, was first recognised as a town in 1879, is the habitat of a large koala population, is surrounded by Red River Gums and is situated close to a national park (About Australia 2011b). Gullyland is also part of the larger Catholic community centred on the larger nearby township of Graemefeld and is also visited monthly by the parish priest, Fr Oliver, but not on a Sunday. 'Sunday Eucharist' is celebrated on a weekday, once a month, by necessity.

Given the size of this 'greater Catholic community' that is at least two hour's drive from the nearest town or church I chose the Sts Joachim and Anne's parish as a fieldsite because it represented the normative model of a resident priest-pastor while at the same time being indicative of the places where parishioners have no options available to them other than a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service when their parish priest is unavailable (for example, on holidays, at an in-service). At Easter 2011, when most priests were re-assigned, this parish's priest was re-located and they became a parish without a resident priest-pastor. The community was assigned as Priest Director Fr Oliver who is the parish priest of the next parish I will discuss, St Gertrude's in Dovington. Visiting Sts Joachim and Anne's, Graemefeld, during this transition period enabled me to engage with parishioners as they were challenged by these new arrangements. Part of the new arrangements being discussed during my visit was an invitation that had been extended to two women religious to minister throughout the parish. Since my visit to this parish two

Marist sisters have been welcomed into the community to assist the parish priest through pastoral ministry (*The Catholic Leader*, 4 September 2011, pp.15-16, McCormack 2011:9).

Parish 8 – St Gertrude's, Dovington; Cloudsview; Oxenhead and Gerrandford; Oordsferd

Celebrating its centenary in 2011, the St Gertrude's faith community is another large parish that encompasses *four* faith communities, also of varying sizes and spread across a large district. On the New South Wales/Queensland border and considered the gateway to the Western Downs, the town of Dovington containing the 'mother' church of this parish was settled in the 1840s by pastoralists and emerged as an important administrative and commercial centre in the latter half of the nineteenth century (About Australia 2011c). The town's Catholic population gathers in a church built by volunteer labour from locally raised funds, with stories still told of people carting timber for St Gertrude's construction (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011). Its resident priest-pastor, Fr Oliver, serves several other Catholic communities in the surrounding district.

These other communities that comprise the rest of this larger Catholic parish – Cloudsview, Oxenhead and Gerrandford, and Oordsferd – are small 'towns' and rural communities of the Western Downs sprinkled through this cotton and grain growing region. They are each at varying distances from Dovington that is home to the 'mother' church of St Gertrude's, to its west, north-west and north-east. Celebrations of the Eucharist take place intermittently in these communities in whatever locations are available, with variable timing. Two of the communities

(Oxenhead and Gerrandford, and Oordsferd) celebrate 'Sunday Eucharist' on a weekday, by necessity, and in the Cloudsview community it is the local kindergarten that serves as a 'church' when the local Catholics gather to worship.

I chose the St Gertrude's Catholic parish because it, too, represented the normative model of a resident priest-pastor but was also too distant from other Catholic parishes to easily allow parishioners to travel to another Mass in another town should a priest be unavailable. Being at least two hour's drive from another parish or town this is another 'greater Catholic community' in which a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service cannot easily be 'skipped' over when their parish priest is absent. I also chose St Gertrude's parish because I have a close friend living and worshipping within this faith community, so was able to tap into her knowledge in my preparatory work. She was also able to speak with people about my research project prior to my arrival. As already mentioned, when most priests were re-assigned at Easter 2011 this parish's priest, Fr Oliver, became the Priest Director of the above-mentioned parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's in Graemefeld. At present, Fr Oliver is functioning as a 'parish priest' of each community for two weeks of each month, necessitating greater participation in parish leadership by the laity during the half a month they are effectively without a resident priest-pastor. Being present as St Gertrude's parish adjusted to 'sharing' their priest with their neighbouring parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's allowed me to observe this transition in both communities.

Like many of the parishes of this diocese St Jerome's encompasses several communities – in this case *five* separate communities, in four townships, with three churches – whose Catholics have been ministered to for about 150 years (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; Ansell 1986). Though reliant on priests from the nearest large town, Bindullah, Eucharist has been available since the 1820s in all of this parish's communities (Ansell 1986:9).

The 'mother' church of this greater Catholic parish, St Jerome's, is in the small town of Oakford north-west of Toowoomba, with the area's first Catholics gathering in private homes for Eucharist (Ansell 1986:10). Desiring to build its own church a contractor was engaged at the end of 1908, with the first wooden St Jerome's church completed by May the following year that was then blessed and opened May 2nd 1909 (Ansell 1986:11). Due to an increasing congregation, in 1917 this building underwent extension to almost twice its original size and was reopened on 2nd December 1917 (Ansell 1986:12). Following the formation of the Toowoomba diocese in 1929, its first bishop made St Jerome's a new parish centred on the Oakford community in 1936 that included several surrounding faith communities (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010; Ansell 1986:6, 14-15). When a new parish priest arrived in 1960 the old wooden church was still in use, so a brick church was built alongside the original and this was blessed and opened on 26th January 1964 (Ansell 1986:19).

The second community within this larger parish, St John of God's, is not located in a town. The Catholics of the sparsely settled area of Abbotshead first celebrated Eucharist in the nearby hall in 1924, usually monthly, having travelled to a nearby

township by sulky or on horseback prior to this (Ansell 1986:25). With a priest travelling from the nearest large town, Bindullah, and staying overnight in nearby farms the St John of God community became part of the larger St Jerome's parish when it was formed in 1936 (Ansell 1986:25). The small wooden St John of God church was built shortly thereafter and was blessed and opened on 11th September 1938 (Ansell 1986:25). Not located in a 'township' as such but as the centre of this dispersed Abbotshead faith community this church building, situated at a crossroads, represents another small part of this larger parish of believers.

Prior to the formation of the larger parish in 1936 the third small community of this parish, St Bruno's in Grey Rocks, belonged to a neighbouring parish and was able to gather to celebrate Eucharist every six weeks when a priest from the nearest town was able to travel by train, stay overnight and return by train the following night (Ansell 1986:22). Following the formation of the new parish of St Jerome's this became more frequent, with the parish priest able to come by car from the 'mother' church (Ansell 1986:22). Built in 1913 the small wooden church of St Bruno's stood for almost seventy years until a violent storm on 15th December 1980 damaged the age-weakened church, which was then demolished (Ansell 1986:23). Due to modern transport and high building costs, St Bruno's church was not replaced so Mass was then celebrated twice a month in the Country Women's Association hall (Ansell 1986:23). St Bruno's old church bell is now held in the presbytery of the 'mother' church of this large rural parish (Ansell 1986:23).

The fourth of the five communities that comprise this larger Catholic parish, St Jude's, is in the picturesque Addington township of about 400 people situated in the foothills of the Bunya Mountains, (About Australia 2011a). Addington's Catholic

residents are able to celebrate Eucharist together quarterly when the priest serving the community is available (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2011, *Mass of Thanksgiving for the Centenary of Immaculate Conception Church JANDOWAE 25th April, 1909 – 26th April, 2009* 2009:6). Belfordly, the fifth community embraced by the larger St Jerome's parish is without a church building in which to celebrate but is able to use the local hall when gathering for Eucharist (Ansell 1986:18). These outlying communities from the 'mother' church of St Jerome's are able to celebrate Eucharist together at least quarterly (Ansell 1986:18, *Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:6, Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010).

This larger Catholic community, centred on St Jerome's in Oakford, was the first parish in the diocese to be without a resident priest-pastor when their last parish priest left in early 1995 (*Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:6). This priest is remembered as establishing a firm foundation on which the newly formed Parish Pastoral Council could build as it saw to the day-to-day running of the parish (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). A succession of Priest Directors was assigned over the next few years, usually the parish priest of the nearby large town of Bindullah (*Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:6). On one occasion when that parish priest was overseas a priest from a neighbouring *diocese* ministered to the St Jerome's parish (*Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:6). In February 1999 a lay leader was placed in charge of this parish as Pastoral Leader (*Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:7). This religious sister's reputation and long-term presence was one reason why I chose this Lay-Led parish as a fieldsite. Her retirement at the end of May 2011, just prior to my planned visit, meant I was able to observe the community as it transitioned, once again, to being without a single leader (whether ordained or lay) to the shared leadership of the

Parish Pastoral Council *plus* newly formed Lay Leadership Team, with their Priest Director.

Forced early retirement of Bishop William Morris

Following the retirement of Bishop Edward Kelly, Fr William Morris of the Archdiocese of Brisbane was ordained to the episcopal seat of Toowoomba in St Damian's Cathedral on February 10th 1993 to become the diocese's fifth bishop (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010). It has become the norm for priests and bishops (with the exception of the Pope) to submit a letter of resignation/retirement at the age of seventy-five, which Bishop Morris was intending to offer in 2018 (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 538.3). However, on Sunday 1st May 2011 Bishop Morris announced his forced early retirement to the diocese through an open letter to the diocese read at all Masses and services on Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May 2011.

The history of events leading to this unexpected announcement is long and more suited to the works of an historian than an anthropologist. I outline it below by drawing upon Bishop Morris' letter of resignation of May 1st 2011 (Morris 2011), a media release from his Consultors (small group of priests, including the diocesan Chancellor, Associate Judicial Vicar and Vicar General) on May 2nd 2011 titled *BISHOP MORRIS REMOVED from OFFICE through EARLY RETIREMENT* (McClure, Quinlan, Scully, Noonan, Crowley, Sparksman, Schultz & Dorfield 2011), the *Pastoral Statement from Bishop Brian V Finnigan on his appointment as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Toowoomba – Monday 2nd May 2011* (Finnigan 2011), a *REFLECTION on the EARLY RETIRMENT of BISHOP*

WILLIAM MORRIS (Dorfield 2011) provided to parishioners of St Damian's Cathedral the following weekend, Saturday 7th/Sunday 8th May, and a letter to the Diocese of Toowoomba from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) dated May 12th 2011 (Wilson 2011). In summary:

- Since his ordination to the episcopate a small number of orthodox (conservative) parishioners, together with a few priests, within the diocese 'have found my leadership and the direction of the diocese not to their liking' (Morris 2011).

- A complex process began thirteen years earlier and ended in deadlock (Wilson 2011).

- A number of doctrinal concerns held by the Vatican, such as the widespread use of the *Third Rite of Reconciliation* (throughout Australia, including Toowoomba) were deemed inappropriate (Dorfield 2011, McClure *et al* 2011, Wilson 2011).

- Bishop Morris' *Advent Pastoral Letter 2006* in which he acknowledged the declining number of active clergy in the diocese, stated the Church's 'deeply held belief in the primacy of Eucharist for the identity, continuity and life of each parish community' and acknowledged discussions already taking place internationally, nationally and locally regarding the Sacrament of Holy Orders (that is, who is ordained to ministry) (Morris 2006).

- In April 2007 Archbishop Charles Chaput from Denver U.S.A. was sent to the diocese by the Congregation for Bishops on an Apostolic Visitation following which he produced an Official Report – Bishop Morris has never received a copy of this Official Report nor seen its contents (Dorfield 2011, Morris 2011).

- In January 2008 Bishop Morris travelled to Rome and met with Cardinals from the Congregations for Bishops, for Doctrine of the Faith, and for Sacraments and Worship. Discussions with these bodies continued for several years (Dorfield 2011).

- Bishop Morris travelled to the Vatican to meet with Pope Benedict XVI on 4th June 2009. His Holiness then requested Bishop Morris' resignation from office on 22nd December 2009. Upon querying whether he had a right to appeal, Bishop Morris was informed that 'Canon Law [*sic*] does not make provision for a process regarding bishops, whom the Successor of Peter nominates and may remove from Office' (Dorfield 2011, Morris 2011).

- 'On 21 February 2011 the Apostolic Nuncio in Canberra, Archbishop Lazzarotto, wrote to Bishop Morris informing that a public announcement would be made on Monday 02 may [*sic*] 2011 of his "resignation as Bishop of Toowoomba" and of the appointment of an Apostolic Administrator to attend to governance of the diocese until a new bishop is appointed'.

- May 1st 2011 – Bishop Morris' early *retirement* announced, as 'to resign is a matter of conscience and my resignation would mean that I accept the assessment of myself as breaking *communion* which I absolutely refute and reject… I have never written a letter of resignation' (Morris 2011).

Much of this detail was unknown to the bulk of the diocese prior to the events of May 2011, myself included, though I was aware of the Apostolic Visitation of 2007 because it was referred to by Paul Collins in his writings (2008). On the evening of Saturday 30th April a cousin who lives out of town called my home after attending a Sunday Eucharist on Saturday night in Toowoomba to tell us, while choking back tears, 'Bishop Bill's been sacked' (Sarah-Jane, pers. comm. 30th April 2011). I was

as surprised as my cousin was and, as evening Masses and services ended elsewhere in the diocese, I received text messages from friends – 'Bishop bill [*sic*] has been sacked! I'm too shocked for words' (Sarah, pers. comm. 30th April 2011) and 'Hey did u [*sic*] know that bishop bill [*sic*] was going 2 [*sic*] resign' (Sharon, pers. comm. 30th April 2011) – indicating to me that this was a widespread announcement beyond the confines of the city of Toowoomba. In the days and weeks that followed I learned of the history to this announcement, as outlined above, and was sought for comment by various media outlets necessitating my immersion in the media coverage and blogosphere of commentary around this issue.

I am a fully initiated member of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, have been a parishioner in three parishes within this diocese over the course of my life, have attended Catholic primary and secondary schools in the diocese as well as taught in some of its primary schools, and been active in various ministries at parish level and one at diocesan level. Thus, my Catholicism is deeply embedded in who I am and how I choose to live making my attempts to maintain a balance between being a fellow parishioner *of* the diocese and being a doctoral research *in* the diocese somewhat difficult during this period. Further to that, over his time in the diocese Bishop William had become a family friend so I was feeling a combination of personal distress over these events and was also experiencing great concern for the future of my project. As with any organisation, the removal of its head usually has consequences for projects and programmes enacted by that individual. Therefore, I was unsure as to the status of my permission to conduct fieldwork/research in the diocese with Bishop Morris' early retirement. I contacted the parishes that were my fieldsites, most by e-mail (regular post for those not online), with the following message:

> As I am unsure as to what impact the removal of Bishop Morris as Bishop of Toowoomba will have on his approval of my ethnographic fieldwork in the Diocese of Toowoomba, I am writing to let you know that I hope to make contact with Apostolic Bishop Brian Finnegan [*sic*] as soon as possible, to clarify this situation. That said, as I have written approval from your parish's leadership I would hope that you would permit me to continue my involvement in your parish as part of my doctoral research. I will, however, respect any decision you make with regards to the present, unsettling situation.

I made contact with these parish leaders as a professional courtesy, as a doctoral researcher; while my offer to respect their decision was made as a fellow Catholic offering pastoral sensitivity during a difficult time. I had hoped, and expected, that the leader/s of these communities would permit me to complete my fieldwork as they were all familiar with me by this point and with the way in which I was conducting research in their parish. As the diocese's Vicar General (essentially, a 'vice president' type role able to stand in for the bishop when the bishop is absent) was the parish leader in one of these communities he was able to assure me that 'Ongoing programs, with prior permission from Bishop Morris, continue. It would be courteous to let Bishop Brian Finnigan know of your doctoral project. His role is primarily a "caretaker" role until a new Bishop is appointed' (Fr David, pers. comm. 6th May 2011). I clarified this further by looking at the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* which makes it clear that 'When a see [*sic*] is vacant, nothing is to be altered' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 428.1).

I received positive comments from most of my fieldsites, including 'I can't see any problem with you continuing your research in St Hilary's' (Belinda, pers. comm. 6th May 2011) and 'You come when you're able. Who knows if we are still here?' (Brendan, pers. comm. 7th May 2011). I received neither an acknowledgement of this message nor a reply from the self-described 'orthodox' (conservative) parish of St Agatha's, Toowoomba. Upon explaining this to one St Agatha's parishioner

some time later, who had already given consent to be interviewed but had not yet scheduled an interview time, again via e-mail, I was told 'Father won't have any issue with us continuing the interviews and from what I have heard of Bishop Finnegan [*sic*] he may be quite interested in some of your research' (pers. comm. 2nd June 2011). To my surprise the leader of the 'progressive' (liberal) parish of St Ephram's withdrew consent for my ongoing fieldwork, saying by e-mail 'At this stage I think it would be better if we didn't proceed formally with what you have been doing in the parish' (Sr Mary David, pers. comm. 9th May 2011). As a result of this withdrawal of consent, a number of St Ephram's parishioners who had given verbal consent to be interviewed but had not yet provided written consent withdrew their consent, modified their consent (would no longer participate in *their* suggestion of a group interview or would not consent for me to record said group interview), or delayed their consent (wanted to wait until I had met with the Apostolic Administrator). As a consequence of this delay, coupled with my absence from Toowoomba on a research trip to more distant parishes in the diocese's north, south and mid-west and the time constraints of the end-date of my ethics clearance from the University of Southern Queensland I was unable to interview *any* parishioners from the St Ephram's community.

Bishop Brian Finnigan, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Brisbane was assigned to be the Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, with his duties as an auxiliary bishop of Brisbane continuing during his period as Apostolic Administrator in Toowoomba. Therefore, he was not (and will not be) resident in Toowoomba for the entire period of his appointment and, when present, is very busy. I made contact with Bishop Finnigan by mail (11th May 2011), explaining who I was, my research project, my formal permission from Bishop

Emeritus Morris and my desire to meet with him, as Apostolic Administrator, to answer any questions he may have and to request his ongoing permission for my research to continue. Due to a small miscommunication I did not receive a reply until the Bishop's Secretary contacted me by telephone the day before he left for three weeks and a hastily arranged telephone interview was scheduled for that afternoon (23rd May 2011), during which Bishop Finnigan gave verbal consent for my research fieldwork to continue with formal written consent following a few days later (dated 23rd May 2011) (Appendix A).

Apart from the withdrawal of consent from one fieldsite, as outlined above, the other significant impact of these events lay in the responses that people gave in general conversations and formal interviews when discussing being a Catholic in twenty-first Australia. The 'Bishop Bill thing' in essence 'skewed' my subsequent research as it was the main topic of conversation during the remainder of my fieldwork. This was particularly the case in the parishes in the north, mid-west and south of the diocese that I visited for only a few days each, which I will discuss in greater detail in chapter six (Discussion of Results).

Limitations or restrictions

Although the declining number of active priests and of vocations to the priesthood – the 'shortage of priests' – is not unique to the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba or to the Australian Catholic Church but is present throughout the universal Catholic Church the primary limitation of this research has been the necessity of restricting fieldwork to within the geographic boundaries of one territorial diocese within Australia and to one of the twenty-two Catholic Churches, the Latin (Roman)

Catholic Church. Of the secondary limitations within those parameters the most significant are the further necessity to confine ethnographic data-gathering to a selection of the Toowoomba diocese's fifty faith communities in thirty-five parishes and the impact of external events, most notably the devastating floods across much of Queensland in the summer of 2010-2011 and the forced early retirement of the diocesan bishop, Bishop Emeritus William Morris.

Further, while many of Australia's dioceses are currently being ministered to by large numbers of priests from outside the respective diocesan borders (either religious order priests or priests from overseas) the absence of large numbers of non-diocesan priests from the Toowoomba diocese limited this research's investigation into this phenomenon. In a similar way, the absence of a restored permanent diaconate from this diocese also prevented research into this phenomenon in the Australian (more specifically, the Toowoomba) context. At this time it is not possible to conduct research into married priests (through the removal of mandatory celibacy) or female priests, due to these options not being permissible under the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law*.

Selection of Fieldsites

A limitation of this research is the small number of parishes selected in which to conduct fieldwork – ten – and the smaller number in which said fieldwork took place – eight. As explained, this small number of fieldsites, and the further constraint related to the length of time spent conducting fieldwork in each, was impacted by the nature of the leadership model in place in one parish, the lack of response from

another parish, the impact of the 2010-2011 summer floods and the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris.

As already mentioned, these chosen parishes were close to, or within the city of Toowoomba, so that I would be able to spend a minimum of eight weeks in each, with a significant amount of ongoing participation in the groups and activities of these parishes beyond these two four week periods. That is, I would be able to attend parish groups throughout the week wherever/whenever they were on, so long as they did not take place at the same time as an activity in the parish I was 'officially' visiting that month.

Of the six parishes close to, or within, Toowoomba itself I was only able to conduct these eight weeks of 'official' fieldwork in four of them, though I was able to go to parish groups in at least two of the city parishes virtually continuously (one for a full twelve months and another for six months until permission to do so was withdrawn). One of the outlying communities, St Justin's, Bluefield, is without a resident priest-pastor and is led on a day-to-day basis by a lay man from within that community, Frank. After my initial mail was believed to have been lost (the local post office filed it in the church's box), I re-sent the mail to Frank's home address and, when it too failed to arrive, then sent it via registered mail. The signed Letter of Consent was returned almost eight weeks later. Although I received this written consent to conduct fieldwork in that community, I experienced great difficulty in organising dates to do so due to two factors – first, I would call and leave a message from 'Regina Ryan, USQ PhD student' and he would invariably contact the diocese's Director of Youth Ministry, a woman whose surname was also Ryan; and second,

the Parish Pastoral Council, in Frank's words, only met when everyone was at Mass at the same time *and* they had something to talk about.

As each of the other parishes replied to my initial contact, gave written consent and scheduled dates for my initial visit, I assigned the only remaining 'free' dates to the St Justin's community and informed all six parishes of this schedule of dates. As with all of the parishes, I made contact a few weeks before I was scheduled to arrive for my first four-week visit. When I made contact with Frank to confirm the timing and venue of Sunday Eucharist in St Justin's parish for the weekend I was due to commence fieldwork I was informed that there had been a selection of new members to the Parish Pastoral Council and that he would want to explain to them who I was and to get their permission for me to visit. Frank further explained that he was going away for a fortnight and would not be available until just before I was due to arrive. When I called Frank at that time, by then the week leading into my arrival in St Justin's parish, he felt it was too short notice for his parish.

Although I had written permission to visit this community, I chose to respect this request both as a fellow Catholic and as a researcher wanting to establish positive relationships with this key 'gatekeeper'. This time passed without result and it was at this point that I realised that visiting St Justin's parish was no longer feasible. These difficulties reflect some of the problems associated with the absence of a parish priest who is both the spiritual and titular leader of the community; the canonical 'boss' able to make a decision 'yes, come' rather than a busy farmer juggling roles in a less clear leadership structure.

When a priest is not available to preside at a Sunday Eucharist the people in these communities that are close to Toowoomba have the option of travelling a relatively

short distance to another community (neighbouring parish or town) in order to attend Mass. As this is not available to the members of the diocese residing in its outlying areas I realised that my samples were skewed somewhat towards Catholics who would always be able to access Eucharist if they so choose. As I was unable to conduct research in one of the rural communities, St Justin's in Bluefield, leaving myself with 'spare' time I realised I would be able to make a short visit, of four to five days, to representative parishes in the far north, mid-west, far-west and south of the diocese to conclude this fieldwork.

I again chose parishes that were representative of the leadership models outlined above – two with a parish priest and two with lay leadership. Of the four contacted I was only able to visit three as the westernmost parish of the diocese, close to the Northern Territory/South Australia/New South Wales borders in the town of Hollow's Rest, did not respond to my contact. While contacting the potential sites, I became aware that in the re-assignment of the ordained clergy of the diocese at Easter 2011, the southern parish's priest (Fr Oliver at St Gertrude's in Dovington) was now being shared with the mid-western parish (Sts Joachim and Anne's, Graemefeld) and the well-known lay leader at the northern parish (St Jerome's, Oakford) was retiring and a Leadership Team (of laypeople) was being established. Visiting during these transitional phases gave an immediacy to the responses provided, making them particularly insightful. Due to the time-constraints of visiting four parishes in a four week period, I scheduled each visit for a 'long weekend' of four to five days, with the only exception being the town of Dovington in which a friend lives with whom I was able to stay for a week rather than travelling into Toowoomba and back out again two days later.

As I would only be visiting these communities for what, essentially, would be a long weekend slightly different preparation was needed. Rather than several weeks in which to become acquainted with parishioners, form relationships and seek interviews, I relied upon the parish leader/s to not only place my notice in the parish newsletter but to explain my desire to speak with parishioners during my stay. To that end, I sent Letters of Consent to the parish leader/s asking them to make them available prior to my visit. During the course of my fieldwork throughout the diocese I had attached to these Letters of Consent a 'Parish Survey 2010-2011' which asked for some basic demographic information (name, address, age group, parish and so on) and listed several questions that people either completed prior to an interview or I would begin an interview with (Appendix F). These survey questions were designed to get people thinking about some of the issues I was interested in – of particular use in parishes with a parish priest where lay leadership or other leadership models may not have been considered as yet. In these more distant parishes I sent a number of these survey forms separately for anyone unable/unwilling to be interviewed during my short stay. In the first of these parishes, Sts Joachim and Anne's in Graemefeld, I failed to take into account the last long weekend of the year, so many parishioners who might otherwise have spoken with me were absent. In the Dovington community in which my friend lives a number of people had been able to learn more about me and my research project from her, so she was able to give me the names of potential interviewees when I arrived.

The Easter 2011 re-assignment of diocesan priests experienced in several of the communities I visited during my fieldwork research was part of a Diocesan Pastoral Plan enacted by the Bishop Emeritus and due to draw to a close at Easter 2014

(Morris 2006). Whether or not this plan remains in effect until that time will be determined by the incoming Bishop and remains outside the scope of this project, though its continued enactment or alteration will bear directly on the lived experience of these communities.

Queensland Floods of the summer of 2010-2011

The other parish in which I was unable to conduct my full eight weeks of fieldwork was that of St Finian's which is centred in the small town of Davidsfield south of Toowoomba. The devastating floods across much of Queensland over the summer of 2010-2011 played out across the Darling Downs, and Toowoomba in particular, in January 2011. The major highway connecting Toowoomba to the Southern Downs was cut in several places, with travel along it either cancelled (in the case of bus companies), impossible (road surface washed away, bridged damaged) or banned (by local/regional/state governments).

The first weekend of my second four-week stint in St Finian's parish was the 8th/9th January 2011 (the day before the floodwaters swept through Toowoomba's CBD). When I arrived in Davidsfield I saw that one of its access roads had been cut by floodwaters (a large section of road washed away), so I decided not to remain in town overnight as I had no supplies with me for an extended stay in terms of clothing, books or otherwise (in this parish I stayed in the empty presbytery/parish house and needed my own bed linen, towels and so on). A large number of parishioners were absent from the service because they were unable to leave their properties or to enter the township. I left St Finian's church intending to return later in the week and by the time I reached my home in Toowoomba Davidsfield had been

listed as cut off by floodwaters. Coupled with this I had close friends 'missing' in the Lockyer Valley, so was distracted for much of the following week until they were able to make contact. Due to both the cancellation of bus services and the state of the roads I had intermittent access to the Davidsfield community over the next few weeks, severely limiting my ability to renew acquaintances or to arrange interviews with St Finian's or St Raphael the Archangel's parishioners.

Sampling issues

Another limitation of this research is its use of the experiences and opinions of only the active parishioners of the parishes in which I conducted fieldwork, without inclusion of those self-defined Catholics who are no longer actively engaged in a faith community (colloquially called 'lapsed Catholics') or of those who no longer define themselves as Catholic. Within this group, a further limitation or restriction that is discernible lays in the spectrum of responses I was able to gather during in-depth interviews. While this will be elaborated on in greater detail during my Discussion of Results (chapter six) it must be noted that neither the orthodox (conservative) nor progressive (liberal) voices are adequately represented in this work.

When I sought an interview with any parishioner I tended to say words to the effect of, 'It's been fascinating speaking with you and I'd love it if you would consider talking to me in more detail in a longer conversation, or interview'. In most instances, people either agreed immediately, took a Letter of Consent to read through and consider being interviewed or declined saying they were 'too busy', 'had nothing useful to say' or 'I don't know anything' (their words). In the parish of St

Agatha's, Toowoomba, in which individuals described either themselves of their faith community as 'orthodox', 'faithful to the teachings of the Church' or 'obedient to the Pope' there was a widespread unwillingness of individuals to consent to an interview when asked. Of the two people who consented verbally and provided written consent to be interviewed, only one was interviewed because the other was unable to schedule an interview in the remaining time. In the progressive (liberal) community of St Ephram's I had only asked this question of a few people, with other key people yet to be asked, when permission to continue fieldwork was revoked. In honouring the community's right to withdraw its participation as outlined in the Letter of Consent (Appendix C) I was unable to interview any member of this faith community.

Due to the delays related to the January floods in the region and the early retirement of Bishop Emeritus Morris I sought an extension to my ethics clearance in order to complete interviews with all the parishioners of all the parishes that had given verbal or written consent to be interviewed. However, some parishioners withdrew consent, others had not given me telephone contact details, some did not respond to contact (e-mail, telephone messages) and others were unable or unwilling to schedule time before its expiration. At this time I also endeavoured to speak to the parish leader/s of these communities (having already done so in the outlying parishes during my short visit) but was unable to do so in the St Ephram's community whose leader, Sr Mary David, had already withdrawn consent and in the community of St Agatha's whose elderly parish priest was on his annual month-long vacation to his family home.

Conclusion

Ethnography, the mainstay of anthropological research, was drawn on throughout this research project, particularly through fifteen months of fieldwork in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. Within the parishes selected to be fieldsites I began my fieldwork with participant observation before moving into informal interviews with parishioners to identify key individuals, or 'gatekeepers'. Having invited parishioners to be interviewed, I then proceeded to conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with those who consented. As this fieldwork research took place in various locations within the Toowoomba diocese, large and small, rural and urban, at parishes that were representative of each leadership model possible under *Canon Law* this was multilocale, multi-sited ethnography. As I am a fully initiated member of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church; was before, am now, and will continue to be a member of the diocese; and chose my own parish as a fieldsite, elements of reflexivity, auto ethnography and 'native' anthropology were integrated into this methodological framework.

The size of the geographic territory encompassed within this diocese placed limitations upon the extent of fieldwork possible to a total of eight parishes that together include twenty-five separate Catholic communities. Further restricting fieldwork were two events external to my project – the extensive floods across Queensland in the summer of 2010-2011 and in the Toowoomba region in January 2011 and the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus of Toowoomba William Morris – with efforts made to redress these and other limitations.

Chapter five: Betwixt-and-Between anthropology and theology

Introduction

In order to adequately address the particular issues surrounding the shortage of priests in the Catholic Church in Australia, more specifically in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, I have drawn on a number of anthropological approaches to religion, Christianity and theology, using a grounded theory approach.

Outlined by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their 1967 work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 'grounded theory' is a methodology for generating theoretical frameworks during the course of conducting fieldwork. Countering the then-prevailing methodologies for approaching data analysis and theoretical formation, in which preformed theoretical frameworks were used to approach fieldwork and data analysis, grounded theory is a way to generate a theory *from* the data gathered. It is 'the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research' (Glaser & Strauss 1967:2). Data collection and its comparative analysis are carried out simultaneously, resulting in the development of a theoretical framework that is further refined through the collection of targeted data that will fill out the emerging theory (Charmaz 1983:110-111; Glaser & Strauss 1967:1, 23, 43; Dey 1999:3-5, 7). Stressing 'discovery and theory development rather than logical deductive reason which relies on prior theoretical frameworks' in grounded theory 'both the processes and products of research are shaped from the data rather than from preconceived logically deduced theoretical frameworks' (Charmaz 1983:110). That way, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967:242), the theory will fit accurately and reflect the real-world in which it was formed, being 'flexible enough to make a wide variety of changing situations understandable, and also flexible enough to be readily reformulated, virtually on the spot, when it does not work in application. Although a

subsequent schism between Glaser and Strauss has resulted in both critiquing each other's later interpretation of grounded theory, resulting in various interpretations existing today, it is this original 'let the theory come from the data' approach that has been utilised in this research project.

In addition to the original text by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the later, separate work by each (Glaser 2002a, 2002b, 1999; Strauss 1995, 1987, 1971; with Corbin 1997, 1990; and with Chatzman 1973), there are many others who have discussed what grounded theory is and how to go about utilising this theoretical approach in ethnographic fieldwork. Among these have been the fieldwork manuals of Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods* (2002); and Laimputtong and Ezzy's *Qualitative Research Methods* (2005). Making careful observation of the social world of Toowoomba's Catholics, both at diocesan and parish levels, this grounded theory approach permits pre-existing theory to be drawn into dialogue with new insights generated through this ethnographic fieldwork (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005:265-266). Thus, identified categories and concepts emerging from fieldwork are linked to substantive and formal theories already existent in anthropology (Bernard 2002:462-463).

To frame the changes and transitions taking place within this specific religious context I first turn to Victor Turner's work on transitioning as this is precisely what Catholic parishes are undergoing at present – a transition from what once was to something new – being at present in a 'liminal' place. This threshold place in which liminars experience change commonly entails the re-creation of communities into *communitas*. While Turner's interests lay primarily in performance and in the way

in which religion is performed, these theories are applicable to many of the faith-communities of the Toowoomba diocese.

The Turners' later work on pilgrimages, particularly those of the Catholic Tradition, also fall with the 'anthropology of religion', which has been an interest within anthropology since 'the West' was first exposed to the 'others' of the New World and elsewhere during the Age of Exploration. While initially interested in defining 'religion', usually with reference to Christianity, the anthropology of religion also entailed identifying the purpose for religion and religious belief, as well as the development of theoretical frameworks with which to examine these beliefs. More recently the anthropology of religion has given way to the 'anthropology of Christianity' that has sought to redress the imbalance within anthropology *away from* its Judeo-Christian roots and theological underpinnings. It is this 'awkward relationship' between anthropology and theology, despite theology's contributions to early anthropological thought, that has led to the appropriation of the term, but not the substance of, 'anthropology' in 'theological anthropology' and 'anthropological theology'. Despite its misuse in this way, there *is* an important relationship to be established between anthropology and theology, including anthropology's ethnographic methodology, in order to allow both disciplines to learn from, and enrich, each other. Thus, the 'anthropology *of* theology' draws upon the best of each discipline to allow any and all religions/belief systems in existence in the twenty-first century to be fully explored both in terms of discursive knowledge *and* 'on-the-ground' local experiences.

Liminality and *communitas*

In his 1908 work *Rites de Passage*, French folklorist Arnold van Gennep discussed the life-changing rituals that accompanied changes in the social status of individuals or groups as processual forms of 'passage' that included three stages (Turner 1992a:101, 1992b:48, 1982:24 and 1969a:94; Starkloff 1997:647). Van Gennep spoke of the 'separation from antecedent mundane life; liminality, a betwixt-and-between condition often involving seclusion from the everyday scene; and re-aggregation to the quotidian world' inherent in these rituals (1908, cited Turner 1992a:101). The first phase, of *separation*, involved a clear demarcation and detachment from the previously held status, through symbolic behaviour; spatial, geographic relocation; or the removal of previous status symbols (Turner 1982:24, 26, 1969a:94). The phase of *transition*, referred to as 'margin' or 'limen', is the threshold period of ambiguity – a social limbo in which the 'liminaries' are betwixt-and-between the established, culturally recognised states that they once held and those they are about to hold – marked by the holding of few of the characteristics of either the before or after status, while at the same time being both this and that in terms of the two states (Turner 1992b:49, 1982:24, 1969a:94). It is the passage from what was to what will be 'when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape' (Turner 1992b:132). The last phase of this tripartite processual structure is *aggregation*, also called *reaggregation* or *incorporation*, in which the individual or group returns to everyday life in a new state of being, through symbolic phenomena and actions (Turner 1992b:48, 1982:25, 1969a:94). 'These terms refer to rites in which candidates pass through the stages of separation from the larger community (preliminal), rites of actual transition (liminal) and rites of reincorporation (postliminal)' (Starkloff 1997:647). Because the Catholic faith-

communities I encountered in the Toowoomba diocese may be considered liminal entities transitioning from what once was (the normative parish priest model of leadership) through the liminal phase (sharing a priest, visiting sacramental priest and day-to-day lay leadership) and into something yet to emerge it is Turner's expansion on van Gennep's liminal phase that is of most relevance to this study.

In his 1969 paper 'Liminality and Communitas' Victor Turner first introduced the concepts of 'liminality', liminal personae neither here nor there, and 'communitas' (community). He also discussed *rites de passage* and millenarian movements. In that same year, he again drew on van Gennep's work on *rites de passage*, particularly the transitional (middle phase) of 'liminality'. It is on *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969a) that Turner's later work rests, and to which the work of others is also addressed. With a personal, lifetime interest in performance and the theatre, he applied Arnold van Gennep's three phases of *rites de passage*, in terms of liminality, liminal, liminoid and communitas, to the theatre in *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of* Play (1982).

A decade later, and containing much of the same discussion of Arnold Van Gennep's work on rites of passage and Turner's other work on the marginal or *liminal* phase, his wife Edith published *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols* (1992b). Published in the same year *The Anthropology of Performance* (1992a) is predominantly about performance and discusses the different ways in which Victor Turner had taught this notion to anthropology students, including 'performing' rituals (a wedding with all roles played by class members) or creating 'tribal' rituals. While it less about liminality than his other works, Turner does include a discussion

of the distinction between the individual form of tribal rituals, what he referred to as life-crisis rituals, and that of collective, industrialised societies (1992a).

His wife, Edith Turner, accompanied Victor on his anthropological journeys (literally, figuratively and theoretically) and discusses her husband and his contributions to anthropology in a 2008 paper 'Exploring the Work of Victor Turner: Liminality and its Later Implications' in which she provides biographical information on the development of Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas. While not adding a great to deal of new insight into these concepts themselves, Edith Turner does discuss more recent developments regarding the application of liminality and communitas in the fields of interpretive anthropology ('studying how people interpret what was happening to them in their lives, listening to them' (Turner 2008:39)) and the anthropology of experience ('anthropological studies … in which the authors frankly state they *were* emotionally involved in their people's religions' (Turner 2008:40)) .

Many others have drawn upon Victor Turner's work on performance and rituals, especially his developments related to liminality and communitas. These have come from fields beyond anthropology, such as theatre/performance (Lewis 2008, St John 2008), music/musicology (Pedroza 2010), education (Winn 2010) and theology (Starkloff 1997). Graham St John's edited collection, *Victor Turner and Contemporary Cultural Performance* (2008), features primarily performance-related contributors discussing the ways in which Victor Turner's work on performance, liminality and communitas has been influential on contemporary forms of performance. An example of the contributions included is that of J. Lowell Lewis, 'Toward a Unified Theory of Cultural Performance: a Reconstructive Introduction to

Victor Turner', that provides a good overview of Turner's theories of the liminal, liminoid and communitas from the perspective of someone who teaches both performance and anthropology, with the author in essence 'updating' Turner's liminal work by putting their own 'take' on it. Starkloff's essay 'Church as Structure and Communitas: Victor Turner and Ecclesiology' (1997) is an example of the way in which disciplines beyond anthropology have also drawn on the work of Victor Turner. In this paper, theologian Starkloff outlines the work of Victor Turner (and to a lesser degree, Edith Turner) on liminality and communitas and relates these concepts to the Catholic Church.

Limen, Latin for 'threshold' is the 'transition between' two states marked by the stripping away of the pre-liminal and post-liminal attributes of the individual or group undergoing change (Turner 1982:43, 1969a:102). *Liminality* is the experience of moving from one structural status to another, through the breaking down of status and behaviour, including the loss of whatever privilege, authority or rank was previously held, and the reforming of the individual or group into a new form (Turner 1969:102, 116). For those undergoing liminality, an old world succumbs and a new one emerges (Nedeianu 2007:266). Those undergoing this period of transition are *liminaries* who are outside society's norms of behaviour and obligations as they learn to combine familiar events and behaviours in new ways either through structured rituals, educative tasks, or through variation and experiment (Turner 1992b:49, 1982:27, 29). Conducive to play and experimental behaviour, liminality may be likened to invisibility, darkness or wilderness (Turner 1992b:52) as it permits 'these persons [to] elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space' (Turner 1969a:95). 'Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the

positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, conventional and ceremonial'
(Turner 1969a:95, 1969b:327). They are 'between states' as they undergo
'separation from the identity and status associated with a … former role, prior to
reincorporation into [a] new status (Bevan 2011:542). Thus, liminality 'is a
subjective experience of the external world in which "thisness" becomes "thatness"'
(Turnbull 1990:80). These in-between entities belong in two worlds, with these
'different states of being … necessarily coexistent in both time and space' (Turnbull
1990:60).

Turner makes a distinction between *liminal* and *liminoid*, suggesting that the first
refers to the ritual *rites of passage* phase of small-scale societies and the latter to the
betwixt-and-between 'work' and 'play' leisure phase of industrial societies (Turner
1982:32-40). While liminality is conductive to play it is a necessitated experience
for those undergoing a *rite de passage* whereas there is optionality available to a
liminoid leisure-seeker that a liminar lacks. 'Leisure-time' is 'free time' that is
distinguished form 'work time'; both a 'freedom from' and a 'freedom to' that, like
liminality, is neither-this-nor-that. Neither fully 'work' nor fully 'play' the liminoid
is similarly betwixt-and-between (Turner 1992b:54-55, 1982:36, 40).

The liminoid is a secularised form of the liminal phenomena that is more
characteristically produced by individuals; tends to be collective in its 'mass' effects;
is plural, fragmentary and experimental; may be subversive, not merely reversive;
and is often derived from tribal liminal antecedents (Turner 1992b:56-57). It is the
'ritual-like' leisure genres of large-scale empires and nation-states (Lewis 2003:48,
50) that is 'akin to the ritually liminal, or like it, but not identical with it' (Turner
1992b:56). While it, too, describes an example of communitas and liminality, the

liminoid 'occurs within the historical or salvation religions, as opposed to those occurring within tribal religions' (Starkloff 1997:655). Thus, the complex network of social structures in which individuals and groups are usually engaged are left aside as new networks and structures are formed, either in experiences of liminality or the liminoid. This transition from what was to what will be entails a transformation of the liminar entity because liminality is 'the process of transformation at work' (Turnbull 1990:79). Turner (1982:44) referred to this social anti-structure, this transformative state, as *communitas* and suggested that 'certain kinds of liminality may be conducive to the emergence of communitas' (Turner 1992b:60).

Communitas 'symbolises the abrogation, negation, or inversion of the normative structure in which its participants are quotidianly involved' (Turner 1982:47). It contrasts the normative social structure by preserving the individual distinctiveness of relationships in this liminal period that Turner viewed as a socially positive model of human society in its homogeneity, equality and lack of structure, which facilitates spontaneity, creativity and immediacy (Turner 1982:45-46, 1969a:97). Communitas 'transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalised relationships' (Turner 1969b:338). Spontaneous, immediate and short-term 'communitas is a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals' (Turner 1969a:131) undergoing the shared experience of liminality. As their individual personhood (or group identity) is suspended, co-liminars develop camaraderie (St John 2008b:7-8) as they together 'inhabit the fringes and interstices of the social structure' (Turner 1969a:145).

A 'community' happens – with Turner preferring the Latin communitas 'to distinguish this modality of social relationship from "an area of common living"' (Turner 1969a:96) – that is the embodiment of the juxtapositions or hybridisation of the established aspects of social structure in this period that is betwixt-and-between. Completely unique and socially transient, this form of society is seamless and structure-less as this experience of mutuality sees the rejection of status by co-liminal comrades (Turner 1969a:135, 137) often involving 'the feeling of acceptance and the accepting of others, often regardless of social status or background' (McGinnis, Gentry & McQuillan 2009:22). This 'heightened sense of community' (McGinnis, Gentry & McQuillan 2009:22) is constructed anew by co-liminars sharing a state between "thisness" and "thatness" or is the newly-transformed pre-liminal social structure in a new guise. Possessing an existential quality communitas 'can be grasped only in some relation to structure' (Turner 1969a:127).

'Structureless communitas can bind and bond people together only momentarily' (Turner 1969a:153) so Turner identified three distinct forms of communitas – spontaneous, ideological and normative (Turner 1992:58, 1982:47, 1969a:132-133; Starkloff 1997:650). *Spontaneous* communitas is existential or spontaneous; a moment of mutual understanding, togetherness and communion in which co-liminars experience synchronicity (Turner 1992:59, 1982:47-48). It is 'the state of becoming that occurs in a marginalised and anti-structural group' (Starkloff 1997:650). *Ideological* communitas uses past models and their remembered attributes for the creation of a 'utopian' model (Turner 1992:59, 1982:48). Turner (1982:49) suggests it is this ideological, utopian communitas that is central to many literate, historical religions, such as Catholicism. 'This phase is in tension with normative communitas because it envisions how the primitive communitas might serve as a model for

society as a whole' (Starkloff 1997:650). The third form of communitas suggested by Turner is *normative* communitas that he sees as an attempt to capture, preserve and normalise the spontaneous form by fostering spontaneous communitas on a regular basis. He suggests it is common during periods of religious revival in which the routinisation of this experience of solidarity is sought for the adherents of a belief system (Turner 1992:59, 1982:49). The marginal group itself is attempting to become an enduring social system through the normalisation of the otherwise distinct community that has formed (Starkloff 1997:650) or been radically transformed (Turnbull 1990:79-80). More so, the act 'of consciously achieving transformation is the process of entering the liminal state' (Turnbull 1990:79) and it is this self-consciousness of the act of transition/transformation/liminality that normative communitas represents.

While Victor Turner's interests lay primarily in performance and religion, as well as the way in which religion is performed, his work on liminality and communitas are of particular relevance to this study as the Catholic parishes experiencing the various leadership models enacted throughout this diocese experience periods of liminality and their parishioners become liminars experiencing various forms of communitas. Indeed, 'the history of the Church has consistently reflected tension between communitas and structure' (Starkloff 1997:658). Turner expresses anthropologically what the Church expresses theologically – that the Church's nature as *communio,* ecclesial communion – 'is not only communitas, but structure as well' with the ongoing tension between structure and communitas affecting all forms of the Church's communal life (Starkloff 1997:664, 667). These communities try to create, re-create or maintain communitas in response to the changing circumstances brought about by the declining number of active clergy, with this most pronounced in

parishes that are without a resident priest-pastor. Further, the transformative aspects

of priestless-ness, when experienced by Catholics of the Toowoomba diocese, best

represent Turnbull's suggestion that *transformation* is a better focus than transition

in the application of Turnerian theories (Turnbull 1990:79). In moving between his

own practice of a religious belief and the anthropological study of the belief of others

Turner fulfilled the earlier anthropological interest in religion, oft-referred to as the

'anthropology of religion' and was a precursor to the later, more recent

developments, regarding the 'anthropology of Christianity'.

Anthropology of Religion

> Religion is a universal. It has been found in all societies studied by
> anthropologists and is one of the hallmarks of human creativity as well as a
> tribute to humankind's nearly infinite resourcefulness and adaptability in
> coping with the problems of daily existence… [Therefore] the anthropology of
> religion and the study of ritual are very much interrelated (Glazier 1997b:3, 8).

The 'anthropology of religion' is a broad sub-discipline of anthropology that

encompasses the history of anthropology's fascination with religious beliefs and

practices, in every form of human society, from small-scale, forager societies to the

globalised complexity of 'Western civilisation'. Anthropology's interest in religion

goes back to its origins, following the Age of Exploration when travellers exposed

European peoples of 'the West' to social others (Priest 2000:60) – the exotic peoples,

customs and lifestyles of other places – with pioneering work on defining and

studying 'religion' by the likes of Müller, Tylor, Durkheim, Malinowski and Geertz.

The early focus of their efforts was in creating a definition of 'religion' and in then

applying this definition to the belief systems and religious practices of non-

European, non-Christian people being encountered.

'Religion' comes from the Latin *religio*, 'the bond between man [*sic*]and the gods' (Klass 1995:18), which is a translation of the Greek *threskeia*, referring to religious ceremonies and practices (Bowie 2007:20). Anthropological definitions of 'religion' draw upon the work of Tylor, Müller, Durkheim, Geertz and Lévi-Strauss to include elements of ritual, deities/spiritual beings, ways of life and relationships. As early as the seventeenth century attempts were being made to define 'religion' in response to the newly experienced belief systems and practices of these 'exotic' peoples, these 'others', with one such definition being 'a set of propositions, to which believers gave assent, and which therefore could be judged and compared as between different religions and as against natural science' (Asad 1983:116). Early simplistic definitions included the 'transhistorical essence' of religion (Asad 1983:112) and Edward Burnett Tylor's 'belief in Spiritual Beings' (Tylor 1871:25). By the mid-nineteenth century, William Robertson Smith, a biblical scholar, linguist and theologian 'combined textual scholarship with some nascent fieldwork experience' in his study of religious belief (Bennett 1996:41). Late in the nineteenth century Friedrich Max Müller began to develop a scientific study of religion in his textual readings of the *Vedas* of Hinduism and in so doing began to formulate comparative religious studies (Bennett 1996:43-45, Bowie 2007:19) while James Frazer used the classical sources and the explorers and missionaries themselves as sources to state that magic preceded science (Bowie 2007:13).

Meanwhile, Émile Durkheim identified a sacred-profane dichotomy in his view of the function of religious beliefs (Bowie 2007:15, Hill 1973:38-39, Winzeler 2008:11) – to 'express the nature of sacred things and the relations they have with other sacred things or with profane things' (Durkheim 1912:42) – with this distinction between the sacred and profane still used today when anthropologists

examine its presence in world religions, secular societies and globalised phenomena. Seeing belief as the shared experience of a group, Durkheim (1912:45) defined religion as 'a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them'. He further defined 'religion' as 'an eminently social thing', a system of cults and practices, with corresponding rites, that 'is inseparable from the idea of Church – …a moral community' (Durkheim 1912:38, 42, 44). Many others also strove to identify the key components of religious practice and, thus, to define 'religion' during this period including James Frazer's discussion of magic (1890, in Bowie 2007:13), Max Weber's examination of the impact of religious forces upon society (1904-1905), Bronislaw Malinowski's extensive research into myths as central to the study of religion (1926) and Claude Lévi-Strauss' life-long interest in the structures of societies, myths and symbols (Bennett 1996:81, Bowie 2007:17, Lévi-Strauss 1985:199). In supporting the value of classifying as an innate demand for order that is resident in humans, Lévi-Strauss (1962:11-12, 13) asserted that classifying is aesthetically pleasing and 'a need common to art and science'.

Bronislaw Malinowski's contribution to the 'anthropology of religion' lies in his pioneering work in the Trobriand Islands, where he spent several years completing fieldwork in the early twentieth century and, in the process, developed the systematic observation and data gathering traits of *participant observation* and *ethnography* (Bennett 1996:61-62). Malinowski viewed religion as part of an organic whole – 'the concern of the community rather than of the individual' (Malinwoski 1948 [1992]:55) – that served the purpose or cultural *function* of controlling moral or social behaviour and, in doing so, developed *functionalism* (Bennett 1996:65, Bowie

2007:14; Malinowski 1948[1992]:96-97). Further, Malinowski called myth a 'hard-working, extremely important cultural force' with a close connection to and intimate association with religion and, thence, to social structure (Malinwoski 1948 [1992]:97-98). He asserted that '[a]ll religions are essentially pragmatic' arising 'as a cultural response to the disorganising fear of adversity and disaster' to provide the means to overcome adversity or ill-luck and to harness luck or chance through ritual and/or magic (Malinowski 1944 [1964]:209). Claude Lévi-Strauss' contribution lies in his study of myth as a thing in itself, 'a fundamental and irreducible pattern of human thought, culture, and language' (Winzeler 2008:126). Using a linguistic approach Lévi-Strauss used symbolism to explore the binary oppositions of religious beliefs (Bennett 1996:80-81) asserting that by means of language, using the remains and debris of events and social discourse, structured sets are built up by individuals and groups (Lévi-Strauss 1962:21-22). This mythical thought or religious belief entails acquiring just enough knowledge to be useful, to be *functional* at some future point, as needed (Lévi-Strauss 1962:17-18). In much the same way as liminality is an experience of being in two states – neither-this-nor-that, betwixt-and-between – mythical thought or religious belief strikes a precarious balance between structure and event, necessity and contingency, the internal and the external (Lévi-Strauss 1962:30).

By the mid-twentieth century Clifford Geertz had developed a definition of 'religion' that is still widely cited today,

> Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, persuasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men [and women] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing the conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1966:59).

Looking at religious symbols and rituals Geertz saw them as functioning to give adherents a way to understand the universe and their place within it, suggesting that these symbols and rituals need to be affirmative in order to achieve this outcome (Geertz 1966, in Lambek 2008a:63, 66). Thus, according to Geertz, religion not only describes an existing social order, it actively *shapes* that order. Methodologically, Geertz distinguished between 'interpreters' and 'explainers', as well as between 'thin' and 'thick' description (Geertz 1975:10-12; Segal 2003:18, 26). Interpreters provide explanations from an insider's viewpoint while explainers do so from an outsider's view, matching the insider/emic and outsider/etic dichotomy of anthropology (Segal 2003:18). In developing a system of analysis ethnographers attempt to conduct actor-oriented *interpretation* of others that is interpretive of the flow of social discourse (Geertz 1975:14-15, 20). For Geertz '[m]ost interpreters seek to determine why the actor believes and practices what the actor does, and most explainers start, whether or not end, with the actor's own view of why the actor believes and practices what the actor does' (Segal 2003:18). Thin description provides only an account of behaviour as viewed whereas thick description is of *intent* plus behaviour or the meaning expressed by the behaviour because the whole point is 'to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects [*sic*] live' (Geertz 1975:24; Segal 2003:26). As this project is being undertaken by a 'native', Geertz's interpreter/emic approach will be taken, providing a thick description of the phenomena encountered. Around the same time Anthony Wallace indicated a greater interest in the kinds of behaviour that could be classified as belief, looking primarily at rituals concerned with supernatural beings, powers and forces (Wallace 1966, cited Winzeler 2008:6). Shortly thereafter, Melford Spiro simplified this definition of religion somewhat to 'an institution consisting of culturally

patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings' (Spiro 1973:96, cited Bowie 2007:20).

'A fundamental difficulty in the anthropology of religion continues to be the definitional boundaries of its central focus' (Donovan 2003:61). How 'religion' is defined is reflected in/by research findings, with the differing ideas of what it constitutes resulting, perhaps, in vast differences in results (Donovan 2003). One approach is to draw together the suggested definitions of various scholars, including those of Tylor, Spencer, Frazer, Malinowski, Müller, Durkheim, Freud and others, as Morton Klass (1995:15) has to define 'religion' as:

- human attempts to explain, interpret, predict, and control phenomena and events and provide an avenue for the manifestations of chance;

- human emotional responses to the awesomeness of the universe and to the impact of illness, the death of loved ones, and one's own mortality;

- mechanisms for the release of psychological stress and internal conflict, utilising inherent tendencies to ritual behaviour;

- symbolic and expressive of a society's sense of unity and its sense of separation or distinction from other human groups.

Seventeenth-century definitions of religion reflected the notion that 'religions could be conceived as a set of propositions, to which believers gave assent, and which therefore could be judged and compared as between different religions and as against natural science (Asad 1983:116) whereas for 'twentieth-century [and twenty-first century] anthropologists, religion is not an archaic mode of scientific thinking, nor of any other secular endeavour we value today; it is, on the contrary, a distinctive space of human practice and belief which cannot be reduced to any other' (Asad 1983:111).

Beyond this period, however, the anthropology of religion has been less focussed on *defining* 'religion' and more interested in the *ways* in which 'religion' has been defined together with the *theoretical approaches* to the real-world practices, rituals and customs of 'religion', drawing on the evolutionary, functionalist, essentialist, phenomenological, structuralist, Marxist and Freudian theories of Tylor, Durkheim, Malinowski, Weber, Radcliffe-Brown, Geertz, Lévi-Strauss, Marx and Freud. *Analytic* definitions look at the way religion is manifested or expressed whereas *functional* definitions reflect interest in religion's role, or function, in a society (for example, to provide explanations or moral codes for conduct). In contrast, *essentialist* definitions focus on the supernatural and the ways in which humans interact with the sacred supernatural (Stein & Stein 2003:18). In drawing on these *ways* of defining 'religion' several types of religions were identified: *prehistoric* religion, hypothesised belief systems based upon fragmentary archaeological evidence; *ancient* religions, as existed in past civilisations such as the Greek, Egyptian, Mayan and Incan civilisations; *indigenous, small-scale society* religions, once called 'primitive', and primarily existing in the past though possibly present in some form in present day small-scale societies; and *world religions*, which have spread far beyond their places of origin, linguistic or ethnic boundaries, and feature proselytising and competition for adherents (Winzeler 2008:17-19). Using this typology, this project's field of study – the Catholic Church in Australia – falls into a study of a World Religion, one which has spread far beyond its place of origin, crossing linguistic and ethnic boundaries, and which is actively competitive and proselytising (Winzeler 2008:19).

In both the efforts to define 'religion' and to classify the so-defined religions into various types, a number of theoretical approaches were utilised. These included the

evolutionary interest in when and how religion began, and its unilineal, positivistic progression; theoretical discussions by the likes of Durkheim, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown on the *functional* aspects of religion, as an integrative force, to promote social co-operation and to meet basic human needs for explanations and guidance; *Marxist* approaches that saw religion as a human construction reflecting the society in which it existed and diverting people's attentions away from life's miseries in order for them to be exploited by those in power; Geertz's *interpretive* approach that viewed religion as a cluster of symbols providing a charter for a culture's ideas, values and way of life, to be read by anthropologists; and Sigmund Freud's *psychosocial* assessment of religion as a defence mechanism distorting reality in order to allow adherents to avoid conflict and reduce anxiety (Klass 1995:15, Segal 2003:17-34, Stein & Stein 2008:21-24).

Many of these approaches were as interested in the reason for religious practice – its function – as they were interested in the theoretical developments that were constructing 'religion' as an anthropological category. According to Jacob Pandian (1997:507) all anthropological theories of religion include three things: 1) religious phenomena as 'projective systems'; 2) these systems have personal/cultural functions; and 3) anthropomorphic, anthroposocial and anthropopsychic characteristics are used to construct a supernatural reality.

While myths, folktales, legends and magic are included in the anthropology of religion by some, including Lévi-Strauss (1985), Malinowski (1926), Stein and Stein (2008) and Winzeler (2008), they lie outside the scope of this project's focus upon one recognised world religion, Catholicism. Some important aspects of these discussions related to ritual and belief are of relevance due to the impact upon

Catholic ritual practice of the absence of an ordained priest-pastor. Rappaport discusses the importance of ritual acts as 'markers' that enunciate, accept and make conventions through the symbolic representation of a social contract (Rappaport 1999:413, 426). The repetitive sequence of acts inherent in public religious rituals transmits knowledge and rules, beliefs and values *of* a community, *to* its community and 'participation in the ritual signals a public acceptance of the basic tenets of the religion' (Stein & Stein 2008:80-81). Therefore, that which prevents this public repetition of rituals will impact negatively upon the maintenance and transmission of this social contract. Therefore, the 'anthropology of religion and the study of ritual are very much interrelated' (Glazier 1997b:8).

Given the prime focus of this project is the Catholic Church, more modern approaches to the 'anthropology of religion' are drawn upon, including those related to world (or major) religions as explored by Winzeler (2008). His definition of a 'world religion; included the following components – a recognised named *identity* as acknowledged by adherents and outsiders; *sacred texts*, written languages and written rather than oral traditions; are *universalistic*, not limited to particular ethnic groups, states or countries (that is, global); are historic entities that have undergone *synchronisation* as they have become localised; have been globalised through *colonialism* and *diaspora*; and *evangelise* (Winzeler 2008:252-260). Although global in nature, anthropology's techniques of fieldwork and participant-observation can still be applied, as is the intention of this project. Thus, the anthropology of religion is today less focussed on *defining* 'religion' but is more interested in the interaction of the *ways* in which 'religion' is defined together with the *theoretical approaches* to the real-world practices, rituals and customs of 'religion', 'Religions' and belief systems. 'There is an urgent need [therefore] for anthropologists to cast a

wider net and develop an inclusive framework so as to address so-called common sense assumptions about the cosmos. This wider net must be positioned to catch elements of popular culture as well as the products of trained theologians' (Glazier & Flowerday 2003:2). As Platvoet (1990:181, in Donovan 2003:68) says 'definitions of "religion" … seem to have been constructed for mainly two purposes: (1) to define what religion "is" where – and wherever it is found; [and] (2) to define what religion is taken to be in societies that are being studied for the purpose of provisionally delimiting "religion" as an object of study'.

As an ethnographic case study of the lives and communities of several parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba that together represent an emerging leadership trend in the broader Catholic Church this project is within the framework of the anthropology of religion. Paraphrasing Durkheim (1915:47, cited Bennett 1996:76; Durkheim 1912:45) Catholicism is a unified set of beliefs and practices related to sacred things (the Eucharist and sacraments) that are beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community all who adhere to the teachings and ritual practices of the institution called the Catholic Church. Contextualising this within this project's parameters, it can be seen that enacted through the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) is the religious nature of Catholics as well as their beliefs and rites related to Eucharist (the Body and Blood of Christ); thus, a shared faith is demonstrated, social unity is maintained and collective realities expressed (Durkheim 1912:38, 43). The absence of the means by which to demonstrate this social unity, shared faith and collective reality is explored utilising ethnographic practice.

The 'anthropology of religion' has been interested in identifying what constitutes a 'religion', in various settings, and analysing the impact of religion on various socio-cultural groups. It 'is therefore a two-stage operation: first, an analysis of the system of meanings embodied in the symbols which make up the religion proper, and, second, the relating of these systems to social-structural and psychological processes' (Geertz 1966:74). Numerous 'religions' have been identified anthropologically, with a recent re-focussing of attention on Christianity.

Anthropology of Christianity

As outlined, for much of anthropology's early approaches to studying religion, religious beliefs and religious rituals or practices, Christianity has been the prism through which anthropology has looked at 'other' religions or belief systems. These early definitions of 'religion' often included components that are part of Christianity – a sacred text, a supernatural deity (or deities) and/or exclusivity of membership. More recently, however, anthropology has identified and examined 'world religions' – Islam, Christianity, Judaism – both in specific national or cultural settings and in cross-cultural, migrant communities.

Focussing this shift within the 'anthropology of religion' to an 'anthropology of Christianity' was Fenella Cannell's edited collection *The Anthropology of Christianity* (2006) in which contributors discuss how the history, theory and/or methodology of anthropology has been influenced by Christianity, not just in terms of its study of religion but in its actual historical development as a discipline and methodology. In her introduction to the collection, Cannell describes the book as 'a comparative ethnography of orthodoxy itself' (2006b:27) endeavouring to unpack

anthropology's own Christian underpinnings because 'the category of religion as a product of Christian thinking … has entered anthropological theory' (Cannell 2006:39). Drawing on the developed anthropological method for studying Christianity developed by Edith Turner, Cannell suggests 'there has been a tendency to avoid or undertheorise the subject of Christianity or to assume that its meanings are 'obvious' because they are part of the culture from which anthropologists themselves are largely drawn' (Cannell 2005:340). The 'anthropology of Christianity', therefore, attempts to unpack the Christian underpinnings of anthropological practice and discourse, particularly given that 'the category of religion as a product of Christian thinking … has entered anthropological theory' (Cannell 2006:39).

Anthropology's own grounding in the Euro-American 'Western' culture in which Christianity is deeply embedded has served to produce among anthropologists 'a tendency to assume that Christianity is an "obvious" or "known" phenomenon that does not require fresh and constantly renewed examination' (Cannell 2006b:3). Thus, the 'anthropology of religion' has centred itself, as outlined above, primarily on the religious beliefs and practices of the 'other' outside Christianity. Cannell (2006b:4) 'would suggest that Christianity has functioned in some ways as "the repressed" of anthropology over the period of the formation of the discipline', so much so that

> Christianity was the last major area of religious activity to be explored in ethnographic writing ... While anthropology proceeded from the examination of "primitive" religions to the analysis of world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, the study of Christian areas of the world was, generally, considered the least urgent object of study (Cannell 2006b:8).

Today, however, 'cultural anthropologists are beginning to define the parameters of the anthropology of Christianity' (Lampe 2010:67). Some have been interested in

historical Christianity's role in colonialism, especially the negative impact of missionaries on indigenous people throughout the world and the ways in which Christianity altered local cultural practices (enculturation by missionaries, syncretism, and cargo cults) (Bullard 1998, Michaud 2004, Van Dijk 2001, Van Rensburg 2005); some have examined Christianity in specific national, ethnic or cultural settings and in cross-cultural, migrant communities (Allerton 2009, Angrosino 1994, Eipper 2007, Garelli 2007, Gocking 2009, Hann 1997); and others have looked at specific Christian denominations, including Pentecostalism, the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church (Manning 2008, Watling 2001). Among the examples of the ethnographic study of the Catholic Church and Catholicism are the works of Badone (2007, France), Baeva and Valtichinova (2009, Bulgaria), Burdick (1993, Latin America), Karamihova and Galia (2009, Bulgaria), Taylor (1995, Ireland) and Wiegele (2005, Philippines).

'Having denied Christianity legitimacy in the past, anthropologists are now turning their attention to Christian communities, giving voice to the actions and ideas that constitute meaningful experience' (Lampe 2010:82). Seeing how an 'anthropology of global Christianity can at least help to provide a potential platform for an anthropology committed to addressing a wider and different kind of public' (Coleman 2010:805) there have been more recent developments towards the 'anthropology of Islam' (Asad 2009, 1986; Kreinath 2011; Marranci 2008; Scupin 2003; Tapper 1995), an 'anthropology of secularism' (Cannell 2010), the 'Christianity of anthropology' (Cannell 2005) and the 'Islam of anthropology' (Houston 2009, Tapper 1995).

At the same time that Christianity was being systematically overlooked by anthropologists and ethnographers, the development of the discipline of anthropology within this Judeo-Christian/Euro-American worldview has seen much of its theoretical underpinnings reflect Christian concepts and thought processes. John Milbank (2009, 2006), Talal Asad (1986, 1983) and others have discussed the influence of Christianity on anthropological theoretical developments and the way in which the 'complex relationship between Christian theology and anthropological theory ... was increasingly backgrounded as time went on' (Cannell 2005:341). As Cameron (2005:54) points out 'theology and anthropology are not, as some would suggest, worlds apart from each other. They are, in fact, very closely related to each other'. I will turn now to what Joel Robbins has termed this 'awkward relationship' between anthropology and theology.

Anthropology and Theology – an 'awkward relationship'?

For much of its existence the discipline of anthropology has eschewed the insights of theology, preferring to observe and document the religious practices of various faith systems and their adherents without drawing upon the insights of those who are part of the intellectual development of those practices and beliefs. After all, it 'is only in the twentieth century that theological speculation has become peripheral to the social sciences' (Glazier 2000:412). In recent years, however, numerous anthropologists have commented upon this hostility of anthropology towards theology (such as Klass, Priest and Turner) while others (Adams, Milbank, Salamone, Glazier, Robbins, to name a few, see below) have suggested that the two disciplines should have a closer relationship.

For the last decade or so John Milbank, with others (Pickstock, Ward and Oliver), has been proposing a 'Radical Orthodoxy' in which what he contends are the false distinctions between social theories, philosophy and theology are dispensed with. In 1998, with Pickstock and Ward, Milbank produced *Radical Orthodoxy: A new theology* (1998a), with Milbank following this with *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* in 2006. In 2009 the tenth anniversary of Milbank's proposed Radical Orthodoxy was marked by the volume *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, co-authored with Simon Oliver. In this series of works Milbank suggests a false distinction developed in late modernity (his term, rather than *post*modernity) and proposes that the 'contemporary theological project – seeks to reconfigure theological truth' (Milbank, Pickstock & Ward1998b:1) and 'to re-envisage particular cultural spheres from a theological perspective' (Milbank *et al* 1998b:4). As with calls by Adams and Salamone (1997, 2000), Robbins and Engelke (2010), and others, Milbank sees theology as 'just another socio-historical gaze, just another perspective alongside other gazes, and faith in its commitment to this gaze constitutes a metanarrative' (Milbank 2006:234).

Over the same period several others have also been suggesting a closer relationship should exist between the disciplines of theology and anthropology. In 1997 Frank Salamone and Walter Randolph Adams suggested that anthropology and theology could, or perhaps *should*, learn from each other and drew practitioners from both disciplines together in an edited volume, *Explorations in Anthropology and Theology*, that was re-released in 2000 as *Anthropology and Theology: Gods, Icons, and God-talk*. The contributors to these volumes included Edith Turner, Morton Klass, Robert Hughes, Stephen Glazier and Robert Priest, as anthropologists or theologians, who explore the history of the interactions between the two disciplines

(or the lack thereof), how each discipline can speak to and learn from the other, and suggesting how the disciplines could work together in the future in an anthropology *of* theology that 'should consider looking at religious issues raised in any religion, whether it be Western or non-Western; modern or modernising populations' (Adams 1997:13). It must be noted, however, that it was not until the re-issued *Anthropology and Theology* in 2000 that theologians' voices were included in the discussion.

As Edith Turner suggested in her contribution to the first Adams-Salamone volume, 'Theology and the Anthropological Study of Spirit Events in an Iñupiat Village' anthropology 'has hitherto found theology foreign to itself' (Turner 1997:70). Stephen Glazier's essay 'Anthropology and Theology: The Legacy of a Link'(2000) in Walter Adams and Frank Salamone's second volume, *Anthropology and Theology*, draws together the broad themes of the various contributors to the book. Glazier also echoes the sentiments of other contributors – about how the disciplines of anthropology and theology *could* complement each other but rarely have; rather, that anthropology has been hostile to such intersections, though both disciplines are interested in the human experience of the world. He suggests that '[c]oming to terms with the problem of belief is perhaps one of the last frontiers for anthropology and one of the greatest barriers to dialogue between anthropologists and theologians' (Glazier 2000:407).

Another essay to appear in Walter Adams and Frank Salamone's *Anthropology and Theology* is Robert Priest's contribution 'Christian Theology, Sin, and Anthropology' that examines anthropology's hostility to theology and critique of both Christianity and theologians. Illustrating how anthropologists 'have borrowed concepts from physics, mathematics, and the biological sciences to the exclusion and

neglect of other equally viable concepts that, if used, would call our attention to the moral dimensions of life' (Priest 2000:63) the hostile climate Priest discusses is also examined by Morton Klass in 'Crossing the Great Divide: What Anthropologists Might Learn from Theology' (1997 and 2000). In this paper, Klass agrees with Priest's contention, going further to suggest there is an open hostility towards theology by anthropology and anthropologists, together with the deliberate avoidance of theological insights. Other contributors to the volumes include Mark Taylor and Robert Hughes III. Mark Taylor's essay, '"Spirit" in the Researching of Cultural Worlds: On Theology's Contributions to Anthropology', as the title suggests discusses the contributions that theology has already made to anthropology; while theologian Robert Hughes III discusses how the science-religion dialogue bears relevance to any discussion of the relevance of theology to anthropology in 'Beginning a Theology of Anthropology: Theological Reflections on Victor Turner's Last Work'.

In 2006 Joel Robbins discussed the ongoing 'awkward relationship' between anthropology and theology, echoing both Adams and Salamone's call for a new relationship between the two disciplines and the earlier (and ongoing) work of John Milbank (2009, 2006, 1998 with Pickstock & Ward) and others (Coleman 2010; Engelke 2010 with Robbins, 2008, 2006; Tomlinson 2006) to re-situate theological constructions that already exist within anthropology. These theorists are demonstrating an understanding that an 'historical analysis of conceptual developments in anthropology is incomplete without a recognition that those developments occurred in a context where theological concepts were pervasive' (Priest 2000:59). Robbins' work reflects a 'growing anthropological interest in

Christianity [and the] new-found legitimacy of Christianity as an ethnographic topic' (Robbins 2006:285).

In 'Anthropology and Theology: An Awkward Relationship?' Robbins asks '*what is or should be the relationship between anthropology and theology?*' before then suggesting three approaches that anthropologists can take towards theology – to uncover and critique theology's influence on anthropological thought; as data read alongside other fieldwork data influencing the people under study; and to examine how 'the encounter with theology might lead anthropologists to revise their core projects' (Robbins 2006:286-287).   I have drawn on his second approach – *to read theological data as one more influence on the people being studied* – in my research on the way in which Australian Catholics are experiencing, and responding to, the declining availability of active clergy to serve in parishes. This approach provided the means by which I utilised the work being done by the people most keenly attuned to this issue – theologians – alongside the methodological insights of ethnographic practice and the discourse of anthropological theory.

Robbins' subsequent work on this intersection between anthropology and theology, including continuing to advocate for the development of an anthropology of Christianity, appears in his 2007 paper 'Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, time and the Anthropology of Christianity'. In this paper he demonstrates how anthropology has actively sidelined Christianity through a 'process [which] may involve quite sophisticated analytical work in order to make Christianity [and its theology] appear absent or unimportant (Robbins 2007:6). Just as Mark Taylor discussed the contributions already made to anthropology by theology so, too, does Robbins demonstrate that 'anthropological ideas about the

centrality of belief to religion are based on post-Reformation Christian conceptions'
(Robbins 2007:14). More recently, Robbins was joined by Matthew Engelke in
editing a special issue of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2010) advocating for cross-
fertilisation between anthropology and theology, while also exploring the recent
surge in scholarly attention to Christianity. Together, Engelke and Robbins
acknowledge that 'there has been a growing awareness on the part of anthropologists
who study Christianity that they need to engage the work of scholars from other
disciplines, such as theology and philosophy, who also work with or in the Christian
tradition' (Robbins & Engelke 2010:629). Included in that special issue is Simon
Coleman's paper, 'An Anthropological Apologetics. Global Christianity, Global
Critique', in which he discusses the best forms of theology that should be utilised,
performative theology, and the works of theologian John Milbank and anthropologist
Joel Robbins.

As the absence of an ordained minister bears directly upon the ability of a Catholic
community to celebrate the Eucharist, the 'summit and source' of Catholic identity,
there has been a natural intersecting of the disciplines of anthropology and theology
within this project. Further, the anthropology *of* theology's goal to consider
examining such religious issues makes it a logical choice of theoretical framework.
The anthropology of theology facilitates the combining in this project of the 'on-the-
ground' religious practices identified by ethnographic observations, anthropological
discourse related to identity and theological insights related to Catholicism and
Catholic identity. Theological insights influenced the evolution of my research
project as the comments and responses by the diocese's Catholics, though less
scholarly in their articulation, regularly echoed theological literature, with one often
informing my use of the other.

Theological Anthropology/Anthropological Theology

Two interrelated terms that arose in reviewing literature about anthropology *and* theology were 'theological anthropology' and 'anthropological theology'. Examples of works in theological anthropology are Ray Anderson's *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* (1982), J. Patout Burns' *Theological Anthropology* (1981) and Helmut Thielicke's *Being Human … Becoming Human: An Essay in Christian Anthropology* (1984).

Ray Anderson's book grew out of a request to give a guest lecture on theological perspectives on human personality in a psychology course. He ended up speaking of 'personhood', to explore the nature of the self from the Christian perspective. This work suggests that 'theological anthropology has no starting point but human existence itself, within this world of time and chance' (Anderson 1982:15). J. Patout Burns is the translator and editor of this volume of the *Sources of Early Christian Thought* Series, in which the writings of early Christianity and the patristic period are translated and provided, with an introduction and explanation by the editor/translator. In *Theological Anthropology* he is presenting how Christianity and its theology developed using the words/works of the Church fathers/patristic church (c.100-700 C.E.) (Burns 1981:p.viii). He uses the term 'Christian anthropologies' repeatedly for 'anthropological theology' *and* 'theological anthropology'; that is, a theological view of the human person/human being. Indeed, his explanation of 'Christian anthropology' is as a '[t]heological anthropology [that] investigates the resources, the limitations, and the destiny of the human person' (Burns 1981:1). Similarly, *Being Human … Becoming Human* collects together a lifetime of Helmut

Thielicke's theological reflections on various aspects of the human person in a single volume.

From these few examples it can be seen that although the term 'theological anthropology' would suggest that this is a kind of sub-discipline of anthropology with some links to theological discourse, it is, rather, a sub-discipline of theology that draws on the broadest definition of 'anthropology' as the study of human beings. Its focus is a theological study and discussion of the human person, being defined as such by Anderson (1982), Burns (1981) and Cortez (2010). Cortez (2010:5) says 'theological anthropology takes the human person as an important object of theological reflection because the triune God has drawn the human person into the theological narrative and, consequently, has made a theological understanding of the human a necessary and vital aspect of the theological task'. As stated by Anderson (1982:15), 'theological anthropology has no starting point but human existence itself, within this world of time and chance' which Burns (1981:1) further suggests 'investigates the resources, the limitations, and the destiny of the human person'.

In this way theological anthropology attempts to identify a way of being human in the Christian life by examining how Christianity and its theology developed over time, from the early works and words of the Church fathers of the patristic period (circa 100-700 C.E.) (Burns 1981). Falling out of favour, this form of theology has had a resurgence of interest in the twentieth century, reflecting widespread interest in the 'self' and the human person (Cortez 2010:3-4). While drawing on what it refers to as the non-theological anthropologies, it is primarily a theological reflection on the data produced by these other scientific disciplines (Freudian psychoanalysis, mythical philosophy, cultural anthropology) (Anderson 1982:9-10, 12; Cortez

2010:4). This theology sub-discipline has several key themes to which it addresses itself, the main being *imago Dei*, the creation of humanity in God's image, a central tenet of Christian faith (Anderson 1982, Burns 1981, Cortez 2010). As 'theological anthropology is that area of Christian reflection that seeks to understand the mystery of humanity by reflecting theologically – and, thus, Christologically – on the human person in constant and critical dialogue with the other anthropological disciplines' (Cortez 2010:7) it has often also been referred to as Christian Theology (Cameron 2005:53) to distinguish from the theologies of other religious traditions. While this 'theological reflection on the human person … seeks knowledge of the human person as he or she actually exists in the world' (Cortez 2010:5-6) it does not do so using the methodology or discourse of socio-cultural anthropology.

The term 'anthropological theology' would initially suggest that it is a form of theology that has been undertaken through an anthropological lens, perhaps 'a study of the human person in conversation with the doctrinal framework of particular religious traditions' (Treloar 2005:2). This form of anthropology, if indeed it is part of the anthropological spectrum (in a disciplinary sense), would be engaging with multiple theologies from various traditions in a variety of geographic, linguistic and cultural settings through ethnographic research. However, the term 'anthropological theology' has been used interchangeably with the abovementioned 'theological anthropology' by most authors. 'This is an *anthropology* written from a theological perspective' says Cameron (my emphasis, 2005:53), who then proceeds to say this is 'the question of *theological anthropology* … What does it mean to say that humanity has been created in God's image?' (my emphasis, Cameron 2005:54).

An examination of the literature containing the terms 'theological anthropology' or 'anthropological theology' usually yields similar results, with the same articles listed in differing order. 'Theological anthropology' tends to return more results whereas 'anthropological theology' may also return works discussing the intersection of the disciplines of anthropology and theology. While the two terms, 'anthropological theology' and 'theological anthropology' each suggest the use of the insights of the discipline of anthropology this short overview demonstrates that neither approach is grounded in this discipline; therefore, this research project will not be utilising either approach. Though drawing on theological insights this research project is an anthropological examination of the impact of the shortage of priests on Catholic identity; rather than a theological discussion of this phenomenon.

Ethnography and Theology

Although this research project is anthropological in nature, using the methodologies of ethnographic practice, it is interesting to note that the insights of ethnography are now being drawn upon by the discipline of theology because 'the language of theology requires that which is not language (behaviour, will, perception, images, time, space, sight, sound and the gesturing body) in order for language about God to have meaning and point, theology needs detailed study of these phenomena in actual communities' (Saliers 2010:3). Therefore, the use of ethnographic practice 'as a method that enriches narrative theological conversations; as a form of theological practice; and as a new method for engaging historical data' (Martin & Whitmore 2010:3) by which theologians can ascertain the lived experience of faith in local contexts helps 'to overcome the constraints of theology' (Stewart Diakité 2010:9).

'Theology without concrete access to how believers live can be empty' (Saliers 2010:2) so ethnographic case studies can serve to illustrate what various theological discourses look like 'in real life' 'on-the-ground' (McBride 2010:4) with 'ethnographic study of the practices in faith communities … now making a significant contribution to theological reflection' (Saliers 2010:2). Ethnography's engagement with theology bridges the gap between lived experience and discursive knowledge (Burkhalter Flueckiger 2010:6), resulting in a repositioning of research 'between the conceptual preoccupations of theology and the methodological tools of ethnography' (Stewart Diakité 2010:7). Drawing on her own experience of blending theological interests and research, with practical 'on-the-ground' ethnographic practice, Jennifer McBride considers the resulting ethnography to be philosophical theology (McBride 2010:5).

Examples of such discussions are the papers of the 2010 Ethnography and Theology Issue of *Practical Matters*. In introducing the special issue Lerone Martin and Luke Whitmore suggest the papers included are examples of how ethnography has been used in this way. In 'Bestowing Meaning: A Reflection on Ethnography and Philosophical Theology' Jennifer McBride's examines autobiographically how she harnessed ethnographic practice in her study of a Washington D.C. inner city church ministry. In particular, McBride's paper demonstrates 'how theologians can engage in ethnographic practice and "read" the theological praxis of faith communities in the same manner as a theology text [and] how such collaboration can also prove to be a fruitful tool in helping faith communities understand themselves (Martin & Whitmore 2010:6).

This intersection of ethnography and theology, that may at times test the limits of conventional theological categories, has also been called 'theography' (Cuffee, cited Stewart Diakité 2010:8). It reflects the fact that ethnography is 'larger today than the discipline that gave birth to it; and though textual and historical disciplines still dominate the fields of religion and theology, ethnography is inextricably part of the mix' (Seeman 2010:10). While this project uses ethnographic methodologies in a context in which theological concerns are of importance to the people with whom I have engaged, it is not 'theography' as such for it is primarily an anthropological and ethnographic study with theological flavour rather than a theological study utilising ethnographic methodologies.

Anthropology *of* Theology

Cannell (2010), Coleman (2010), Engelke (2010 [with Robbins], 2008, 2006), Milbank (2009 [with Oliver], 2006, 1998 [with Pickstock & Ward]), Robbins (2010, 2007, 2006) and Tomlinson (2006) have discussed the historical links between theology and anthropology, with Robbins (2006) suggesting a way for theology to be utilised by anthropologists. Drawing on, or perhaps responding to, this discussion Frank Salamone and Walter Randolph Adams (1987 and again in 2000) called for a new form of anthropology – the 'anthropology *of* anthropology' – in much the same way as Cannell called for an 'anthropology of Christianity' and, more recently, there have been calls for a 'Christianity of anthropology' (Cannell 2005), an 'anthropology of secularism' (Cannell 2010), an 'anthropology of Islam' (Asad 2009, 1986; Kreinath 2011; Marranci 2008; Scupin 2003; Tapper 1995) and an 'Islam of anthropology'(Houston 2009, Tapper 1995). In making this call, Adams and

Salamone drew together both anthropologists and theologians to suggest what an anthropology *of* theology might or should entail.

As already suggested, in bringing together the insights of anthropologists and theologians Salamone and Adams sought to form the foundation of a new 'anthropology *of* theology' which they defined as 'the study of the *meaning* behind central tenets of faith, the *systems of value*, and of *moral* and *ethical codes*' (Adams 2000:3). They 'argue that the anthropology of theology should address religious questions posed by any modern religion' (Adams 1997:3) which furthers echoes Robbins' contention that Christian religious practice is a suitable ethnographic topic. Thus, just as all 'culture is grist for the anthropological mill, … studies of religious culture will doubtless provide welcome grist for the theological mill as well' (Glazier 2000:413). In conducting ethnographic research on the religious practice of Catholic Christians in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba this project takes up both of these calls, in being an anthropology *of* theology that draws on a religious practice (Catholicism) as its ethnographic topic.

In providing ideas about how the disciplines could learn from each other, the anthropology of theology was defined as 'the study of the *meaning* behind central tenets of faith, the *systems of value*, and of *moral* and *ethical codes*' (Adams 2000:3). It must be noted that this definition does not include or preclude any specific faith system as the anthropology of theology seeks to include all modern religions and quasi-religions in its attempt to be an all-encompassing exploration of 'ultimate concerns' (Glazier 2000:408) and to 'understand *any* and *all* religions practised on the eve of the Third Millennium' (Adams 2000:24,1997:17). Thus, 'the anthropology of theology should consider looking at religious issues raised in any

religion, whether it be Western or non-Western; modern or modernising populations'
(Adams 1997:13).

However anthropology 'has hitherto found theology foreign to itself' (Turner
1997:70) so its willingness to draw on many other disciplines, such as physics,
mathematics and the biological sciences 'to the exclusion and neglect of other
equally viable concepts that, if used, would call our attention to the moral
dimensions of life' (Priest 2000:63) must now be extended to the insights afforded
by theology. 'As both disciplines offer a view of what it means to be human, there is
a conceptual overlap *and* ongoing tension between anthropology and theology'
(Hughes 2000:50) that can be utilised to produce new insights in the religious
experiences of people throughout the world. As Adams (2000:26) contends, 'if
anthropology is to survive and remain a worthwhile discipline in the twenty-first
century, mainstream anthropology will have to modify its traditional conceptions. If
it does not, anthropology (unlike theology) may not survive well into the Third
Millennium'.

> Both theology and anthropology are diverse and have long-standing
> academic traditions that are difficult to bridge. Bringing theology and
> anthropology together might be compared to gift-wrapping an elephant. No
> matter how much paper one uses, it still looks like an elephant. To make
> matters even more difficult, elephants are not fond of being gift-wrapped and
> are able to put up considerable resistance (Glazier 2000:423).

In terms of this project, the bulk of the work discussing this 'priestless-ness' and
'Eucharistless-ness' phenomenon – Catholic parishes that are without a resident
priest-pastor – is theological in nature. Specifically, it is theologians who are
discussing the implications, predominantly negative, of the absence of a priest in
terms of the Eucharist and on the implications for Catholic sacramentality,
specifically on regular access to the Eucharist (Mass). Many of the key theological

concerns related to the ongoing absence of the Eucharist, through the declining availability of ordained priests, were echoed in the comments of the Catholics I encountered while conducting ethnographic fieldwork throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. As a consequence of this natural intersection between the theological concerns related to the shortage of priests and my findings using ethnographic fieldwork, I have endeavoured to gift-wrap the elephant of theology within an anthropological paper.

As already mentioned, ethnography can bring to light what religious practice looks like 'on-the-ground' for its adherents in various local contexts and, thus, bridge the gap between theological discourse and lived experience. In this way, the 'rigour of theology – like that of good ethnography – is in seeking consistency, grounded in an accurate pictures [*sic*] of the world. The scrupulous theologian and the conscientious ethnographer seek to encompass human experience within a limited set of assertions about what is important to people' (Glazier 2000:422). Endeavouring to be a conscientious ethnographer while drawing upon the works of scrupulous theologians I consider this project to be one more contribution to the emerging anthropology of theology by using ethnography as the method of choice in an anthropological examination of the liminality being experienced by Toowoomba's Catholics when experiencing the phenomenon of a shortage of priests and the impact of this liminality upon their Catholic identity.

Conclusion

To address the issues surrounding the declining number of active clergy in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, as an example within the wider Catholic Church's

shortage of priests, I draw on numerous anthropological approaches to community, religion, Christianity and theology. In formulating this theoretical framework I utilise the 'grounded theory' approach formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in which the data gathered suggests the theoretical approach to be taken; rather than to conduct data-gathering within a preformulated theoretical structure. Acknowledging that both Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss have contentiously discussed this initial approach in the decades since, both individually and with others, it is this initial framing – 'let the theory come from the data' – that has been utilised in this research project.

These include Victor Turner's works on the processes surrounding transitioning, drawing especially on his notions of liminality and communitas, the 'anthropology of religion', the 'anthropology of Christianity' and the 'anthropology of theology'. The Catholic parishes I encountered are, at present, transitioning from what once was the norm of parish leadership through Turner's liminal phase to something new. In passing through this transition parishioners are endeavouring to create new forms of communities – Turner's communitas – that are emerging in this threshold place in which they find themselves.

In applying these theoretical concepts to religious practice, such as in their work on Catholic pilgrimages, the Turners were engaging in the anthropology of religion just as much of anthropology has since its early development. While initially focussed on defining 'religion' and categorising what constituted such, the anthropology of religion was later interested in identifying religion's purpose and in developing theoretical frameworks with which to examine these practices and beliefs. More recently, though, the anthropology of Christianity has been redressing a traditional

absence of anthropological explorations of Christianity by re-focussing on anthropology's own Judeo-Christian inheritance, including its theological underpinnings. Despite the early contributions of theology to anthropological thought there has always been an 'awkward relationship' between the two disciplines. A recent rapprochement between anthropology and theology has led to the development of 'theological anthropology' and 'anthropological theology' which, unfortunately, has been a mis-appropriation of the broadest understanding of 'anthropology' *without* an accompanying incorporation of its theoretical or methodological frameworks. That the disciplines of theology and anthropology have much to offer each other can be seen in the anthropology *of* theology, which draws upon the strengths of each discipline and allows each to learn from the other, thus allowing all of the world's present religions or belief systems to be explored both in terms of the local experience of practitioners and the discursive knowledge of the broader faith tradition.

Chapter six: Discussion of Results – Catholic identity re-shaped?

Introduction

In conducting fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork across eight parishes situated throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba I spent time talking with close to three hundred parishioners in guided conversations (informal interviews) at parish services, groups and meetings, and with forty-one individuals in structured, in-depth interviews. These Catholics came from rural and urban parishes in which each of the three canonical leadership structures enacted in this diocese were in place – a parish priest (the normative model), an ordained minister serving two (or more) parishes and a layperson or team of laypeople leading a parish day-to-day – and included cradle Catholics, neophytes (new Catholics), 'convert' Catholics, men, women and teenagers, as well as parish leaders, both ordained and lay.

In discussing the key theme of my research – the 'shortage of priests' – these individuals' responses reflected some of the theological concerns already highlighted regarding the importance of the Eucharist (Mass) to Catholic ritual practice and Catholic identity, as well as the negatives *and* positives related to the loss of a resident priest as pastor. Their responses to the loss of access to regular celebrations of the Eucharist (Mass) revealed that the Turnerian communitas that develops as a result of 'priestless-ness' outweighs the experience of 'Eucharistless-ness'. Australian Catholic identity, as it currently exists in the Toowoomba diocese (as well as its potential future form), is revealed to be in a liminoid state due to a number of factors – the declining number of active clergy to serve in parishes, the interruption of the intergenerational transmission of that identity and the transitional phase through which the national Catholic Church is passing due to the change of leadership in several of its episcopal Sees.

Of particular relevance to this liminal phase in the Toowoomba diocese are the events leading to the May 2011 forced early retirement of its bishop, Bishop Emeritus William Morris. While not directly relevant to my research into parish leadership structures in the face of the shortage of priests, this momentous event and the role of the 'temple police' in its occurrence was of such significance that it impacted upon my ethnographic fieldwork and a discussion of its impact on the Diocese of Toowoomba and Catholic identity in Toowoomba is, therefore, included.

Demographic data

As outlined earlier, I approached ten parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba that each represented one of the leadership models in place in this diocese – parish priest of one faith-community, parish priest serving two (or more) parishes or a layperson or team of laypeople providing day-to-day leadership for a parish – and that were representative of urban and rural areas. Of the ten approached, one failed to respond to any correspondence, nine gave permission for me to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in their communities and I was able to do so in eight of the communities. As discussed in chapter four (Methodology chapter) in which I outlined the methodology utilised, the parish that gave permission but in which I did not conduct fieldwork is currently under the day-to-day leadership of a layperson and many communication difficulties were encountered that prevented me from visiting that community. As also explained in that chapter my initial plan to conduct a total of twelve months fieldwork was delayed by the widespread floods across Queensland, including the Toowoomba diocese, over the summer of 2010-2011, necessitating the extension of fieldwork dates so that I ultimately conducted fifteen months of ethnographic data-gathering across the eight faith-communities

described in chapter four (Methodology chapter). During this period I was able to have a conversation of at least a few minutes duration with somewhere between 250 and 300 parishioners from throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, with longer conversations or informal interviews of twenty-thirty minutes duration with ten to twelve of these individuals and formal, in-depth interviews with forty-one individuals. The forty-one parishioners interviewed came from seven of my fieldsites and one individual from outside my fieldsites whom I met in one parish group and later learned worshipped elsewhere.

Almost ninety-three per cent (38) of those whom I interviewed were laypeople and included unmarried individuals, married individuals, couples (interviewed together) and lay religious (religious sister). Although the majority of those interviewed were women, as is normative in terms of broad religious participation trends, the ratio of women to men was not as high as I had initially expected it to be, with a little over fifty-six per cent (56.1%) of interviewees being female and just under forty-four per cent (43.9 %) being male, a ratio of 1:1.27. The participation rate outside Toowoomba city, in rural and regional areas, was significantly higher than for parishioners from urban parishes. Sixty-one per cent (25) of interviewees were from rural parishes and thirty-nine per cent (16) from Toowoomba, a ratio of a little over one-and-a-half rural Catholics to every urban Catholic (1:1.56). Within these numbers, the female-male ratio for Toowoomba's participants was fifty-fifty (eight females, eight males) and one-and-a-half to one for rural respondents, almost thirty-seven per cent (36.6%) female to twenty-five per cent (24.4 %) male (fifteen females, ten males).

These forty-one individuals ranged in age from fourteen to eighty-two years (though the age bracket '76-85' means some were potentially older, and five individuals did not indicate their age). Less than one-fifth were under the age of forty-five (19.5%) and the other two-thirds were relatively evenly divided between the forty-six to sixty-five, and sixty-six to eighty-five year groups (see Table 6.1 for complete breakdown). I did not interview anyone in the eighteen to twenty-five age bracket or anyone over eighty-six years of age. Over half of these parishioners (51.2%) had worshipped in their respective communities for less than ten years; over one-third (31.7%) had been in their parish for over forty years; less than a tenth (7.3%) had worshipped in their parish for twenty to thirty years; and the remaining tenth (9.8%) did not provide this information (see Table 6.2 for complete breakdown). Among these parishioners were six people (14.6%) who have come to the Catholic Church from another Tradition. The two men have entered the Catholic Church in the past two and six years respectively while the four women have been Catholic Christians for twenty to fifty years. All were able to offer insights into their experiences of the Catholic Church from another Tradition's perspective, with those of the more recent neophytes being more grounded in the Church's present circumstances.

AGE	< 18	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76-85	86+	Unknown	Total
	///		///	//	/////	///// ///	///// ////	///// /		/////	41
	7.3%		7.3%	4.9%	12.2%	19.5%	22.0%	14.6%		12.2%	100%

Table 6.1: Ages of interviewees

TIME IN PARISH	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
< 5 years	ℋℋ //	7 = 17.1%
5-10 years	ℋℋ ///	8 = 19.5%
10 years	ℋℋ /	6 = 14.6%
20 years	//	2 = 4.9%
30 years	/	1 = 2.4%
40 years	ℋℋ	5 = 12.2%
50 years	////	4 = 9.8%
60 years	///	3 = 7.3%
70 years	/	1 = 2.4%
UNKNOWN	////	4 = 9.8%

Table 6.2: Length of Time as member of parish

Thirteen of the interviewees hold leadership roles within their communities, either as

parish priest (three); Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council (one); head of the Lay

Leadership Team (two); members of the parish's Parish Pastoral Council and/or

members of the Lay Leadership Team (seven). In Toowoomba I spoke to two

ordained males (priests) and outside Toowoomba I spoke to five males (one priest,

four lay men) and six females (lay women, no religious sisters). Together, these

thirteen leaders constitute over one-third of the Catholics interviewed (31.7%), with

the three priests almost a quarter of the leadership (23%). This figure of twenty-

three per cent priest-leaders is well below the current circumstances across the

diocese, with sufficient ordained ministers for about two-thirds of parishes to have priestly leadership (twenty-one priests for thirty-five parishes); however, it is an accurate reflection of the actual numbers of priests *available* for parish ministry leaving twenty-one faith-communities, or two-thirds, under lay leadership day-to-day.

That almost eighty-five per cent of the lay leaders interviewed are situated outside the city of Toowoomba indicates that remote, regional and rural communities are bearing the brunt of the 'priestless-ness' phenomena and that the ongoing ministry of retired priests in some Toowoomba parishes, a religious order priest serving as pastor in one and at least one priest well past the Church's retirement age of seventy-five still serving as parish priest (under the title of 'Administrator' due to his being past retirement age) is obscuring the true state of the diocese's shortage of priests. Over half of my respondents (56.1%) are over fifty-six years of age, meaning they were no younger than ten years old when the Second Vatican Council concluded in 1965 and draw some of their experiences of the Church from its pre-conciliar form, with many of their responses reflecting their experiences of the pre-conciliar, transitional and post-conciliar Church.

In addition to the common themes discussed in detail in this chapter a great deal of data was gathered along the way that would be of great interest to a Church liturgist (such as the introduction of the new Missal[new Mass texts] and use of laity as Extraordinary Ministers of Communion); Church archivist (such as the oral history of local parishes and personal involvement in the Democratic Labor Party (DLP)); Church musician (such as choice of music and use of musicians or CDs); or historian (such as agricultural history of a district or the aforementioned DLP involvement),

although it necessarily lays outside this project's parameters so will not be included in subsequent discussion here.

Shortage of priests

Importance of Eucharist (Mass)

The centrality of the celebration of Eucharist to Catholic identity is a theme discussed at length by theologians, liturgists and historians (Collins 1987, 1991, 1998, 2008; Dallen 1994; Donovan 1997; Gilchrist 1986, 1987, 2006; Harrington 2009; McGillion 2003a, 2003b; McLaughlin 1998; Ranger 2010). As outlined in chapter two (Identifying the problem) these theologians and historians contend that the Mass is the central action of the Church, through which most Catholics experience their faith, especially in the key milestones of their lives (birth/baptism, marriage and death/funerals). Not only do these experts consider Eucharist to be a defining element of what it means to be Catholic, so too does the Catholic Church itself, with its *Code of Canon Law* calling it

> the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and effects the unity of the People of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 897).

This theme – of the Mass as central to being Catholic – was echoed by parishioners throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, in passing conversations, informal interviews and in-depth interviews. During the informal interviews and passing conversations that I had with parishioners at various parish events and meetings, in both rural and urban communities, similar comments were made.

In the urban parish of St Agatha's one woman spoke of the Eucharistic Mass as being central to who we are and what makes us who we are. She went on to describe the celebration of the Eucharist as the sacrifice of Calvary being re-enacted each Sunday by each community (Fieldnotes 6th February 2011). In a similar conversation a man, also from St Agatha's, described the Eucharist as a source of strength that provides individuals with the ability to withstand events (Fieldnotes 15th August 2010). During formal interviews another man, Glen from the Lay-Led rural parish of St Jerome's, phrased the importance of the celebration of Eucharist as 'the Mass is the thing' (Interview 26th June 2011); an older woman from another urban parish, Kelly, said 'the Eucharist is probably the foremost thing in our faith' (Interview 25th July 2011); and another woman whose parish shares its parish priest, Karen, identified its importance within the context of a community of faith and in comparison to worship in the absence of a priest as 'I think the Mass is so important to me … The whole community thing is important to get together and to touch base, but it's different from a Mass' (Interview 19th June 2011).

As I have already said, it is only in the celebration of the Eucharist that a Catholic faith-community's identity as a *Catholic* Christian community is truly signified, with this idea echoed by a Catholic raised in the pre-conciliar Church and the transitional period afterward,

> The Mass was the thing; it was everything when we were a kid … Thinking of it now, we were at Mass every Sunday, no matter what. If I got home from a party at seven, a quarter to seven, we were at Mass at seven. When I was away at college for four years, we went to Mass every day, Rosary every night, Benediction every Friday. That was every day. … even if you were working, if you had to work seven days, you'd stop what you were doing, go to Mass and come back to the tractor and keep going. There was no excuse, even in floods, when the roads were bad. When I was a kid I remember going with Mum and the floodwaters were over the bonnet of the car (Glen, Interview 26th June 2011).

For an older Catholic who entered the Catholic Church as an adult just prior to the

Second Vatican Council, the emphasis is upon the Body and Blood of Christ

received as Eucharist at a Mass.

> It's a big thing to be able to receive the Eucharist and … we can receive the
> Eucharist every morning, if we want to, or every day … It keeps us in touch
> with our Lord. It gives us strength to go about our journey and to live the
> sort of life that Jesus would want us to live … I think you can get lazy if you
> don't make the effort to receive the Eucharist, or to go to Mass or to be in
> touch with the Church, one way or another, and to receive the Eucharist is
> probably the nicest way to do it (Kelly, Interview 25th July 2011).

Interestingly, the few teenage Catholics I was able to speak with spoke of the Mass

not only in terms of it being an important action for Catholics but also as a learning

experience and affirmation of a chosen religious identity. One near-adult teenager

from the urban parish of St Damian's Cathedral, made the following comments on

the Mass, which included all these aspects.

> It's very important to being a Catholic, for Mass. If you say you're a
> Catholic and you don't attend Mass, how do you know what Catholics
> believe, how do you know what they say at every Mass, everything said in
> Mass reflects the beliefs of the Catholic Church, reflects the beliefs of the
> Church itself, so being a Catholic it's vital to attend Mass. If you say you're
> Catholic, you have to start acting out your titled faith that you've given
> yourself (Philip, Interview 20th April 2011).

As demonstrated, Philip's description of the importance of the Eucharist focuses

more on the learning aspects of Mass.

> That's where we learn everything, that's how we know how things operate
> and what Catholics think and what you think if you call yourself a Catholic.
> Yep, I'd say that's a central part of the Catholic faith (Philip, Interview 20th
> April 2011).

In the decades since the Second Vatican Council many Catholics have gained a more nuanced understanding of the celebration of Eucharist and its place within their own lived faith, within the Church's ritual history, and within Catholic life. Examples of these understandings, drawn from interviews, include one woman's passionate and personal 'I think it's just me; it's just the breathing in and the breathing out' (Karen, Interview 19th June 2011); and another woman, Laura, acknowledging the historical origins of the celebration as being 'based around the Gospel, I suppose the consecration; it's based on the Last Supper, really. I think that's really, really important' ending with another personal statement, 'Maybe it's just because I feel comfortable with it, but I think it's beautiful' (Interview 21st May 2011). The historical roots of the Mass were also referred to by Karen as 'we met in each other's homes – I mean there's something beautiful about putting your feet under the table – sharing a bottle of wine … sharing a meal and sharing your story' (Interview 19th June 2011). Speaking more broadly of the place of this ritual within broader Catholic life, either as an individual or communally, Karen also shared the answer she once gave when asked why she attended Mass, 'well, I go to Mass to meet up with people of like mind, to nourish me for the week ahead, to bring me joy, to share your joys and sufferings of the week. I go because I feel close to my roots and who I am' (Interview 19th June 2011).

However, these explicit comments about the centrality of the Eucharist (Mass) to Catholic identity by a small number of individuals represent a miniscule of the 250-300 people I interacted with over fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in the diocese. Reflecting the circumstances they are currently experiencing in the bulk of the parishes from which interviewees were drawn; that is, rural parishes either being led day-to-day by the laity or currently sharing their parish priest across

communities, these individuals viewed *community* as more important than the Mass, though they, too, still see the celebration of Eucharist as important to being a Catholic and would welcome the opportunity to celebrate weekly, or even more frequently, if that were possible at this time – 'I'd love to have a priest up there for Mass every Sunday' said an older lady, Cherie, whose parish of St Jerome's is without a parish priest (Interview 27th June 2011). Even those who see a turnaround in the decline of priestly numbers accept the present circumstances, with one man's nodding head agreeing with his wife's comment, 'we'd prefer to have a priest living here, popping in and saying hello, and able to have him out for tea but it's not happening. It's not going to happen, for a little while anyway' (Rosanna, Interview 26th June 2011). For now, they, like many others in similar circumstances, prefer to maintain their local community rather than travel to a neighbouring parish or town to attend Eucharist.

Before I turn to this perceived preference for community over the Mass, it must be noted that on a few occasions the personal desire to have a parish priest once again was overridden by the financial constraints related to a permanent priestly presence. When asked if his currently Lay-Led parish of St Jerome's, Oakford, would want to have a parish priest again, Christian 'answered as treasurer' with 'We couldn't afford to keep one permanently, at present – the numbers, the troops. Yes, we would want one. Whether we could afford it is another thing' (Interview 26th June 2011). This response was surprising at first, but was echoed by the members of other parishes' Finance Committees and Leadership Teams, as in the following exchange between two members of the Leadership Team of the Lay-Led rural community of St Finian's, Davidsfield, and St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead, one of whom is also on that parish's Finance Committee.

> Colin: Being on the Finance Committee, the biggest problem we've got with a proposition like that is trying to afford it. We're finding that the distribution, the breaking up of the cost, sharing the cost of the parish priest at Redlea as our Priest Director; it's a big enough task for us to carry that portion of the cost of a priest whereas obviously a parish priest of our own would be a much, much bigger expense to us and we'd have difficulty with that.
>
> Bartholomew: We wouldn't even go close, Colin, would we? I mean, like, to a) whether we left this building standing and had to renovate that for him or whatever our dreams for this building were and just the year-in, year-out of having a priest and his expenses.
>
> Colin: We'd probably find a way for a period, of doing it, but it all started with the fact that Fr Tim was getting a pension and that helped us. Because we haven't had a parish priest for just over five years, isn't it, and we've just had so much voluntary labour involved in running the parish it's been less of a financial drain.
>
> Bartholomew: With people ageing and people moving on, you know the money base isn't there compared to?
>
> Colin: The money base hasn't changed much but the cost of maintaining what we've got; it doesn't go as far, really (Interview 12th August 2011).

Such concerns, however, are a moot point at present because there are no priests available to serve in St Finian's parish, or St Jerome's, as its permanent priest-pastor; rather, the priests available are being shared across communities, sometimes as parish priest for an enlarged community through parish mergers, though more frequently as Priest Director of parishes neighbouring their own. As already mentioned, in these communities it is Lay-Led Liturgies that take place when a priest is absent from their gathered worship, with some parishioners expressing a preference for these rather than travelling to Eucharist in a nearby community. I return now to this preference.

Communitas versus Eucharist

The Catholic parishes of the Diocese of Toowoomba are currently experiencing various leadership models as a consequence of the current shortage of ordained

ministers to serve in faith-communities as parish priests. As briefly touched upon in chapter five (Betwixt-and-Between) these parishes are experiencing liminality; parishioners are becoming, or already are, liminars; and they are experiencing communitas. While I will speak more of the parishes' liminal/liminoid nature later, I wish to turn now to the ways in which these communities are creating, re-creating or seeking to maintain communitas in response to these experiences.

The staffing of Catholic parishes is the responsibility of the episcopate, with the bishop of each diocese choosing how to share the personnel available within the parishes of his See. In the case of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, as already discussed, Bishop Emeritus of Toowoomba William Morris chose not to close parishes and to delegate day-to-day leadership to laypeople when he no longer had sufficient clergy to place one in each faith-community as priest-pastor. Although some consultation was made with the diocese's clergy and laity, these choices are effectively beyond the control of the individual parishes or their parishioners, with the resulting shift from the normative parish leadership model of a parish priest to that of sharing a priest or lay leadership contrasting the normative social structure in the Turnerian sense. Distinctive new relationships are formed when lay parishioners, whether members of the Parish Pastoral Council or not, are now thrust into roles, and holding responsibilities, once the domain of the ordained clergy alone. In this way 'new' communities are formed in the existing parishes, what Turner would term communitas.

The Lay-Led parishes in which I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork were situated in or near to Toowoomba city, affording the parishioners of these communities an option not available to those living in the more remote areas of the diocese – to

attend Sunday Eucharist at a neighbouring or nearby parish on the Sundays when a priest is not able to preside at Mass in their local community. As reported to me informally during passing conversations, formally in in-depth interviews or as stated in the parish's history the parishioners made a conscious choice, with few exceptions, to gather together in their local church to worship together *as a community* rather than disperse to neighbouring communities or remain in their respective homes. Many phrased it in those exact terms, to maintain community on the Sundays they were without a priest because community, in those circumstances, was more important than Mass. Glen, the same man from St Jerome's quoted above as saying the Mass was everything when he was a child, also said, 'I see the Mass as everything but I see the community as more important than the Mass'. His wife, Tanya, followed on to say, 'we live just five minutes down to Bindullah, blow this community, we've got two daughters living there but this is our community. This is where the Lord's put us' (Interview 26th June 2011). Another couple gave a similar explanation of the significance of community to them, even over the ability to attend a celebration of Eucharist:

> Charles: Yeah. I guess it's supporting your own community, church community. That's a positive. You do that by attending, going to Mass, going to prayer service or whatever.

> Rosanna: as you said before, people in Toowoomba can hop in the car and go across town ten or fifteen minutes. This morning in Flocksville, we don't. It was ten o'clock in Flocksville this morning. It was said to me once, 'I would never go to a Communion service' and I said to them, 'you're very lucky that you have that choice'. What do you do, do you go to Bindullah for a Mass and, besides driving extra, and you leave this community? (Interview 26th June 2011).

The most comprehensive explanation of this desire to maintain community, even at the expense of access to and sharing in the celebration of Eucharist was provided by Gloria, a member of St Finian's parish's Lay Leadership Team:

> The reason we went into Lay-Led Liturgies; when we knew we weren't going to have a priest we went 'righto, people can go to other places' and we decided, we went the way we went, simply to keep our community together. We wanted to keep the Davidsfield, St Finian's, community together and that's really the motive for everything we do, isn't it, to keep our parish *as* St Finian's parish and we're not part of Jacksford, we're not part of Redlea and the laypeople expressed that desire that that's what they wanted; they wanted to keep our parish and the Lay-Led Liturgies have done that whereas had the people gone off to other town for other Masses we wouldn't have the community we've got. We wouldn't be able to do all the things we're doing, so the Lay-Led Liturgies really have been a tremendous positive (Gloria, Interview 12th August 2011).

These conscious choices to maintain the original St Finian's parish community, albeit in its new communitas form, constitutes Turner's third form of communitas, *normative* communitas because these individuals and communities are attempting to preserve the community that has formed in these new circumstances. Other members of this parish's Lay Leadership Team spoke of being disappointed that they are viewed as a 'fill in' temporary measure rather than as the present leaders of the Davidsfield Catholic community because, in their words, 'We're not just filling in; we need to feel that we're not just doing a job while we're waiting for a priest to turn up, which I think is a perception that, if not shared by people in lay leadership, it's certainly the view, the wider view that's out there' (Brendan, Interview 12th August 2011). This desire to maintain their own distinctive communitas arose when parishes were assigned new Priest Directors as part of the re-staffing that took place at Easter 2011.

The normalisation of the distinctive leadership model that includes a separate Lay Leadership Team in addition to a Parish Pastoral Council is held as preferable even when an incoming Priest Director has differing ideas about structures of authority, pastoral outreach and ritual practice because 'the role of Priest Director has never been spelled out clearly by the diocese and it's been a learning experience for us. Each of the priests has had a different view of it' (Gloria, Interview 12th August 2011). In one instance, in St Finian's parish, the Lay Leadership Team had to explain to the incoming priest 'that he was Priest Director and not acting parish priest' (Bartholomew, Interview 12th August 2011) due to a

> lack of understanding of what that entailed – the difference between parish priest and Priest Director – his perception that we were all going to be one parish and that's been a battle for us, personally, as well as a parish, parish leadership. I think, I'm hoping and praying that awareness is gradually coming on-board and his acceptance of what we've established here will become more appreciated and not be seen as a challenge to his authority, his role (Brendan, Interview 12th August 2011).

Thus, the parishioners actively strive to maintain *normative* communitas because 'keeping that community' even if Eucharist is celebrated as little as once-a-month 'helps to keep – a country church, a lot of them don't get used much, in terms of operation' (Bartholomew, Interview 12th August 2011) and for these parishioners the community is the thing.

At the small-group level – that of the prayer groups, ladies groups, craft groups and other parish groups within each faith-community – there is also a communitas forming that members maintain between times in which they gather. For example, in one of the parish groups of St Damian's Cathedral parish elderly members who may not attend any of the weekend celebrations of Eucharist due to infirmity, poor weather or ill-health will continue to attend these groups due to the sense of community they foster. In a parish such as St Damian's Cathedral in which there are

four Masses each weekend (6.00 p.m. Sunday Eucharist on Saturday night and celebrations of Eucharist at 7.00 a.m., 9.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Sunday) the weekly prayer group or craft group or other parish group may be the only time that this 'community' gathers together in fellowship or prayer. When making a conscious choice to attend one (the parish group) over the other (parish Eucharist) these individuals are also striving to form normative communitas.

Eucharistless-ness

Theologians including James Dallen (1994) and William McManus (1994) express concerns related to the ongoing absence of priests (priestless-ness) in terms of the resultant absence of the Eucharist, termed 'Eucharistless-ness' by historian Paul Collins (1991) and theologian James Dallen (1994). These theological concerns relate to the *perception* of the alternate forms of worship by the faithful; the weakening of the universal church; the loss of personal identity, local identity and local participation; and, most importantly, the acceptance of 'priestless-ness' and 'Eucharistless-ness' as *'normal'*. Many of these theological concerns were echoed in the comments by the Catholics I encountered while conducting ethnographic fieldwork throughout the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

When recalling her experience in a parish in central Queensland where a religious brother led a Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service, Evelyn recalled that a Brother led the service 'and people thought that the Brother was Father' and would comment that they preferred 'Brother's Mass'(Fieldnotes, 8th August 2010). In her written responses to the survey form attached to her Letter of Consent, Leanne, a woman living in the rural parish of St Gertrude's that now shares its priest with the

neighbouring parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's wrote on the survey form attached to her Letter of Consent that a 'liturgy group conducts a "para-mass" communion service when the priest is not available' (Interview 20th June 2011). Such comments as these bear out theologians' concerns that individuals would not be able to see that a 'Liturgy of the Word, plus Communion' service is <u>not</u> the same as a Eucharistic Mass (Dallen 1994:32, 87, 139; McManus 1994:v). Another of the theologians' concerns borne out by the comments of parishioners is regarding the weakening of the communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*) when the source of that unity is absent (Dallen 1994:71) – when asked to comment on lay leadership, Laura, who worships in a community with a parish priest, said 'we'd have to be very careful because we could end up becoming removed from the Church. You get somebody who decides they're a really good leader, and you get a cult on your hands' (Interview 21st May 2011).

Although I utilise a discussion of the way in which these theological concerns were expressed by the parishioners of the Toowoomba diocese, they are not divorced from anthropology's interests in identity formation, maintenance and, at times, re-creation or modification. While theologians express unease about the way in which Catholics may *perceive* a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word or Liturgy of the Hours service Hoffstaedter (2011:167) also suggests that religious rituals are 'a visible signifier of an ongoing commitment that goes beyond an inherited [identity]' with the absence of this visible signifier of commitment (Mass) impacting on the ability of Catholics to self-define their collective identity 'in situation-specific ways to include or exclude others' (Lichterman 2008:83, 84). Further, should parishioners fail to understand the difference between Protestant-style worship focussed on the Word of God and a Catholic Liturgy of the Word service then the context of *theyness* (Hoffstaedter

2011:3) that this difference creates weakens the symbolic boundaries and structural barriers that promote group cohesiveness and in-group co-operation (Cerulo 1997:395-396).

A further concern, expressed explicitly by Dallen (1994:80), is that when there is no longer any difference between the liturgies of different Christian traditions when the Eucharist is absent there may be a resultant decline in attendance or members of the community move to other traditions, particularly those who may have re-discovered the importance of Sunday Eucharist or those focussed on scripture (Dallen 1994:80); thus, leading to a weakening of the universal Church. In the Lay-Led rural parish of St Finian's/St Raphael the Archangel's, the head of the Leadership Team, Brendan, lamented that the irregular service times that were necessary to accommodate the priests travelling between communities often confused parishioners resulting in them missing Mass or attending Mass elsewhere (Fieldnotes 15th July 2010). In the more distant rural parish of St Gertrude's that is now sharing its priest, Fr Oliver, with another parish, Sts Joachim and Anne's, a number of older parishioners expressed their confusion to Fr Oliver about knowing when each kind of service (Mass or Lay-Led Liturgy) is on (Saturday evening or Sunday morning) and the need to constantly check the roster distributed with the parish newsletter each month (Fieldnotes 17th June 2011).

While not directly attributable to the theological concerns expressed above, such confusion over when or where services occur may lead to a drop-off in attendance. Edward, a man from the small outlying community of St Margaret's in Sts Joachim and Anne's parish that is visited monthly by its parish priest, suggested that if people attend intermittently they'll get out of the habit of attendance, 'I haven't gone for

three weeks, so why bother?', then numbers drop off (Fieldnotes 11th June 2011). The other concern of theologians relates to the possibility that Catholics will no longer view the role of the ordained minister in the same way, to the point of believing a priest is not important (McManus 1994:vi) and that the celebration of Eucharist is merely a way to obtain consecrated Hosts for Lay-Led Communion services (Dallen 1994:134, 140). Of most concern in this situation would be its normalisation, not in terms of frequency of occurrence but that Catholics would view this *as* 'normal'. During a series of pre- and post-Mass conversations with Amanda, from the rural parish of St Finian's that is led by laypeople, we discussed how the young children of this parish only know the present circumstances and may see Lay-Led Liturgies as normal (Fieldnotes 4th and 25th July 2010).

Similarly, the feared loss of *communio* and resultant schism within/away from the universal Church *could* occur if Toowoomba's Catholics, in celebrating these alternate forms of worship necessitated by Eucharistless-ness, are no longer able to self-define their Catholic identity at either the individual or group level using the notions of 'we-ness' or sameness suggested by Cerulo (1997:386) and Sökefield (1999:417). When the shared characteristics of Catholicism by which an individual, or a community, identifies the 'we-ness' of another is no longer present – 'Catholics go to Mass' (Fieldnotes 22 August 2010) – then this 'we-ness' is potentially absent from this identity. Since religious identity encompasses both the sense of believing (by the individual Catholic) ***and*** that of belonging (to the broader religious community of the institutional Church)' (Duderija 2008:382) the inability to participate regularly in local celebrations of Eucharist or the reluctance to attend the alternate forms of worship, while not preventing self-definition of individual identity, does reduce a parishioner's ability to self-identify as part of a local

community (specific place of worship or parish) or as part of a larger whole (diocesan, national or universal Church). The further dissolving of the group boundary marked by the Catholic ritual of Eucharist (both its celebration and its reception by the faithful) through the *normalisation* of Eucharistless and priestless worship further impedes the use of Catholicism to create 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', in much the same way as language, ethnicity or place of origin can (Duderija 2008:379 & 382), especially when this situation becomes not only tolerable to parishioners experiencing it but acceptable and 'normal'.

These few examples, drawn from urban and rural communities, and from parishes with parish priests and those without, demonstrate that these academic, theological concerns were often echoed in the conversations I had with parishioners. These more theological concerns came predominantly, though not always, from those Catholics who had 'studied', or engaged with, their faith – that is, participated in discussion groups, were self-educated through Catholic literature and publicationsor who had participated in formal theological, liturgical or scriptural studies. A good example is the abovementioned Amanda, a lady in her eighties whose bedside reading included the third volume of well-known Catholic theologian Hans Küng's memoirs and the first volume of Pope Benedict XVI's *Jesus of Nazareth*. In discussing her rural, Lay-Led parish of St Finian's intermittent celebration of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) and reliance on Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services, Amanda expressed deep concern that people will come to think priests are unnecessary, 'but we're a sacramental church, so we *do* need them' (Fieldnotes 25th July 2010).

Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion

As discussed in chapter two (Identifying the problem) the forms of worship available to a Catholic community when they gather for Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest (SWAP) that are most commonly used in the Toowoomba diocese are Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Hours. In the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba it is the former that is used most frequently, most likely due to the addition of 'plus Communion' thereby allowing parishioners to receive at least the Body of Christ from the Eucharist reserved from a previous celebration of the Eucharist. During a long conversation with a religious sister during preparations for the celebration of the canonisation of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, she suggested that it was common in this diocese to only want Communion, with the addition of 'plus Communion' to Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word being enough to meet the needs of some people (Fieldnotes 10th March 2011). For faith-communities that are without an ordained pastor, being able to at least gather together *and* receive Communion in a form that resembles a Mass is generally preferable to a celebration of the Word of God alone, as in Liturgy of the Hours. As one woman, Therese, explained the history of her parish's reliance upon Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services, their last parish priest

> knew that we'd be short of priests so he taught us. We get Liturgy of the Word, we call it Liturgy of the Word with Communion now, and different ladies are doing it … In the nineties, there were three priests there [at] Bindullah and we had Mass every day, but now they've got one priest there, we get only two Masses. We have Liturgy of the Word with Communion and ecumenism is the fifth Sunday with the Anglican and Uniting Churches and the Catholics (Interview 26th June 2011).

Although Catholics in 'priestless' parishes are generally supportive of the Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services, there are those who express dismay

over the increasing reliance upon them. An older gentleman who completed his sacraments of initiation less than two years ago after a lifetime of limited participation in the ritual life of the Church spoke of his reaction to these services when he first moved to the small parish of St Jerome's that is led day-to-day by laypeople and in which Lay-Led services take place. Luke said, 'When we came here and started going, I didn't go on the Liturgy days. I do now; I'm a full Catholic but I didn't in those days because I didn't think of it as a real Mass' (Interview 27th June 2011). His wife, Cherie, echoed his thoughts saying, 'when we do Liturgy of the Word, no matter how much these people put their heart into it and it means something, there's something missing. It'll always be missing no matter how well we all perform our little duty the weeks that Father is not there. It's not Mass (Interview 27th June 2011).

This distinction sees some parishioners travelling elsewhere, in parishes close enough to a neighbouring community for this to be possible; or staying away altogether on those Sundays that Mass is not celebrated. While welcoming me into her rural parish of St Gertrude's, Dovington, in the diocese's south that has begun to share its parish priest, an older lady responded to my explanation of what I was researching by telling me about the members of St Gertrude's community who will come to the door of the church, see that the service is not a Mass, then leave (Fieldnotes 17th June 2011). This comment was echoed by a parishioner in the small church community of St Margaret's that was once a separate parish but is now part of the larger faith-community of Sts Joachim and Anne's and visited only monthly by its priest, Fr Oliver, who explained that some people will only come to church when there's a Mass, when Father comes (Fieldnotes 11th June 2011).

During the course of my fieldwork the bulk of Catholics in the diocese I encountered viewed Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services as an acceptable way for Catholics to gather together when a priest is not present to preside at Eucharist. This included those living with this reality who have no other option available to them due to the distance to the next parish community (more than an hour away), those living in rural parishes near to Toowoomba who *could* travel to another parish in under an hour but who choose to maintain their community through these services and those in urban parishes who have rarely, if ever, experienced such a service but can see their usefulness (hypothetically, at least).

However, I did encounter three people who verbalised their dissatisfaction with this form of worship quite vehemently. One woman from the urban parish of St Agatha's with a resident priest as pastor suggested that 'these Lay-Led Liturgies of the Word plus Communion services are illegal, not just wrong but illegal' and that the St Agatha's community would never accept a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word service in the place of the Mass, with its parishioners preferring to travel to another of the city's parishes to attend Eucharist (Fieldnotes 8th August 2010). Though not verbalised in quite the same way, a woman standing alongside the two of us said, 'you can maintain your sense of community saying the Rosary but you have to have/go to a Mass because Mass is the most important thing' (Fieldnotes 8th August 2010). In that same community a few weeks later another woman expressed a similar opinion. Mass is important to her and if Mass wasn't available, she would go somewhere there was a Mass, or would change parishes because, for her, Catholic identity is *so* tied up with the Mass. She pointed out that other people, other Christians; identify the Mass with Catholics as 'Catholics go to Mass on Sundays'.

She did suggest that if she was not within a five-hour drive of a Mass she might have a different view, or she would move (Fieldnotes 22 August 2010).

The views of these three women, though probably representative of the bulk of St Agatha's parish's members, represent a very small minority within the broader diocesan community, as I experienced during fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork. For those who *do* live with Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word services as a regular reality of faith-life the suggestion that they possibly could, or perhaps should, drive up to five hours over darkened roads across which kangaroos, emus and wild pigs roam, in order to attend Mass is an unrealistic suggestion. As one man in St Joachim and Anne's in Graemefeld said, 'they don't go to a Lay-Led service, but they can drive across town. They've got that option; we don't' (Fieldnotes 12th June 2011). Moreover, when this topic arose in conversation with a group of parishioners in this regional parish their body language, facial expressions and tone of voice suggested they were deeply upset to hear their lived reality flippantly referred to as 'not just wrong, but illegal' (Fieldnotes 12th June 2011).

Of concern to other people is the preference that some Catholics have *for* Lay-Led Liturgies, even over the option of Eucharist with a visiting priest. After attending my first parish Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service (since those of my secondary school days) I mentioned how lovely I thought the service was. The eighty year old lady, Amanda, to whom I have already referred, expressed deep concern about how some people prefer these Lay-Led Liturgies as 'we're a sacramental church, so we need priests'. She explained one source of this concern is that there is 'a weekday Mass … on the fourth Tuesday of the month but [the school]

children don't come to that, so they don't get to see a priest'(Fieldnotes 25th July 2010).

I later learned that in this community as well as others, some parishioners prefer 'our liturgies' due to a variety of elements. The most common of these is the 'better Homilies' that are perceived to be better prepared or more relevant to the community. The other possible 'drawcard' is when individuals know the person leading; a visiting priest is often out the door and in their car on the way to the next Mass too quickly to form the kind of relationships that they have with the Lay Leader who is a member of their local community. The more engaged that the individual is with the preparation of the service, be it Eucharist or a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word service, the more satisfaction they derive from that participation, with the necessity of Lay-Led services opening people's eyes to how much preparation *is* necessary for either service.

Negatives of loss of parish priest

Negatives for parish priest, Priest Director and sacramental minister

One of the responses to the declining number of active clergy that are available in the Toowoomba diocese, has been to merge together neighbouring parishes, as has occurred in several of the communities in which I conducted fieldwork. Sts Joachim and Anne's (Parish 7) in Graemefeld in regional Queensland encompasses four separate faith communities, one of which was once a separate parish with its own priest-pastor. Today, one man serves all four communities as Priest Director while also being parish priest of Parish 8 (St Gertrude's, Dovington), which also encompasses four separate communities. Although I was unable to conduct

fieldwork within Parish 6 (St Justin's Bluefield and St Bridget's Ploverton) it is an example of a merged parish, containing what were once two separate parishes served by two separate priests. This parish is now led day-to-day by a layperson with its sacramental needs met by its Priest Director who is also Priest Director of Parish 2 (St Finian's, Davidsfield and St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead) and parish priest of a third parish, itself another merged community.

As merged parishes are physically larger entities than the once separate communities, priests are travelling greater distances in order to serve the sacramental and spiritual needs of their parishioners, at a time when the average age of these same priests is growing steadily older. At present, the parish priest of St Gertrude's, Dovington (Parish 8), Fr Oliver, who also became Priest Director of Sts Joachim and Anne's, Graemefeld (Parish 7) at Easter 2011 is among the youngest of the ordained ministers of the Toowoomba diocese, at forty-three years of age. Even so, Fr Oliver is serving the needs of *eight* separate faith-communities that were once in three separate parishes served by three (or more) priests with no prospects of any form of clerical assistance in the form of an Associate Pastor (once called a curate) or even a permanent deacon any time in the near future. While travelling with Fr Oliver to one of the small communities within the greater St Gertrude's parish he recounted what he had recently been told by one of his parishioners – that they had calculated that Fr Oliver travels a distance of 1 800 kilometres each month (Fieldnotes 19th June 2011). This is the *average* of the distance he traverses, without including any additional journeys required for funerals or other unexpected events. When discussing the distances travelled by the parish priest with Sharon, she told me of an incident when Fr Oliver was quite sick and needed to travel somewhere and the parishioners were quite concerned about him doing so (Fieldnotes 19th June 2011).

An older woman from St Damian's Cathedral parish, Ivy, whose family live and worship in various rural parishes of the diocese recounted a similar incident involving Fr Aaron, the then Priest Director of Parishes 2 (St Finian's, Davidsfield and St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead) and 6 (St Justin's, Bluefield/St Bridget's, Ploverton) as well as parish priest of the Redlea-Gemfield communities (re-assigned elsewhere at Easter 2011). As recounted to Ivy, although Fr Aaron was presiding at Eucharist on the Saturday evening at his own parish he was too sick to distribute Communion and called a woman forward to do so. Fr Aaron's parishioners believed he was too sick to drive to the next community in which he was to celebrate Eucharist later that evening and offered to drive him there because they did not think he was well enough to make it there safely. Fr Aaron insisted upon driving himself to the next community, with this woman's son following him most of the way to ensure his safety (Fieldnotes 29th June 2010).

Such concerns for the safety of priests travelling great distances were expressed by other Catholics in other communities as well, with Rosanna, a woman from one of the small faith communities within the larger St Jerome's parish (Parish 9), commenting on the distance travelled by 'this priest this morning in Flocksville, he'd just come in from Addleyton. Addleyton would be how far from Flocksville, a good couple of hours? There's roos on the road, too. I wiped our car out with a roo the other day. You know, they're getting old men, aren't they and they're driving miles to say Mass for us' (Interview 26th June 2011). Near-misses and other safety concerns are well-founded for some of Toowoomba's Catholics, with Harold, a parishioner who has come to the rural parish of St Hilary's from interstate, telling me 'I've known two priests who have been killed driving back of a night'. From within this diocese, in St Jerome's published history, is a similarly tragic event; the death of

a priest travelling from one community to another to celebrate Mass (*Mass of Thanksgiving* 2009:6). In addition to the distances covered is the fact that Catholic priests live on-site where they 'work' and are, therefore, effectively on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with little time off, leading (potentially) to issues of burnout, stress and various health problems.

Canon Law makes provision for a team of priests to work *in solidum* to meet the pastoral needs of one parish or several parishes, led by a 'moderator' who directs the join action and answers to the diocese's bishop (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 517.1). When insufficient priests are available to operate *in solidum*, as is the case in this diocese, 'the care of several neighbouring parishes can be entrusted to the same pastor' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 526.1) with no definitive title given for this role. In this diocese the term 'Priest Director' is used for this role although, as expressed above, the role of 'Priest Director' has never been clearly defined within this diocese, with the way in which this role operates varying in the different communities in which I conducted fieldwork.

Three Priest Directors have been assigned to St Finian's, Davidsfield/St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead (Parish 2) during the last two years (the first died; the second was re-assigned at Easter 2011 and the present one assigned at that time) and each has operated in that role differently. Their first Priest Director was parish priest in the nearby large town of Jacksford as well as Priest Director of St Finian's, Davidsfield, and a neighbouring rural community. According to one member of the Parish Pastoral Council, that priest was laid back, 'perhaps a little too laid back and we've gotten used to doing things our way' (Fieldnotes 25th July 2010). The second Priest Director, Fr Aaron, was from a different parish, the merged parish of St

Justin's, Bluefield, and St Bridget's, Ploverton, in an agricultural area between Toowoomba and Davidsfield, and was also Priest Director of a second rural community (Redlea-Gemfield) situated between his own parish and theirs. He, too, 'was happy just to oversee, in general, same as' their first Priest Director (Clare, Interview 12th August 2011). According to Clare, the Priest Director assigned in the parish re-staffing of Easter 2011 'came with the mindset of being parish priest, not Priest Director, and I think that it was impossible for him to do so many parishes as a parish priest, but that's how he saw it' (Interview 12th August 2011) with another member of the Leadership Team, Bartholomew, explaining that 'we did have to make the point to him, initially, that he was Priest Director and not acting parish priest' (Interview 12th August 2011).

I had the opportunity to interview two priests who are functioning as Priest Director for a faith-community beyond that of their own parish. One is in a regional parish as parish priest and Priest Director of a neighbouring regional parish while the other is serving the needs of two urban parishes, one as Priest Director.

 The first of these ordained ministers, Fr Oliver, is responsible for Parish 8 (St Gertrude's, Dovington) as parish priest and Parish 7 (Sts Joachim and Anne's, Graemefeld) as Priest Director, though is in effect *operating* as parish priest of each community for two weeks of each month with both parishes operating as Lay-led communities when he is absent. This is the priest who is travelling an average of 1 800 kilometres each month, both between the two parishes and *within* each parish, and who is responsible for eight separate faith communities that were once spread across three separate parishes. This system of Fr Oliver operating effectively as parish priest of both faith-communities has been in place since Easter 2011 when the

then parish priest of Sts Joachim and Anne's was re-assigned elsewhere and Fr Oliver was made its Priest Director.

I was able to visit each of these communities within eight weeks of this Easter 2011 transition and could observe that the procedures being put into place in each community are similar to the most effective ones I saw in other Lay-Led communities (like Parish 2 that has been led by the laity day-to-day for five years). However, the impact of the loss of a parish priest on the people of St Joachim and Anne's was for some a raw wound while for others an expected inevitability (Maria, Interview 13th June 2011). St Gertrude's is functioning somewhat better, partly due to the preparations made by Fr Oliver prior to his taking on of the role of Priest Director of Parish 7, though I will speak more to the impact upon parishioners shortly.

Fr David, an urban priest who serves as Priest Director of one of Toowoomba's Lay-Led parishes, St Ephram's (Parish 5), described his role in the following way,

> In the particular circumstances where you have a Priest Director and a local leader … and a Parish Council then that leadership is shared between those three persons and our common ground where we all come together is in the setting of the Parish Council. I'm at the Parish Council meetings every month and that's where we basically pray and reflect and think and as a group of people in that community exercise leadership, which is then implemented, if you like, differently in the sense that I don't implement things directly except when they involve me sacramentally. They're primarily implemented by [the lay leader] and by the various people involved in ministry (Interview 26th August 2011).

In some communities that are without a resident priest-pastor, the Priest Director is not the priest seen by the community on a regular basis nor is he the ordained minister presiding at celebrations of the Eucharist. In these communities a priest who is neither the parish priest nor the Priest Director of the faith-community travels

to that parish's church (or churches) to preside at Mass. Given the entirety of their official role in the community is as the means to provide the *sacrament* of Eucharist, and from time to time the Church's other sacraments, including baptisms, Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist, marriage and funerals I have borrowed the term 'sacramental minister' from Ruth Wallace's studies of American parishes led by women and by married men (1992, 2003).

As a visiting, sacramental minister a priest has no authority within a parish with regards to decision-making, finances or any other matter. The priests in the Toowoomba diocese currently functioning as sacramental ministers include those who are retired from full-time ministry in either parishes or diocesan agencies, Priest Directors who function in a fairly 'hands-off' manner and priests who serve the diocese full-time in one of its agencies (for example, the Marriage Tribunal). The issues encountered by the sacramental ministers I met included having no authority within a parish to organise pastoral outreach (home visitations, helping people) even when they can see that things are being missed (Fieldnotes 28th August 2010), being asked to make decisions for parishioners and communities though they are not the Priest Director (Fieldnotes 14th March 2011) and having to travel sometimes long distances when 'It's misty … it's late at night and it's for a handful of people' (Harold, Interview 14th March 2011).

By its very nature the role of a pastor is to be the *pastor*al leader of a flock, a role that a sacramental leader is unable to fulfil when they are rushing from one community to the next, an experience I was able to share when travelling between communities with one such sacramental minister. When there was morning tea after Mass in the mother church of the parish of St Hilary's we were only able to stay

chatting to people (in his case, *pastor*ing to their needs) long enough to quickly drink a cup of tea before we needed to leave to be at the next community for its Sunday Eucharist (Fieldnotes 20th March 2011). There is little opportunity for these visiting priests to form relationships within the community, a common complaint voiced by parishioners.

Negatives for Lay Leaders, Parish Pastoral Councils and parishioners

Just as there are negatives associated with the loss of a parish priest for the ordained ministers now taking on more and more duties in an effort to continue to meet the sacramental, pastoral and spiritual needs of the diocese's Catholic communities, there are also negative consequences for the laypeople left to shoulder the rest of the burden of these emerging leadership trends.

Broadly speaking, lay leaders of parishes in this diocese may be either a single layperson as 'Lay Leader', a lay member of a parish's Leadership Team or a lay member of a parish's Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). However, the majority of the recognised 'Lay Leaders' in this diocese are female religious (that is, a religious sister/nun) and are given titles of 'Pastoral Leader', 'Pastoral Associate' or 'Pastoral Presence'. Non-vowed lay men or women are rarely acknowledged at diocesan level as *the* Lay Leader; rather, they are given titles of 'Chair of PPC', 'Chair of Leadership Team', 'Parish Council Chair' or 'Chair of Parish Executive'. These individuals are operating within the parish community as a distinct leader entrusted to make decisions in a similar way to that of a parish priest and the 'local community knows where to come to if they've got questions about what we should be doing or how to do things, but as soon as you go beyond the boundaries of our own parish,

even the neighbouring parish' the perception is that the Priest Director, sacramental visitor or retired sister, brother or priest in residence is the parish's leader thus negating 'anything that we've established; that we've done; that we've worked towards and that's just the perception of outsiders' (Brendan, Interview 12th August 2011).

Although Brendan is *functioning* as the *La*y *Le*ader of the rural parish of St Finian's (including St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead) he is not recognised as such, even by diocesan agencies, and expressed his concern 'that on a diocesan, a wider diocesan point of view, Sr Veronica – our resident nun – would be seen as the Pastoral Leader because that's where some of the mail goes – "Sr Veronica Pastoral Presence"' (Interview 12th August 2011) rather than to Brendan'. As the role of 'Lay Leader' does not exist in *Canon Law* this ambiguity reflects the virtual absence of even references to the non-ordained operating in this capacity. Canon 517.2 permits the pastoral care of a parish to be entrusted 'to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons' under the guidance of a priest and is the only mention made of non-priests 'leading' Catholic communities (*Code of Canon Law* 1983). Thus, the roles and functions of a 'Lay Leader', be they lay religious (sister or brother) or a lay man or lay woman, are ill-defined at diocesan level and absent entirely from the universal Church's legal code, causing a great deal of 'making it up as we go along' to occur in various communities.

St Finian's, Davidsfield (Parish 2), a rural parish in an agricultural area close to Toowoomba that encompasses the smaller Catholic community of St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead, is capably led by Brendan, who is the Chair of the Leadership Team and who works collaboratively with the other members of the

Leadership Team. Together with the 'open' Parish Pastoral Council – being 'open' to any member of the parish who attends meetings without needing to be nominated or prayerfully selected (not quite the same as elected but effectively elected) – these laypeople are not only paying the bills and getting someone to mow the lawn but maintaining an active pastoral life in their parish and wider community.

In comparison, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council of St Hilary's (Parish 4), Belinda, lamented 'I think sometimes we can get bogged down in things' in meeting procedure and 'like to get the task done', and 'it is very difficult to get anyone onto the Council and if you do get someone on it's very, very difficult' (Interview 30th August 2011). In this community that encompasses St Hilary's, Cedar Falls; St Michael's, Wyndesom; and St Dymphna, Treefuldom, several parishioners expressed concern about the inability of the Parish Pastoral Council to make decisions, citing the necessity of a full parish meeting to make what was essentially an administrative decision (Fieldnotes 26th September 2010), with one individual going so far as to suggest that the non-pastoral issues in which the Council was bogged down are the reason there is no pastoral life or social life in the community and that the parish's Priest Director once left a meeting saying 'I've got better things to be doing' (Fieldnotes 14th March 2011). 'Some of the things at the Council are the nitty-gritty and we go round and round in circles' sums this feeling well (Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011). A former member of the Parish Pastoral Council reported to me that this parish had resisted attempts to create a separate Leadership Team, preferring a model in which the Parish Pastoral Council made decisions and the 'co-ordinators' (a team of three people with no authority to make decisions) implementing them (Fieldnotes 26th September 2010).

Given that *Canon Law* says 'a pastoral council is to be established in each parish …
who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, [and] assist in
fostering pastoral activity' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 536.1) within that
community, the adding of administrative and leadership duties to the role of a Parish
Pastoral Council (PPC), in the absence of a separate individual Lay Leader or Lay
Leadership Team, restricts the PPC's ability to function as intended and draws
attention away from their stated purpose. This was clearly demonstrated in my
experience with Parish 6 (St Justin's, Bluefield and St Bridget's, Ploverton), as
outlined in chapter four (Methodology chapter).

As I explained there, although I had formal, written permission to visit St Justin's
community, I was unable to do so due to some of the problems associated with the
absence of a parish priest who is both the spiritual and titular leader of the
community; the canonical 'boss' able to make a decision 'yes, come'. In this rural
community the 'Pastoral Director' (Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba 2010) Frank is
a busy farmer juggling the roles of parishioner, Pastoral Director, husband and
farmer, in a less clear leadership structure in which the Parish *Pastoral* Council has
become an administrative and leadership body. Without a clear structure of
leadership in which authority to make decisions is vested, Frank felt obliged to take
my already-approved request to conduct fieldwork in his community to the new
members of the Parish Pastoral Council for consideration. As a result, the delay in
re-making that decision was sufficient to make fieldwork in St Justin's parish no
longer feasible.

In instances such as these the Parish Pastoral Council is a liminoid entity betwixt-
and-between being an advisory body to the parish priest on pastoral matters (as

intended) and being an administrative body in lieu of a parish priest. This experience contrasts sharply with St Agatha's (Parish 3), representing the normative pre-liminal model, in which the priest, Fr Lee, read my letter seeking permission to conduct fieldwork, signed the attached Letter of Consent and returned it to me within two weeks of my sending it, a period that included the busiest time of the Christian calendar – the celebrations of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum (Fieldnotes, April 2010).

For the members of either a parish's Parish Pastoral Council or Lay Leadership Team (in many instances the members of the latter are part of the former) there is a similar risk of burnout to that of the parish priests now asked to take on so many additional responsibilities. This is of particular concern in communities in which the parishioners are also ageing. Christian, a gentleman in his late seventies/early eighties, from the small rural parish of St Jerome's said, 'We've all got one thing in common; we're all grey heads coming to church. You're the lightest coloured hair we've had in our church for a while' (Interview 26th June 2011). In this faith-community, as in others with small numbers of regular parishioners who are primarily over fifty years of age, a few people are carrying the load and are often wearing several 'hats' because when there is no priest 'we've got the job, whether we want to or not' (Christian, Interview 26th June 2011). This sentiment was echoed by Colin, a member of the Lay Leadership Team of St Finian's rural community, when asked what lay roles existed within their parish; his answer, 'Whatever needs to be done' (Interview 12th August 2011). Even in St Finian's parish, with its open Parish Pastoral Council with meetings open to anyone to attend, an older lady stated, 'I can predict who'll be there, the regulars and' proceeded to name seven people, plus the Leadership Team (Fieldnotes 30th July 2010).

This over-burdening of a few is not unique to the parishes of the Toowoomba diocese, occurring just as frequently in metropolitan parishes (Brady, pers. comm. 15th October 2011) though occurs for differing reasons in communities that are without a resident priest-pastor, nor is it unique to the Catholic Church. 'Maybe it's nothing that doesn't happen in any organisation, that a few people do a lot of the work, so maybe the Catholic Church is no different to any other organisation. A few people do the work and it's hard to get anybody to do the work' (Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011). Common across the nine parishes in which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork was this multiplication of roles by the parishioners, with the following three examples as typical:

- In Parish 1 (St Damian's Cathedral, Toowoomba) there is a Parish Pastoral Council working alongside the parish priest, with many of its members also wearing other 'hats' within the parish or the wider community; as are many of its parishioners. Simon, a member of the PPC, is also an Extraordinary Minister of Communion; Kelly, though in her late seventies/early eighties, leads a parish group and is a member of a parish ministry team; and Simone is a Minister of the Word and member of another liturgical ministry.
- In Parish 2 (St Finian's, Davidsfield and St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead) there are seven members of the Lay Leadership Team, with each also being members of the Parish Pastoral Council and, often, holding other roles within the parish and wider community as well. For example, Brendan, the Chair, also runs a farm and works part-time locally; and Colin, another farmer, is also on the parish's Finance Committee.
- In Parish 9 (St Jerome's, Oakford) there are eight members of the newly-formed Lay Leadership Team, again with each also members of the PPC. In addition to this dual role within her rural parish, Alyssa is also a member of the parish's Catholic Women's League (C.W.L.), secretary of a local organisation and a volunteer within the wider community.

Nonetheless there *are* areas into which the laity are being pushed, by necessity, that some have expressed as being 'too far' both pastorally and in terms of time, effort and potential for burnout. One such area that is expanding at present in the Toowoomba diocese is the training of laypeople to conduct funeral services. While a

layperson is unable to celebrate a Requiem Mass for a deceased parishioner, other liturgical rites may be conducted by a non-ordained layperson.

Over the fifteen months of fieldwork, I learned of at least six funerals that were led by the Lay Leaders (two religious sisters) of the Hollow's Rest parish in the diocese's far west due to the inability to source a priest to preside at a Funeral Mass (names withheld, pers. comm. 2010-2011). At a ladies group in one rural parish I met a lady who, when I explained what my research was about, told me her family had experienced a Lay-Led funeral during the week because no priest was available (Fieldnotes 14th September 2010). From her tone of voice and body language, she seemed to be lamenting the absence of a priest, a sentiment echoed by Gloria, member of the St Finian's/St Raphael the Archangel's Lay Leadership Team in her rural parish, who is soon to undergo training in this area, has 'been involved in a number of funerals like that, with people who know you and trust you and love you but it's still not the same for them as a priest coming to them' (Interview 12th August 2011). This 'not being the same' sentiment was oft-repeated during fieldwork, such as in early October 2010 when both the Lay Leader and regular sacramental minister were absent from St Ephram's (Parish 5) in Toowoomba, a situation that was of great concern to a member of one of the parish's groups. One woman, Wilma, mentioned that she had a real concern about dying during this week while the Lay Leader was on retreat and the visiting priest was interstate' as there would be no-one to conduct her funeral (Fieldnotes 7th October 2010).

 In response to the upcoming training to take place in the rural, Lay-Led communities of St Finian's and St Raphael the Archangel's, in order for laypeople to

conduct funeral services, two members of its Lay Leadership Team expressed their

unease in the following exchange:

> Colin: I certainly agree with you that that's one thing, one area that would be better if we didn't have to, because it's a highly specialised skill [Gloria: Yeah.] to be able to deal with people in that situation. Sure everybody does it in their own way but as far as…
>
> Gloria: When it comes to the crunch, I think that's one area we should slow down in. Another one, for instance, marriage preparation that's talked about here; you can't do that without some training. I mean we need training in all of these lay ministries. We can't go into lay ministry without training ... Laypeople *must* be trained for those specialised ministries (Interview 12th August 2011).

Although acknowledging the training workshops made available by the diocesan

Liturgy Office, Gloria emphasised that 'sometimes we're pushing the laity into

everything' (Interview 12th August 2011). That it is the *same* laity being called upon

again and again, in various ways, is leading to the same burnout issues that may be

experienced by the parish priests now asked to serve ever-enlarging mega-parishes

while also serving as Priest Directors of other communities.

Again and again I encountered the same people at liturgy committee meetings that I

had met at the parish's prayer group; the people who had supplied morning tea were

the same ones organising the parish's sacramental programme preparing children for

reception of Confirmation and First Eucharist; the gentleman who greeted me at the

church doors as a Welcomer before Mass also proclaimed God's Word as a Minister

of the Word, made the collection during Mass and carried the parish's offerings

forward at the Preparation of the Gifts; and the woman who plays the organ is also a

lay leader of Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services. Over-burdening of the

few who are 'holding the fort' so-to-speak was commented upon by several

individuals across the rural parishes in particular, with one man, Bartholomew,

suggesting that 'some members of our parish are reaching burnout stage' (Interview

12th August 2011). Like others, Bartholomew also commented on the financial burden that parishioners are incurring in undergoing training in the various ministries in which they now serve, both in terms of the costs of formal courses and the associated travelling entailed by those from remote and regional parishes. 'Like, it's one thing people donating their time but it shouldn't be also at a great expense, of a lot of travelling and running around them being put out of pocket always in achieving these things' (Bartholomew, Interview 12th August 2011).

Although more and more is being placed upon the shoulders of the laity, particularly in the absence of a resident parish priest, these concerns about burnout are not the primary concerns expressed by parishioners of the Toowoomba diocese; rather the most commonly expressed worries are related to the loss of a spiritual presence when a parish is without an ordained minister. While theologians such as Dallen (1994) and McManus (1994) and historians like Paul Collins (1991) suggest the loss of Eucharist is the greatest concern in these communities parishioners list other aspects of a priestly presence as more important, or perhaps more noticeably absent.

As the individual considered to be responsible for the actions of a parish, in *Canon Law*, the parish priest or Priest Director is the 'go to' person able to make definitive decisions that carry more weight than those of a Lay Leader, both in the way in which 'Father's' decision is viewed as absolute and in the way in which an absentee Priest Director is the final arbiter of PPC or Lay Leader/s decisions. One Catholic emergency services professional related this need for definitive authority to their own professional experiences, as 'everybody likes to see somebody in uniform, so to speak. When I go to a car accident, the look of relief on some faces that they see the uniform, they know I'm there in that capacity, and they're relieved by it. Sometimes

an authoritive [*sic*] figure; people are relieved by that' (Simon, Interview 20th April 2011).

While the need to have decisions made in a timely manner is of concern to many parishioners more often the absence of a priest-as-pastor was felt on the personal, interpersonal and relational level, with parishioners frequently using terms like 'presence', 'guiding', and 'shepherding'. Much of this relates to the ability of a permanent parish priest to form relationships, know the people of his flock and to guide the laity in their various roles and ministries; actions that are diminished when the ordained minister is a 'part-time', 'sometimes here, sometimes there' Priest Director or a visiting priest providing sacramental rituals only. When talking about the priest being a *presence*, Simone, who has come to the Catholic tradition from the Anglican Church, believes 'it's a priest's role, it's certainly somebody's role to know who the people in the parish are' (Interview 23rd May 2011) and a teenage boy, Albert, considers a priest to be 'the spiritual leader of the church that's there all the time, that you can talk to any time' (Interview 20th April 2011). A teenager who, at the time of being interviewed, was struggling with being in the minority of his peers (that is, being a Church-going Catholic) responded to my hypothetical situation of arriving at church for Mass and there being no priests by placing this absence in the context of not having 'our priests to answer some of the questions that we have, which could be pretty difficult questions about the faith and, if someone didn't answer those questions we might give up on God and stuff. The church would get a whole lot small I suppose, 'cause the priest leads the church. If there's no leader, there'd be not much left' (Harry, Interview 20th April 2011). Interestingly, his father Simon, who completed his initiation into Catholicism six years ago also talked of the absence of the priest in terms of spiritual guidance and addressing questions of faith

as, 'if you've got a matter, or there's a problem with an area of *Canon Law* or a

spiritual matter or a theological matter, you should be able to go these persons and

ask for their advice and you know you'd be getting, you'd be getting the good oil'

(Interview 20th April 2011). When asked to articulate what the key role of a priest is,

Belinda responded, 'to keep in touch with people and make sure they don't slip

under the carpet, who actually do need some spiritual or a shoulder to cry on. I think

that's what they do' (Interview 30th August 2011) thus suggesting that interpersonal

relationships are highly valued by the Catholics of this diocese; a relationship that is

sadly missed when the priest is absent from a community.

The inability to 'drop in' to the presbytery to talk to Father, invite Father home so as

to speak with him, or to call to speak with Father was lamented time and again by

parishioners whose faith-communities are currently without a resident parish priest

(Fieldnotes 13th March 2011, 20th March 2011, 17th June 2011, 26th June 2011).

However, similar concerns about the lack of a personal relationship were expressed

by parishioners of parishes with a parish priest when posed with the prospect of not

having a parish priest. 'When you've got a resident priest you can invite them for

lunch but when you've got a visiting priest when he's gone, he's gone ... as far as the

average parishioner is concerned' (Helen, Interview 14th March 2011). This is

particularly the case when the visiting sacramental priest presides at celebrations of

the Eucharist in several communities within a parish (Parish 4), the Priest Director is

ministering to multi-community parishes (Parishes 6 and 7) or the parish priest's

'parish' consists of communities that were once separate parishes (Parish 8). When

travelling with one such sacramental minister, Fr Julian, from Toowoomba to St

Hilary's, Cedar Falls (Parish 4) and with him to the smaller faith-communities

encompassed within that larger parish (St Michael's, Wyndesom and St Dymphna's,

Treefuldom) I too experienced this rushed interpersonal interaction, as alluded to briefly above.

When the parishioners of St Hilary's gathered for morning tea following the early morning celebration of Sunday Eucharist Fr Julian and I had less than ten minutes in which to make and drink a cup of tea, while speaking with (at best) one or two parishioners before having to dash to the car in order to travel to the next community, St Dymphna's, for its mid-morning Mass. Even so, we arrived at that community a few minutes late for the Eucharist's scheduled start-time leaving Fr Julian with no real preparation time and necessitating his explanation to that congregation of the reason for our tardiness (Fieldnotes 12th September 2011). This inability to form meaningful local relationships plays itself out most notably 'when it comes to funerals and things like that – the priest might come in; they haven't got a clue who the person is; they haven't got the background of the family or anything like that; they have to learn it in a couple of hours whereas the laypeople have probably known this family' (Clare, Interview 12th August 2011).

Of course, when specifically asked what a priest's *key* role is most parishioners include, at various points in their reply, that the Mass is a key duty for priests: 'Well, to say Mass, to marry people, to baptise people, to provide the Reconciliation service… I don't think he has to do funerals, but it's nice if he does' (Alyssa, Interview 24th June 2011); 'Well, the Mass. If you're going to have a Mass you need them for a Mass. The sacraments, you need them for that' (Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011); 'To perform the Mass in its entirety' (Cherie, Interview 26th June 2011).

These varying roles of a priest – to provide sacramental rituals (especially Eucharist), be a presence in the community, be a source of guidance and leadership, as well as administrative duties – was summed up by a priest when responding to a selection of comments by parishioners about the roles of a priest. Fr Oliver said,

> It's being a presence. I'll give an example, Elizabeth who is ninety-two … said 'it's nice to have you back'. I don't see you every day Elizabeth. 'I know but it's nice to know you're up on the hill'. Just to know you're here is an assuring thing to a lot of the older people, for sure. To be a presence in the wider community; you narrow that down to celebration of Eucharist, gathering in community, celebrating the highs and lows of people's lives with them, walking with them. I think, people do, until they get used to it, people *do* feel a loss when the priest isn't there, just not because they necessarily want him or need him at that moment, but just to know he's there (Interview 20th June 2011).

Positives of loss of parish priest

Positives for parish priest, Priest Director and sacramental minister

In reviewing fieldnotes and interview transcripts, as well as my own memory of events, there is little data that relates the *positives* experienced by parish priests who are now serving multi-community mega-parishes or serving as Priest Director for a parish (or two) in addition to their own parish duties. What comments I did encounter related more to the way in which the laity's assumption of more and more roles and responsibilities that were once the sole responsibility of an ordained minister is 'freeing' priests for their priestly duties, such as those missed in their absence (as discussed above). This comment was made particularly pertinent to my research topic of the 'shortage of priests' by the Lay Leader of a rural community, Glen, who spoke of helping a priest to live longer by taking on more roles as a layperson

> because of the age of our priests and the scarcity of them, if we want our priests to live a long and fruitful priestly life, we've got to do everything possible to make it so. That means taking everything a priest allows us to do, off him, to allow him to do the priestly things that only he can do. People say 'leave it to him' but you can't, you've got to assist the priest as much as you possibly can, to make his life easier, so he lives longer (Interview 26th June 2011).

This comment also taps into another common response regarding exactly what *is* the key role or roles of a priest, a question I asked explicitly in interviews when discussing people's response to the Survey Form question 'What lay roles exist in your parish?' and the follow-up question, 'Are there any roles in your parish that you think a lay person is more suited to?' Responses tended to relate to the various administrative tasks that are not specifically priestly in nature (especially as many exist in *any* organisation) that a parish priest is burdened with that could otherwise be completed by laypeople. Simon, the man who has come to the Catholic Church from another tradition within the last six years feels

> sorry for a lot of the priests. They seem to be going around to financial meetings and getting hung up in the day-to-day, particularly when there's so few of them, and the day-to-day running of that should be left up to laypeople. You've got to cut them a bit of slack … yeah they shouldn't be so involved in the level that anybody can do. You don't have to be an ordained member to have a financial meeting, to sit on various committees (Interview 20th April 2011).

This latter part of Simon's comment, relating to financial matters, was a regular example used by Toowoomba's Catholics when speaking of the areas in which priests would benefit most from the greater involvement of laypeople in parish leadership as a consequence of the declining number of active clergy. St Finian's Lay Leader, Brendan, believes that 'somebody with a good business background brings their skill of business management to parish finance management a lot better than a parish priest might' (Brendan, Interview 12th August 2011); although, as Fr

David pointed out financial leadership is 'not specifically the gift of a priest because he's a priest and that's not the gift of a layperson because they're a layperson; it's the gift of a member of the community who has competence in things financial' (Fr David, Interview 26th August 2011). Also representative of the way in which parish finances being placed in the hands of the laity, especially those holding qualifications and expertise in this area, is now being viewed are the following comments:

> I think it's important that you've got people in those Parish Council and Finance Committee roles, because a priest cannot possibly be across the large range of issues that need to be managed by that kind of organisation. When you think about purchasing or disposing of assets, those sorts of things, that's huge to be thinking about dumping that on one or two people, whose real interest in life is spiritual (Simone, Interview 23rd May 2011).

> [The laity are] better at that [finances] because there's a lot of priests who aren't very good at finances and the priest shouldn't have to know about finances because they, some of them, go to the seminary quite soon after leaving school. They can do things like that and, also, there are lots of laypeople who are specialists in certain areas and they can speak on those things' (Olive, Interview 25th July 2011).

Apart from these comments about unburdening priests of their non-priestly duties, there were few other positive comments made. It was interesting to learn that the 1 800 kilometres travelled each month by Fr Oliver between the various communities of Sts Joachim and Anne's (Parish 7) and St Gertrude's (Parish 8) that is considered a potentially dangerous burden by his parishioners is viewed as a positive by Fr Oliver. While travelling within Parish 8 from Dovington to Cloudsview to celebrate Eucharist with the Catholics of Cloudsview Fr Oliver expressed his feeling that the driving entailed in his duties can be a blessing, as an unbroken period of silence or contemplation in which he cannot be distracted, interrupted or working on other things, such as the two parish newsletters (Fieldnotes 19th June 2011).

While not expressed explicitly as a positive that has been *caused* by the declining number of active clergy, Frs David and Robert both expressed their satisfaction with the level of lay participation in the Church being fostered today. Fr David called it 'an orchestra of gifts that includes ordained as well as baptised in their midst together' (Interview 26th August 2011). Fr David further suggested that 'there is no area of ministry that laity are excluded from; more positively, every area of ministry in the parish laypeople have a part to play' (Interview 26th August 2011). Also expressing comments about the positives of greater involvement of the laity in the Church, Fr Robert talked of his priestly leadership as both service to others as well as identifying, encouraging and 'empowering others, encouraging others to exercise their gifts off their own bat, as part of their vocation. That takes you down the track where a community comes to life' (Interview 26th August 2011). This greater involvement by the laity, this coming to life of faith-communities is particularly the case in parishes that are currently without a resident parish priest, to which I now turn my attention.

Positives for Lay Leaders, Parish Pastoral Councils and parishioners

'Sometimes what happens when we talk Church we think Church equals bishops or Church equals bishops plus Pope; we tend to forget the priesthood of the laity' when, in fact, *every* 'community is priestly, not every community has a priest resident within it' (Fr David, Interview 26th August 2011). For the laypeople now taking more and more responsibility within their faith communities for aspects once the domain of the resident ordained minister, Fr David's sentiment holds true; that the priesthood of every baptised member of the Catholic Church calls each to participate

in their community beyond attendance at the celebration of the Eucharist to 'fully conscious, and active participation' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul V on December 4, 1963* 1963: 14) in all aspects of parish life. Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a monumental shift from the pre-conciliar ideas discussed in chapter three (Identity) in which the 'role' of the average Catholic parishioner was to 'pray, pay and obey' to the necessity-driven experiences of lay Catholics in 'priest-less' parishes of the Toowoomba diocese. As Colin (St Finian's, Davidsfield) and Bartholomew (St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead) from the Lay Leadership Team of St Finian's/St Raphael the Archangel's put it, 'we've gone from a chauffeur-driven, priest chauffeur-driven parish to, now, a parish where…*you've got to push the car yourself*' (Interview 12th August 2011).

The positives experienced by Toowoomba's Catholics as a result of the absence of priests as pastors from many of its Catholic communities can be summed up by the words 'ownership' and 'empowerment' with these two sentiments expressed by the Lay Leaders and Parish Pastoral Council members now taking on more and more administrative and pastoral duties, as well as by the parishioners being called upon to 'step up' into ministry roles hitherto held by the ordained clergy. The Catholics who have taken on the leadership roles in the parishes in which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork were, by and large, already active within their parish community before the need for greater lay leadership arose. Many were already engaged in the liturgical ministries opened up to lay Catholics following the Second Vatican Council – within the Mass as Extraordinary Ministers of Communion or Ministers of the Word and within the parish as those making Home Communion visits or caring for the church environment (for example, preparing the liturgical space through

cleaning, mowing). That these individuals are now carrying heavier burdens as Lay

Leaders within their communities reflects their long-standing involvement with their

faith-communities. As the administrative, pastoral and day-to-day leaders,

particularly in those communities that are without a parish priest, they are now

seeing their fellow Catholics become more engaged than they previously were and

using the terms 'empowering' and 'ownership' when describing this to me:

Glen, Chair of the Lay Leadership Team of St Jerome's, Oakford:

> That's the two things we're pushing – ownership and consensus. You've got
> to own the church to be part of it and I think that's one of the most positive
> things. People stepping forward, even if it's to do rosters or even to mow the
> yard, you can see tremendous growth – sure, the growth is not in the
> numbers but the growth is in the people themselves. There's so many here
> who, over the years, have just turned up and just done nothing … The people
> that have stepped forward in the last few years has been incredible
> (Interview 26th June 2011).

Brendan, Chair of the Lay Leadership Team of St Finian's, Davidsfield/St Raphael

the Archangel's, Evanshead:

> I think they've discovered that now they can; they do have that gift. It just
> was never allowed, it was never their domain; it was always the domain of
> the ordained minister, the one person, so I think those roles, those duties are
> being explored by laypeople more, whether it's sacramental preparation,
> whether it's liturgy' (Interview 12th August 2011).

Belinda, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council of St Hilary's, Cedar Falls:

> I think the laypeople; I think it's wonderful that we've been forced to take on
> more jobs … I think if anything, having less priests has made us, as
> Catholics, be a bit more proactive and accept responsibility and be a bit more
> than just one hour Catholics. That's it. I think we can accept those roles of
> organising rosters, running the nitty-gritty of the parish, the finances of the
> parish. I think the laypeople can do all of those things (Interview 30th
> August 2011).

Other members of Lay Leadership Teams and Parish Pastoral Councils echoed these

sentiments by their respective leaders, such as Gloria's 'acknowledgement of the

laypeople's role in the Church [as] a very positive thing [and the] emphasis on the importance of our baptismal call to be Church [as another] very positive step in the Church today' (Interview 12th August 2011). At the same time, their fellow parishioners spoke of both the need to 'step up' and the positive experiences as a result of 'stepping up'. Having come to St Damian's Cathedral parish in Toowoomba from a rural community interstate Bethany believes that 'if you want to continue having a community it'll be the responsibility of members of the community to step up and say, 'hey, we don't want to lose what we've got here' … In a way, it could be a positive thing not to have priest because that does compel the members of the community to take ownership of their parish' (Interview 29th May 2011).

The much older Amanda placed her experience of the need for parishioners to 'step up' within the context of her generation (those in their late seventies/early eighties). Amanda felt that, prior to the loss of their parish priest five years earlier, many parishioners of her generation would only do their turn on the roster without volunteering for any extra duties for fear of being seen to 'put themselves above others or being seen to be making themselves important'; today, these same individuals will willingly volunteer not only to take their turn but to step in at short (or no) notice when a role needs to be filled (Fieldnotes 30th July 2010). This notion of 'wow, we *can* do that' was expressed in numerous passing conversations with the parishioners of these nine parishes, as well as the parishioners from other Catholic communities that I encountered at diocesan celebrations that occurred during my fifteen months of fieldwork.

While most of the positives discussed are those related to the roles and functions now taken up by Toowoomba's lay Catholics in their respective communities, there were some who also looked to the spiritual/ritual positives of the absence of a parish priest. Mirroring the concerns discussed above about the loss of Eucharist and how a Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion service is not the same as a Mass, several parishioners spoke about how much more aware they are now of how much preparation goes into the celebration of Eucharist. As a consequence, those lay Catholics taking on those roles are putting more effort into preparing to carry out those roles, such as 'if you have to read, you probably go and read it and put more preparation in' (Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011). In the same way that the absence of a priest highlights the importance of their guidance, leadership and shepherding so, too, does the absence of 'proper Communion, full Communion [and] they're distributing Communion; well, the Body and Blood, not the Blood, the Body of Christ' (Cherie, Interview 27th June 2011) highlight the importance of the *celebration* of Eucharist as well as the reception of Eucharist (in both species, the Body *and* Blood of Christ). As Sarah from St Damian's suggested, Eucharistless-ness 'would actually highlight the importance of the Mass somewhat more because you wouldn't be having it as often [and s]ometimes you tend to appreciate something more if you get less of it' (Interview 20th April 2010).

Transformation of Australian Catholicism

As discussed the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* states that the Eucharistic Mass 'is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 897). The sacramental theology upon which this view of Eucharist is grounded (both the celebration of Eucharist and the reception of Eucharist)

contributes greatly to the way in which Catholic Christians self-define their Catholic identity. Catholics maintain and transmit their Catholic identity through this ritual act, which Groome (2002:101) called 'the central symbol of divine-human encounter'. Ideally, it is within this central ritual act that all of the Church's sacraments are to be celebrated because, for most Catholics, it remains 'the single most important way in which [to] celebrate and renew and deepen [their] faith' (Donovan 1997:195). Although deemed the central action of faith, the celebration of the Eucharist cannot be celebrated without the presence of an ordained minister, specifically a priest, for only a priest can preside at Eucharist 'in the person of Christ' (*Code of Canon Law* 1983: canon 900.1). Thus, the absence of an ordained minister from a Catholic faith community has implications for the identity of that parish and its parishioners, as presently experienced in numerous parishes within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

Celebrating (and in turn receiving) Eucharist serves as an identifier of the Catholic 'self' that is positioned in opposition to a non-Catholic, non-practising (or non-Christian, non-believing) 'other'. This collective 'self' identity is transmitted through the symbolic devices and routinised behaviours (Pratt 2003:167, 176) of the Mass to form a central, enduring and distinctive identity within the broader Catholic, diocesan, Christian or Australian culture (Pratt 2003:163, 165, 168) for those who regularly participate. This central action of Catholic faith, based upon shared ritual and knowledge, forms a strong bond between these humans (we-ness) as their self-identity as Catholic Christians is formed. Its absence due to the loss of a presiding priest – priestless-ness – has implications for the formation and maintenance of this shared, collective 'Catholic' identity.

Given that identity is self-defined, usually in terms of shared characteristics that mark 'we-ness' or sameness in opposition to the distinctiveness of outsiders, 'others' and *différance* the absence of a parish priest, and the celebration of Eucharist over which only he can preside, is impacting upon the Catholic identity of Australian Catholics residing within the Diocese of Toowoomba, in both positive and negative ways. In chapter three (Identity) I defined Australian Catholic Christian identity in the Toowoomba diocese as having four components – being a regular participant in a faith-community, colloquially called a 'practising Catholic' (sameness/we-ness); identifying the Church's sacramental tradition as a key component of identity, especially the Eucharist, and attendance at Mass as a measure of adherence (shared characteristics); being an active member of an identifiable parish (self/other); and identifying Catholic Christianity as distinct from other faith traditions, though not in terms of exclusivity or superiority (*différance*) – and will now explore how priestless-ness and Eucharistless-ness is effecting this identity.

A small number of Toowoomba's Catholics from the self-described 'orthodox', 'loyal to the Pope' parish of St Agatha's in Toowoomba expressed fear and anxiety that the self/other distinction between the Catholic and Protestant Churches was breaking down, suggesting that the wide-spread use of Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services was tantamount to adopting the Protestant Word-centred style of worship, with one woman saying (with another nodding in agreement) that 'this diocese, this bishop and these priests don't want priests, they want to Protestantise the community' (Fieldnotes 8th August 2010). Their concerns echo that of historian Paul Collins who suggested twenty years ago that the increasing frequency with which Catholics deprived of the Eucharist were gathering only to

hear the Word of God but not to celebrate Eucharist was tantamount to Protestantism (Collins 1991:73).

In contrast, elsewhere in the diocese, particularly in St Jerome's in Oakford, numerous parishioners expressed great joy at the greater unity between the Christian churches of Oakford necessitated by the absence of ministers not only from its Catholic parish but from their fellow Christian parishes (the last remaining minister, the Anglican priest was re-assigned elsewhere during my visit) (Fieldnotes 23rd-27th June 2011). These members of the diocese see no 'watering down' of Catholicism in their regular ecumenical worship; rather, one woman who has come to the faith from the Methodist tradition, Tanya, feels that her 'Protestantism [has] been enriched by Catholicism', a sentiment echoed by her husband Glen, a cradle Catholic, who feels his own Catholic faith has also been enriched (Interview, 26th June 2011). The only other parishioner to express concern about the shortage of priests in terms of its potential impact on Catholic identity was Amanda, from St Finian's in Davidsfield, who, as already mentioned, acknowledged that the Catholic Church is a sacramental Church that needs its priests in order to maintain that sacramentality (Fieldnotes 25th July 2010). Amanda expressed further concern, as already discussed, about the way in which St Finian's children would view the absence of a priest as 'normal' and therefore come to believe ordained ministers are unnecessary (Fieldnotes 25th July 2010) thus leading to a loss of shared characteristics with the universal Catholic Church beyond St Finian's and beyond the Toowoomba diocese.

Liminal or liminoid

Victor Turner's use of the term liminal applies to the parishes of Toowoomba's diocese because they are in a state of transition, between what *was* – the normative leadership model of a resident parish priest – and what *will be* (though what this future entails is yet to be seen). These faith-communities had little (or no) say in the events unfolding around them because staffing arrangements in dioceses are the purview of the diocesan See and its episcopal head, the bishop. While Bishop Emeritus Morris allowed priests and communities to provide input as to the skills they had to offer or required, as well as the parishes in which they wanted to serve or were needed most, it was his responsibility as diocesan bishop to assign (or re-assign) priests to parishes. In the parishes where a re-assigned parish priest was not replaced and lay leadership was installed, these events were beyond the control of the parishioners; thus, they became (and still are) liminal beings within the diocese.

However, Turner later developed the notion of the liminoid to refer to the not-play/not-work notion of leisure that exists in large-scale societies and this term may be more apt in describing the betwixt-and-between state in which priestless parishes now exist. Just as the leisure activities of liminoid beings may be contextualised as 'play' for them while equally being 'work' for those in other contexts so, too, could the priestless-ness experienced by many of the diocese's parishes be a contextualised state. Turner's discussion of the optionality of the liminoid state is particularly relevant to those faith-communities without a resident priest-pastor that are geographically close to parishes with a parish priest. Like the societies in which Turner suggests the liminoid state exists Australia is a large-scale industrial nation with an effective and widespread transport system accessible to the majority of its inhabitants. As explored above, the parishioners in several of the priestless parishes

I encountered have made a conscious choice to maintain their local community rather than to travel to neighbouring parishes in order to attend Eucharist, despite the relative proximity of these communities.

The urban parish of St Ephram's in Toowoomba, as well as the rural parishes of St Finian's, Davidsfield (including St Raphael the Archangel's, Evanshead); St Hilary's, Cedar Falls (encompassing St Michael's, Wyndesom and St Dymphna's, Treefuldom); and St Justin's, Bluefield/St Bridget's, Ploverton; in Toowoomba's immediate surrounds are close enough to neighbouring parishes with a resident priest-pastor to be able to regularly attend celebrations of the Eucharist with travel times to these neighbouring parishes ranging from five minutes within Toowoomba to thirty to forty-five minutes in its rural surrounds. Similarly, Oakford, the town on which one of the diocese's northern parishes, St Jerome's, is centred, is connected to the large regional town of Bindullah by a major highway that can be traversed in ten to twenty minutes meaning the Catholics in its five communities could attend Mass at that regional parish.

While this proximity to other parishes is not feasible in either Sts Joachim and Anne's parish or St Gertrude's due to the distance between Graemefeld and Dovington, the Catholic communities *within* these respective parishes could travel to Graemefeld and Dovington respectively but have chosen, rather, to maintain their local community and, hence, to be priestless. Given the level of optionality entailed by these practices, the priestless state of the parishes of St Finian's and St Raphael the Archangel's; St Hilary's, St Michael's and St Dymphna's; St Ephram's; St Justin's/St Bridget's; St Margaret's; and St Jerome's, St John of God's, St Bruno's and St Jude's, together with the Catholic communities of Arrowshead, Gullyland,

Oxenhead and Gerranford, Oordsferd, and Belfordly is a liminoid state from which they *could* emerge because they are satellite communities surrounding or near to parishes with priests.

Although I will be discussing the impact of the early retirement of Bishop William Morris in May 2011 in greater detail shortly, it must be noted that the absence of a bishop (notwithstanding the appointment of a 'caretaker' Apostolic Administrator) places the entire diocese into a liminal state. While the parishioners of the diocese 'wait and see' who their next bishop will be, they also ponder the decisions he will take with regards to the diocese's shortage of priests and the lay leadership models that are in place. The result of those decisions could force these liminoid beings from their liminal state *back to* their pre-liminal state, thus truncating Turner's and van Gennep's tripartite transitional process entirely, though the now empowered laity who have 'stepped up' into various leadership roles within their communities are unlikely to return to their pre-liminal state so may yet complete this tripartite process through a *reaggregation* or *reincorporation* into the normative (though changed) model of priestly leadership. This will particularly be the case should the *Canon Law* option not enacted by Bishop Emeritus Morris be taken – to close parishes that are without a parish priest – or should large numbers of priests from outside the diocese be invited to minister in its parishes. Unable to predict either who will be consecrated as the next Bishop of Toowoomba or to predict his decisions in this area, it remains an area of potential future research.

Intergenerational transmission interrupted

While identity is self-defined, in this case in terms of a religious belief and adherence to that belief system's ritual practices, it also encompasses characteristics *shared* between fellow members. The shared 'we-ness' encompasses those who came before from whom present members gained their knowledge and beliefs about an identity and future members to whom these shared characteristics will be imparted. Thus, Catholic Christian identity in the Australian Catholic Church, like any form of identity, includes the intergenerational transmission of its shared knowledge, language, history and practices, with the boundary distinctions between us/them, insider/outsider, self/other then becoming recognisable and identifiable to all adherents.

In the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church this 'patterning behaviour' (Cerulo 1997:395-396) consists of the reception of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist) by those seeking to enter the Church, most often infants who have been brought by their Catholic parents to be so initiated through baptism initially though older children and adults may also undergo these rituals (Rite of Christian Initiation of Children, R.C.I.C. or of Adults, R.C.I.A.). Through these sacraments, individuals are made members of the Catholic Church but they gain the nuanced understandings of identity (shared knowledge, language, history and practices) through regular participation in the ritual life of Catholicism, primarily through attendance at and participation in the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). As in many cultures, religious beliefs, ethnic groups and so on it is repetitive rituals and behaviours that transmit insider knowledge and practices intergenerationally. This intergenerational transmission of Catholic knowledge, beliefs and practices has been interrupted in the Toowoomba diocese, with the resultant absence of

succeeding generations in its parish congregations and ritual life a recurring concern expressed by its Catholics.

As already alluded to by Edward from St Margaret's Barrington, a small rural community within the mid-western parish of Sts Joachim and Anne's in Graemefeld, the irregular attendance of parishioners as a direct result of the priest's absence may lead to them 'dropping the habit' of attending church services (Fieldnotes 11th June 2011). When adults cease to attend Mass regularly it usually follows that their children do not develop the habit, leading to a disruption of the transmission of the Church's rituals, language and beliefs to those children. Given that a key component of the Catholic Christian identity of Toowoomba's Catholics has been defined as adherence to this central action as a shared component of identity, the failure to pass on the practice of regular participation in the Eucharist will prevent the intergenerational transmission of this aspect of 'sameness'. Further, those Catholics who only attend when the priest is present to preside at Eucharist are passing on a clericalised vision of the Church to their children that may further impact (negatively) upon the intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity.

At the self-described 'orthodox' parish of St Agatha's in Toowoomba one parishioner said she has told her children that attending Mass is tied up with Catholic identity ('Catholics go to Mass on Sundays') and that they should be willing to drive to the next parish or the next town if need be in order to celebrate Eucharist. For herself, if she wasn't within a five-hour drive of a Mass she would move (Fieldnotes 22nd August 2010). It took me five and a half hours (including a one hour lunch break) to travel to Graemefeld from Toowoomba. Using this woman's rationale, should her children find themselves residing in a parish that is without a parish

priest, such as Sts Joachim and Anne's in Graemefeld they should drive to Toowoomba for Sunday Mass or the two and a half hours it took to travel from Graemefeld to Dovington for Mass at St Gertrude's. This is an unrealistic expectation if these individuals are to attend an 8.00 a.m. service in the next parish, if they are travelling with children, or if they are agriculturalists and/or pastoralists for example. Catholics such as these, therefore, are more likely to not attend *any* Catholic service as the Eucharist is too far to travel to and they have been discouraged from attending (or refuse to attend, in some cases) Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services. As Edward from St Margaret's, Barrington, said, once a habit is broken it is unlikely to re-form; thus, the children of these Catholics are also unlikely to repeatedly experience the ritual and language of Catholicism through which it is transmitted.

As Christian, from St Jerome's in Oakford said, 'The Church is not the centre of anything anymore' (Interview 26th June 2011). In his late seventies/early eighties Christian's Catholic upbringing was the likes of that depicted above in the opening sequence of *Going My Way* in chapter two (Identity) in which the physical church building was the centre of the local Catholic community and the life of that parish community revolved around the rituals (Mass, Benediction, Confession), organisations (Solidarities, Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul) and social groups (tennis club, football club, bushwalking club) of that faith-community. With the broader Australian society having changed the adult children of this generation of Catholics see the young ones 'bringing their children to be baptised and then they go to school, and they come for Confirmation and First Communion and they come to get married but we just don't see them' any other time (Therese, Interview 26th June 2011). Christian repeated the comment of one his friend's daughter, 'the Church is a

good place to get married in but…' just before making his statement about the Church no longer being the centre of the community (Interview 26th June 2011).

In the same community, when discussing the absence of young ones from their congregation Charles asked 'Why is that happening?' (26th June 2011) which is a question I cannot adequately address given the focus of this research was the church-going people of the diocese. The National Church Life Survey Occasional paper 10 of January 2008, *Moving Beyond Forty Years of Missing Generations* provides some insight into the broader, cross-denomination trend; nonetheless, it is a question that deserves to be addressed in the context of this diocese and this Church with greater detail than I am able to do at this time.

Transition of the national Church

Shared characteristics are a feature of any shared identity, with the shared characteristics cited by Toowoomba's Catholics when asked to describe 'what is Catholicism?' being the celebration of Eucharist (Mass); the Catholic Church's distinct hierarchical structure, named as 'the Pope'; and some of its unique religious practices and devotions, including devotion to Mary (Our Lady) particularly through the praying of the Rosary, and the honouring of saints. Many of the other characteristics cited were broadly Christian in nature – following Jesus Christ; reverence of the Gospels and/or the Bible, especially the Christian Scriptures (New Testament); pastoral outreach to the poor and marginalised; and efforts in the area of social justice (though it must be noted that the latter two are not reserved to Christianity alone). Before proceeding to a discussion of the future of this Catholic Christian identity as it undergoes transition, it is worth examining how

Toowoomba's Catholics have seen their own Catholic identity (as individuals or as an institutional Church) alter over their lifetimes.

For those Catholics of my generation who were born into the post-conciliar Church or who have come to the Church from another tradition since the Second Vatican Council, the experience of its great changes to Catholic life are the stuff of family stories or history books. Nonetheless, this post-Vatican II generation (relatively) recently experienced a significant change in the ending of the long, twenty-eight year (1978-2005), pontificate of Blessed Pope John Paul II, who for many of these Catholics is the only Pope they have ever known. Viewed as a benevolent and kindly man of prayer, his successor Pope Benedict XVI, an academic theologian and former head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith is a much more authoritarian and hands-on leader than they have previously experienced. As I only interviewed five adults and three teenagers from the post-Vatican II generations this was not articulated as such in their interviews; it was, however, referred to by the Catholics of their parents' and grandparents' generations.

The older Catholics I interviewed were much more likely to say 'yes' when asked if their Catholicism had changed over their lifetime, given the broader societal changes (Civil Rights movement, anti-Vietnam War protests, Equal Rights movement, post-war migrant influx, Vietnamese refugee influx) and changes in the Church's liturgical practices (Eucharist in English, lay participation in roles in Mass), legal code (revised *Code of Canon Law* 1983) and leadership structures (introduction of Parish Pastoral Councils and the first non-Italian Pope in centuries in Blessed Pope John Paul II) that they have experienced. The way in which these broader

experiences shape an individual's worldview can be seen in Luke's explanation of how, in his lifetime,

> … the role of the woman has become much different. When I was young the woman stayed home and had kids and looked after the house. When the war came, a lot of women started working. When they started working they started making money and they became more independent. At one time, they never left their husband, or very seldom, but if you're getting ill-treated now you've got somewhere to go and someone to see … Well, we've got a woman Prime Minister and they were very close to having a woman President in America; they weren't far off it before (Luke, Interview 27th June 2011).

Within the context of societal and Church changes, overwhelmingly the Catholics of this generation agree that their idea of Catholicism has changed over their lifetimes; with most suggesting the changes have been, for the most part, positive. Most cite the move from the 'pray, pay and obey' of the pre-conciliar Church to the greater participation encouraged in the post-conciliar Church's 'priesthood of the baptised' as a great positive, as well as welcoming a deepening of their faith so that it 'has got a lot more meaningful over the years' (Rosanna, Interview 26th June 2011). For Colin, the pre-conciliar Church 'was a fairly simple case of "just obey the rules and all will be well". It's quite amazing the changes that have happened … We've certainly been encouraged to think differently about a lot of things' (Interview 12th August 2011), with Bettina agreeing that 'you were very regimented [whereas now] I suppose I've explored, in my own way, and I've found what I need' (Interview 16th June 2011).

The shared characteristics of an identity are usually transmitted to new generations by those who came before and this process was experienced by those Catholics who grew up in the transitional Church (the period of the Second Vatican Council and the years immediately afterwards) as 'you went with your parents as a child and it was because you were made go and learning the rules and regulations but now it's

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because I want to go, I want to practice my faith and yeah, I feel freer about it but I still use the tradition as a guide' (Clare, Interview 12th August 2011) and 'as a child as long as you followed, you did this and you did this and you did this, you were right, you did the right thing. I think that's a child's perception and [today I think] there's more to being a Catholic or a Christian than just following the rules' (Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011). Gloria's lengthy response encompasses all the elements cited by numerous parishioners of her generation – those whose childhood faith was developed in the pre-conciliar Church, who experienced the upheavals of the Second Vatican Council and whose faith has been profoundly shaped by the post-conciliar developments within the Church:

> Oh, yes. I think it's entirely different. I always have felt I've been a practising Catholic and I've never lost that but in the early days it was about rules and laws. You were a good Catholic so long as you obeyed all the rules and stayed within those rules – we know what they all were, like not eating meat on Fridays and all the rest – but, now, being a Catholic for me is a way of life; it's what starts your day and ends your day; it's just how you think and how you act with people. It's become a much more subjective type of belief and love; rather than the objective doing what you're supposed to do. I think Vatican II has a lot to do with that, of course. I think there's been tremendous changes in the way we think about our faith and been allowed to think about our faith.
>
> For me, too, I feel that I've been exposed to so much more in terms of reading. There's so much more emphasis on theology and other – the way I find it, the Spirit has moved since Vatican II and you start to think differently about being a Catholic. The reading that you do confirms that – you find that there are people – great thinkers and great philosophers – and they agree. To me, that's a change from when you just read the Bible stories. The amount of information that's out there from good people who've studied, and I think that's changed my attitude from being a Catholic to being a *thinking* Catholic (Interview 12th August 2011).

While it is not possible to predict the future of any of these individual parishes, the Diocese of Toowoomba, the Australian Catholic Church or the universal Church, the experiences of today's Catholics in varying parts of the world will contribute to the

future identity of its members wherever they may be. To gain insight into how Toowoomba's Catholics believe this future will unfold, during in-depth interviews I asked them two related questions – 'Name the most important forces shaping the future of the Church today' and 'Picture the Church fifty years from now. What do you see?' For the parents of young children or teenagers, I would often amend the latter question with words to the effect of 'What would you hope for your children?' Toowoomba's Catholics feel that the most important forces shaping the future of the Catholic Church today are the dwindling numbers of parishioners and lack of participation by those parishioners, at the local level; the shortage of priests and the various causes of this phenomenon at the diocesan or national level; the impact of secular society on Australia's Church; the decisions of 'Rome', the hierarchy in 'the Vatican', pushing the universal Church in unwelcome directions; and the divisive actions of the 'temple police'.

Many of the physical church buildings I visited were built to house local populations far larger than the size of the present congregations I encountered. For example, eleven people celebrated Eucharist at St Margaret's in the small mid-western Queensland town of Barrington including Fr Oliver and myself, the two youngest present (in early forties and late thirties respectively). Of the nine regular St Margaret's parishioners the youngest was probably in his fifties with the rest probably seventy-plus years of age (Fieldnotes 11th June 2011). I estimate that St Margaret's church could have a maximum capacity of approximately eighty to one hundred, meaning its current congregation is about one-tenth of what it once was, though I am unable to suggest when it was last at its maximum capacity. Similarly, I estimate that St Jerome's in Oakford has a maximum capacity of 120-150 people (without including side veranda or choir loft) meaning its congregation of eighteen

when I visited (four of whom were visitors, including myself) is approximately one-tenth of the congregation that worshipped there when this church replaced the original wood building in 1964 (Ansell 1986:19).

This phenomenon of dwindling numbers in congregations is not limited to the rural parishes in which I conducted fieldwork but extends to the urban parishes as well. During the celebration for First Communion I estimate that there were 130-150 people (15th August 2010) at St Agatha's in Toowoomba and the congregation again swelled to 150-160 people for a baptism that took place including a large number of family members and friends of the couple whose son was being baptised (Fieldnotes 20th February 2011); however, the regular congregation for the first of my four-week fieldwork visits was sixty to seventy-five (Fieldnotes August 2010) and for the second four-week visit around one hundred (Fieldnotes February 2011). With the bulk of these parishioners over fifty years of age, St Agatha's present congregation is smaller than when first constructed as I estimate its maximum capacity is about 350-400 without including its verandas. Even my own parish of St Damian's Cathedral has a fire-rated seating capacity of 1 100, though its regular congregations (across four weekend Masses) range in size from 100-120 at the smaller end of the scale to 400-450 at the larger end depending on the time of the Mass and the season of the year (for example, 7.00 a.m. Mass in winter versus that service in summer or 6.00 p.m. Saturday evening on a foggy wet night) (Fieldnotes June 2010-June 2011). Of these dwindling numbers of parishioners regularly attending church services (whether celebrations of Eucharist or Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion) much smaller numbers are participating actively within their parish community either in liturgical roles in Mass (Welcomer, Minister of the Word, Extraordinary Minister of Communion, money collector, musician/singer) or in the

wider parish community (prayer group, craft group, scripture study group, social committee, Parish Pastoral Council, Lay Leadership Team, youth group).

Simon, from St Damian's Cathedral in Toowoomba is a member of its Parish Pastoral Council and an Extraordinary Minister of Communion, while his wife Sarah contributes to the music ministry as a singer, his son Philip is an Extraordinary Minister of Communion (and was an Altar Server) and his younger sons Harry and Albert are also Altar Servers. This level of participation by *all* the members of this family contrasts with that of other families within the parish whose parents and children are not participating in the parish beyond arriving at Mass a few minutes before it begins and leaving immediately afterwards, if not before, as described by Simon as,

> there's no shortage of getting people to turn up for barbeques and weddings, but there is a shortage of people turning up to Mass. It's a little bit disturbing too when, at the start of the Mass there's so many people and there's a whole lot of people who come up for the Eucharist, the Hosts, and a whole lot who take off out there. … I mean, it's pretty good. The grand prix wouldn't have that many people rounding the chicane and out the door. I almost want to yell out 'vroom, vroom'. … They're rounding the pillar to the door (Interview, 20th April 2011).

While Simon's comments apply specifically to the Cathedral parish, they are sentiments that were echoed by parishioners in other communities during post-Mass cuppas, prayer group morning teas and other conversations. Simon referred to this too-common lack of communal participation, beyond mere attendance at Mass by continuing his barbeque analogy:

> They don't, I don't see these people talking after Mass or before Mass, and basically it's the community that makes the parish, that makes the Mass. If you haven't got a community there, it's really rather pointless. I mean, if you had a barbeque at your place and you said, 'rightyo, it's going to start at 5 o'clock but tea's going to be on the table at 7'. How many people would turn up at five past seven? I mean, logically, most people would say, 'rightyo, she wants us there at 5'. We'll probably help with the cooking,

have a yarn. We're certainly not going to be nicking off at half past seven
(Interview 20th April 2011).

When the Church's future is discussed, 'one major thing [mentioned] would be the dwindling number of priests; that's certainly going to shape the Catholic community of the future' (Bethany, Interview 29th May 2011). Parishioners suggest that the lack of youthful, innovative, enthusiastic priests to inspire the youth of the parish to engage more means today's young people who are absent from their communities will not be there in the future with their own children, creating a cycle of decline. As Fr Oliver put it,

> in the old days, you'd have two or three priests; one or two of them would be straight from the seminary and so would come with all these wonderful, creative ideas from the seminary. Your parish would respond accordingly … and that would attract a whole new lot of young people and creative thinkers into the Church … We've lost all that because we don't … have young priests or young pastoral leaders, so it's a bit of a catch twenty-two
> (Interview 20th June 2011).

In addition, the lack of youthful priests means that few of the active young Catholic males are able to identify with this role as a potential vocation for themselves. Parishioners also discuss the shortage of priests in terms of the current restriction on who is permitted to be ordained – males only, leaving aside the fifty-plus per cent of the active members of most congregations (that is, women); celibate males, leaving aside the many active married men who are already serving their parishes as Lay Leaders who could just as easily be fulfilling all of their parish's sacramental and ritual needs if ordained. This is considered a particularly difficult situation in which to live when most Catholics today are familiar with the presence of 'converts' to Catholicism from other faith traditions who were ministers in their former tradition and are now ordained, *married* Catholic priests serving in parishes and diocesan

agencies throughout Australia and elsewhere (though there are none in the Toowoomba diocese at this time). Many also feel that the presence of these married priests should allow the return to active ministry of those Catholic clergy who have left the priesthood and are now married, as the following few examples demonstrate:

At a parish group at St Damian's Cathedral in June 2010 a few days after the completion of the Diocesan Gathering, which several group members had attended, a discussion of vocations arose due to a session at the Gathering on that theme. During the subsequent discussion at this parish group there were comments made about the presence of married priests elsewhere in Catholicism or the need to allow Catholic priests to marry with one woman saying there had been an Anglican convert priest at the Gathering (or she believed he was about to become a Catholic priest). The words used were to the effect of 'if they're already serving, why can't ours marry?' There was also discussion of the history of celibacy and the barrier that celibacy currently places before potential candidates for the priesthood, many of whom cite it as a reason *not* to enter the seminary. Ultimately, these women both suggested and accept that the future Church and its future priests will be different to what is the case today (Fieldnotes 16th June 2010). In a Parish Leadership Team meeting at St Finian's, Davidsfield, the following month this exchange came up in my conversation with Clare, who suggests that the openness of these older Catholics, including her mother, to married priests or 'women priests even' is because 'they have to be, they've learned to be' out of necessity (Fieldnotes 15th July 2010).

At Sts Joachim and Anne's parish, Graemefeld, in June 2011 three gentleman spoke with me over a cuppa after Mass about the married priests they knew who would still make good priests and should be permitted to return to active service in light of the

welcome given to priestly converts (Fieldnotes 12th June 2011). During the supper component of the parish's Parish Pastoral Council meeting the following evening, a similar conversation took place, with its members referring to the priests who have left the priesthood and the ease with which they could return to active ministry; while others suggested that young men called to serve may be put off by mandatory celibacy because they want to serve and they also want to have a family (Fieldnotes 13th June 2011). The issue of mandatory celibacy and married priests, either those who have left or the ordination of married men, was raised again and again throughout the diocese (Fieldnotes 2nd June 2010, 13th June 2010, 16th June 2010, 15th July 2010, 14th September 2010, 25th January 2011, 13th June 2011).

During in-depth interviews people were more direct in their comments about mandatory celibacy, often citing how relatively recent a phenomena it is (mandatory in the Latin Church since the eleventh century though not fully enforced until late in the seventeenth century (McGillion & O'Carroll 2011:32; Schoenherr 2002:199, 201)), about the welcome of married priests from other traditions into the Catholic Church alongside the hypocrisy of denying a return to active ministry to those Catholic priests who are now married and the Church's refusal to permit the ordination of women despite the majority of the world's active Catholics (particularly in this diocese) being women. Laura from St Damian's Cathedral parish said,

> I think that if we don't consider bring[ing] in women as priests, if we don't have married men as priests. The Canon Law has got nothing to do with celibacy anyway, it's financial, probably in the eighth century or something that they decided that. … It has nothing to do with doctrine or anything. There are incidences in other countries where people have converted to Catholicism who have been priests in another Church (Interview 21st May 2011).

Alicia from St Jerome's parish in Oakford related her support for married priests to their greater understanding of the lives of their parishioners saying,

> I am in favour of married priests because they need to consider their children who may need shoes and their wives who may need a new outfit, as well as their own personal needs. They will understand some of the things in the families of their parishioners, particularly ones who battle a bit. That only comes with experience and age; it also only comes with experience and age for laypeople (Interview 27th June 2011).

The way in which this shortage of priests, either due to natural attrition (retirement and death), lack of vocations, mandatory celibacy or the refusal to ordain women, is impacting on the Church's future was also articulated in interviews as a 'chicken-and-the-egg' vicious circle idea because 'it's the shortage of priests that's going to change something; it will eventually; but it'll continue to shape it' (Gloria, Interview 12th August 2011). 'Internally, of course, the fact that it's only open to single males to start with [is problematic]. Then, you're lacking … ordained ministers [and] that makes it difficult to build' (Fr Oliver, Interview 20th June 2011). As a consequence of the lack of priests there is 'training of laypeople to take on some of the roles of the priest' (Kelly, Interview 25th July 2011) with the laypeople 'stepping up because of that…going to shape the future of the Church' (Rosanna, Interview 26th June 2011).

The two other recurring themes given by Toowoomba's Catholics when asked to name the forces they believe are shaping the Church's future are the wider Australian (secular) society and the Church's leadership (the Vatican, the Pope, Rome). Modern, industrial society places great stresses on all its members, with Toowoomba's Catholics acknowledging that 'lifestyle is probably the other thing … just the lifestyle of family life. If both people, the mother and father, are working and the expectation of living with the running around to sports and everything; people just don't have the spare time, do they?' (Bartholomew, Interview 12th

August 2011). They also 'believe society is working against the Church [and] works against us' (Karen, Interview 19th June 2011). Bettina, of St Hilary's in Cedar Falls, believes the Church is a reflection of the society in which it exists and if 'the parents don't bring their children to church I find that it's got to be a gimmicky thing; you've got to get the children to bring the parents to church … Children these days don't have that; they've just never been … but I don't know how you do that in a society where the family can't make kids do too many things these days' (Interview 30th August 2011).

Frequently referred to as 'the Pope', 'the Vatican', 'the hierarchy' and 'Rome' the Church's universal leadership was also named as a force acting on the Church's future, with these comments suggesting that the leadership's influence is predominantly negative, though these views must be seen in light of the forced early retirement of the Bishop of Toowoomba. Being out-of-touch with the everyday life of people in general and of Toowoomba's Catholics in particular was a comment voiced again and again from Toowoomba to Davidsfield to Dovington by Catholics from all walks of life. Cherie from St Jerome's in Oakford suggests 'we're lacking leadership from the Vatican … constructive leadership' (Interview 27th June 2011), Bettina from St Gertrude's, Dovington, feels that 'they're trying to govern the Church from Rome and all the archaic stuff. The old guys who live over there – they're out of touch with day-to-day living. … They tried to rule people that way and that lost a fair few people I'd say' (Interview 16th June 2011) and Gloria from St Finian's in Davidsfield, views recent decisions as demonstrating 'a lack of understanding on the part of Rome of how we live and the way we live' (Interview 12th August 2011), a sentiment echoed by the Chair of her parish's Lay Leadership Team, Brendan, that 'it just illustrates how narrow-minded and out-of-touch they are

with our world today; the people who make up the Church today' (Interview 12th August 2011). Though these Catholics worship in some of the diocese's rural Lay-Led parishes they are sentiments held by parishioners of city parishes, such as Laura, from St Damian's Cathedral parish, whose response was that

> there's no open mindedness, there's no being in touch with reality and what the people think and what the people want. It's about, it's about man-made laws, it's not about God's law, it's not about anything that's in the Bible, it's not about anything that's in the Gospel, or in any of the epistles … It's all man-made stuff that's built layer upon layer upon layer, but where… it's a dictatorship because where is the consultative process? (Laura, Interview 21st May 2011).

When asked to name forces acting on the Church today, many of Toowoomba's Catholics also suggest that the 'temple police' are trying to pull the Church backwards to an earlier version of itself, with most parishioners reacting negatively to these developments. This is particularly the case in light of the events of May 2011 when the then Bishop of Toowoomba William Morris announced his early retirement. Though I will turn shortly to the events of May 2011 that influenced many of these comments it must be noted that the majority of Catholics I encountered also view the role of the 'temple police' – 'orthodox' Catholics who monitor the actions (liturgical, spoken, written) of priests and bishops for anything they view as unorthodox, then report these directly to the Vatican – as directing, or at least heavily influencing, the 'very rigid teachings – are they teachings or things coming out of Rome? … The teachings from Rome' (Karen, Interview 19th June 2011). Many 'wonder if they're trying to pull it all back together [and] don't know if we can ever pull it back together and … don't know if we should try to' Karen, Interview 19th June 2011).

When asked to picture the Church fifty years from now, the responses often (though not always) reflected the age of the respondents. Those who have experienced the

last fifty years in the Church (pre-conciliar Church, reforms introduced by Vatican II and the post-conciliar Church, including the increasing influence of those campaigning against these reforms) who will not be alive to see this future Church provided a broader response than those of my generation who are most likely going to be alive to experience this future Church, whose responses reflect their faith-life in the present Church undergoing the forces just discussed. The responses to this question included those with a negative view of the future as well as those with a positive view. Those viewing the future pessimistically see a continued decline in numbers of active Catholics; even fewer ordained ministers, leading to or causing schism; increased control by an increasingly isolated (from the world's Catholics) hierarchy and a loss of the Catholic Church's positive impacts upon society (social justice, pastoral care and outreach). Those more optimistic about the Church's future suggested there will be smaller numbers of more dedicated and more actively engaged Catholics, an opening of priesthood to women and those who are married (male or female), greater Christian unity through increased ecumenism, a re-structured hierarchy more in keeping with the needs of the People of God (that is, the Church) and a period of re-growth of the Church as it re-embraces the structures and practices of the early Church.

The declining numbers of active Catholics is a trend that many of Toowoomba's Catholics believe will continue both in this diocese and across the universal Church. Catholics are 'going to be a minority, a very small minority, sort of like a boutique religion … maybe a small group of very devoted, devout people' (Bethany, Interview 29th May 2011). For the teenagers I spoke to who will be the adult Catholics of this future Church the view is bleak. Sixteen year old Harry's view of 'the Church' is confined to his experience of his parish, which he sees as

being smaller because I don't know too many Catholics at all, that are my age, so when they grow up they're not going to be Catholic or they're not going to go to Church. I think the church [parish] is going to be smaller, but that's only from people that I know, so probably, the very few kids that attend Mass now on Sunday, would go. I don't think it'd be too big (Harry, Interview 20th April 2011).

While his older brother, Philip, has a broader view, of the universal Church, he too has a pessimistic view of a future in which the 'Catholic Church is going to deteriorate in numbers, old people are going to die eventually and pews will just end up being empty. The Church will really be nothing. There'll be no one, huge, Catholic Church, it'll just be one, small thing and other Christians going off and starting their own small groups, stuff like that' (Interview 20th April 2011). It is not only the declining numbers of Catholics that was viewed negatively by Toowoomba's Catholics but the consequences of a declining number of priests as well, with Laura suggesting there will be

parishes that are so big that [priests] can't possibly cope with them in terms of geographical distance … I see the Church that's it's going to end up – you're going to have the rock sitting in Rome and people scattered all around the world. You're going to end up with all these churches that used to be close together [that] become like hundreds of Pentecostals and other churches we have all around the place – they'll have no connection with each other (Laura, Interview 21st May 2011).

Laura goes on to discuss the role of the Church's hierarchy in Rome when discussing the Church's future, saying 'the Vatican [Catholicism] could keep going in the middle of Rome and throughout Italy but as it gets further and further away from the Church, from Rome. At the moment, Rome is the centre of it and all the parishes throughout the world are satellites of it. I see a huge disconnection that will happen' in the next fifty years (Interview 21st May 2011). In the context of a future in which the Church's worldwide numbers have fallen dramatically, St Damian's Cathedral parishioner Bethany believes that the Catholic Church will no longer 'be a big, worldwide, well-known presence in the world [and that] so much will be lost to

society in general if our numbers do dwindle down so low that we're just not … not noticeable in our presence because there's so few of us left' (Interview 29th May 2011).

Although these views of the Church in fifty years are negative the overwhelming majority of responses to this question were positive in nature, even when placed in the context of an ongoing decline in vocations to the present form of priesthood and in the numbers of active Catholics. As Bethany went on to say after her earlier comment, 'That's why I describe it as a 'boutique religion' because I think we'll just have this core, this small group of people, who really believe' (Interview 29th May 2011). Brendan, from St Finian's in Davidsfield says 'we're on that dying phase where many people still come to Mass every Sunday simply to practice a tradition by obligation. They are not living an understanding of what it means [and] why we do this tradition; it's not just because that's the way we do that tradition; it's the understanding behind it' (Interview 12th August 2011) with Bethany's core of those who *really* believe – no longer the Catholics of the 'pray, pay and obey' generations – participating in the faith-life and ritual practices of Catholicism because they 'want to', not because they 'have to' (Simon, Interview 20th April 2011; Belinda, Interview 30th August 2011).

In terms of the current shortage of priests, most of Toowoomba's Catholics believe this will no longer be an issue due to the opening up of the priesthood to all who feel called, including women and married men (and women) (Cherie and Luke, Interview 27th June 2011; Sr Olive, Interview 25th July 2011; Gloria and Colin, Interview 12th August 2011). With the growth of the ecumenical movement throughout the twentieth century and particularly in the rural communities throughout Australia

where it is as much a necessity as an act of 'good faith', many of Toowoomba's rural Catholics, and some of its urbanites as well, see the next fifty years as a period of union of the denominations of Christianity 'because God is so much bigger than any of the institutions we've created' (Sarah, Interview 20th April 2011). Sarah worships at St Damian's Cathedral in Toowoomba and believes this will be the case 'because we are united by so much more than we're separated by' (Interview 20th April 2011) with Charles, from the Lay-Led rural community of St Jerome's in Oakford agreeing 'it'll be a lot more ecumenical' (Interview 26th June 2011).

While the view of the hierarchy is today overwhelmingly negative (due to local events to which I will turn shortly) there is also the view that the upper echelons of the Catholic Church will *have* to undergo a fundamental restructuring of its hierarchical leadership in order to facilitate the changes necessary for the Church to flourish into the future. When thinking of the St Finian's church building in Davidsfield that celebrated its centenary as a church in August 2011, Colin mused 'There's no reason to think it won't last another hundred years, at least [and it's] hard to imagine a building of that age fifty years hence, the people that'll be around still using the same building in a way that even resembles the way we use it now'. Drawing this example out to the wider, universal Church Colin proposed that 'some sort of different system, different methods needs to be devised' and that the future hierarchy of the Church would reflect that development (Interview 12th August 2010).

While several parishioners saw the decline in the Church's numbers as a strengthening of a core of the faithful others believe there will be a re-growth of the Church in the coming decades, in terms of numbers of active Catholics participating

in their local parishes, in vocations to the priesthood (and to religious life) and in the Church's place within broader society. Several referred to the need for there to be national or worldwide calamity in order for this re-growth to occur, with the Chair of St Hilary's Parish Pastoral Council, Belinda suggesting that 'it will depend on how society, how society goes. It may be that – actually, if we go into very serious, serious, serious times and we can't get ourselves out of problems I think everybody will turn back to the Church' (Interview 30th August 2011), a sentiment echoed by other Catholics in the diocese, such as Leanne from St Gertrude's in Dovington: 'I see huge problems in the future for the world and the solution will be to go back to the Church'. During this re-growth it is widely believed that there will be a re-claiming of the ritual practices and leadership structures of the early Church; that is, of the first three centuries of Christianity so that the 'Church of today, I don't see it being around in fifty years' time' (Karen, Interview 19th June 2011).

In reflecting on this future Church in which he will serve Fr Oliver is confident it will 'be a strong Church again but, in the meantime, there's a sense of going back to an early Church situation to rebuild and in the rebuilding it may look a lot different to what it is now, in terms of structure even, hierarchy, all that sort of thing, may change' (Interview 20th June 2011). Acknowledging that it will not be in her lifetime, Sr Olive echoed Fr Oliver's view that in the coming decades Catholic identity will be closer to 'how the early Church was [because] the essence of what was there is the small group and then the different groups uniting to get together at different times. I see the Church like that and I see there will be married priests and women priests' (Interview 25th July 2011).

This expected renewal in the Church was also viewed as part of an historical cycle through which the Church has been before because 'the Church sees itself as two thousand years old so why would it worry about a little blip' (Fr Oliver, Interview 20th June 2011). For Fr David '[h]istory would suggest that fifty years is a very short period of time in history' (Interview, 26th August 2011), a sentiment echoed by Lawrence, 'I'm not sure whether fifty years is too short a time frame'. Christian from St Jerome's, Oakford is certain '[t]here will be a revival [because] you have your ups and your downs; maybe we're having a down at present … I don't know what's going to happen, but something will. The troops will return' (Interview 26th June 2011). While Christian is confident that 'troops will return' he *does* preface this comment with an oft-said 'I don't know' just as the near-adult teenager Philip said, 'I don't know where it's going to go, I just hope it's going to go somewhere good' (Interview 20th April 2011). Similarly, one of St Finian's Lay Leadership Team members, Clare, accepts that the future Church is 'going to be different but *I don't know* how. *I* really *don't know* but I can't see how… *don't know*. That might all be part of it but *I don't know* that it'll be any bigger a congregation than what it is today. *I don't know*; we might have a whole turn-around, plenty of priests and things like that ... *I don't know, I don't know*' (my emphasis, Interview 12th August 2011).

While this research project was conducted in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba it must be noted that the Catholic Christian identity under examination is equally applicable to the Catholics of all of Australia's dioceses. The liminality being experienced by Toowoomba's Catholics in parishes that are without a resident priest-pastor is also experienced by many other Australian Catholics as well, as is the liminal state of the diocese itself following the early retirement of its bishop, William Morris, and the diocese now being a vacant episcopal See; a state currently shared by

three other Australian dioceses also without a bishop at the time of writing. As a national Church the Australian Catholic Church as a whole is undergoing a period of transition due to the number of bishops recently retired or about to retire.

Three dioceses are currently without a bishop – the Archdiocese of Brisbane where Archbishop John Bathersby turned seventy-five in 2011 and submitted his resignation to the Pope, Wilcannia-Forbes that has had an Apostolic Administrator since 2010 and the Toowoomba Diocese, which has had an Apostolic Administrator since May 2011. There are five dioceses whose bishops will be turning seventy-five in the next two years – Archbishops Barry Hickey of Perth and Adrian Doyle of Hobart both turned seventy-five in 2011; Bishops Brian Heenan of Rockhampton, Geoffrey Jarratt of Lismore (named Apostolic Administrator of Brisbane in November 2011) and Peter Connors of Ballarat are currently seventy-four years old. Seventy year old Justin Bianchini of Geraldton will also be submitting his resignation in five years when he, too, turns seventy-five. In addition, eight other dioceses have had new bishops appointed to their episcopal Sees in the last five years – Bishop Les Tomlinson appointed to Sandhurst and Bishop Timothy Costelloe to Perth in February 2012, Bishop Michael Kennedy of Armidale in December 2011, Bishop William Wright of Maitland-Newcastle in June 2011, Bishop Anthony Fisher of Parramatta in January 2010, Bishops Michael McKenna of Bathurst and Christopher Prowse of Sale in 2009, Bishop Eugene Hurley of Darwin in 2007 and Bishop Greg O'Kelly of Port Pirie in 2006 (Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference 2011). Thus, the period in which I conducted fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Toowoomba diocese was virtually the mid-point of a period of transition for the Australian Catholic Church as a whole, given that sixteen (that is,

over half) of its twenty-eight territorial dioceses have (or will) experience a change in episcopal leadership during this ten-year period.

Impact of removal of Bishop Morris

Apart from the withdrawal of consent from one fieldsite, as outlined in chapter four (Methodology), the other significant impact of these events lay in the responses that people gave in general conversations and formal interviews when discussing *being* a Catholic (that is, Catholic identity) in twenty-first Australia. The 'Bishop Bill thing' in essence 'skewed' my subsequent research as it was the main topic of conversation during the remainder of my fieldwork. Although outside the scope of this project and not the primary focus of my ethnographic fieldwork (that is, local parish leadership) this important event in the life of this diocese took place towards the end of my fieldwork when requesting interviews, scheduling interviews and conducting in-depth interviews, so has a direct bearing on these results. Although the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris took place during the period of my fieldwork and is an event worthy of study in itself, a significant limitation of this research is its inability to fully incorporate this event into the existing project in the time remaining for its completion. Though worthy of much more attention, there was insufficient time remaining in the fieldwork phase of research to fully engage with this event as it played out within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba (or more broadly, within the Australian Church). Further, as the leadership decisions of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and the Roman Curia were not the subject of regular discussion amongst Toowoomba's Catholics prior to these events they are, within the context of this research into the impact of the shortage of priests on Catholic identity, not of immediate relevance to this research although this does not intend to

suggest that these events were not of relevance to the Catholics of the Toowoomba diocese (or the wider Australian or universal Church) or not worthy of further discussion.

Of the various general questions on the 'Parish Survey 2010-2011' (Appendix F) that was attached to each Letter of Consent in an effort to encourage parishioners to think broadly about Catholicism and being Catholic prior to being interviewed, **one** question is key to this discussion of the impact of the early retirement of Bishop William Morris because it provided unsolicited responses from parishioners. Although not asking about the events of May 2011, this question was viewed in its light by numerous respondents. The question: 'What is the most *negative* thing about being a Catholic today?' to which the following are a sample of the responses given, as written:

> 'The untimely retirement (forced) of Bishop Morris – so unfair'.
>
> 'The Temple Police causing turmoil and distrust, and challenging the unity of our church, and causing pain to our beloved Bishop'.
>
> 'The increasing oppressive control being imposed by Rome'.

When discussing the written responses during in-depth interviews only one individual, Fr Oliver, framed his answer in a way that acknowledged that this event *had* impacted on the way he viewed the Church by responding:

> 'After Bill Morris, organisation out of touch with today's world, i.e. transparency, democracy, not hierarchical. Before – Australian society, religion less relevant to people's lives, but they're searching – they don't trust the Catholic Church to give them what they need – see them at crisis points' (Interview 20th June 2011).

In St Agatha's parish, Toowoomba, whose parishioners described themselves, and their community, as 'orthodox' and 'faithful to the Pope', only two people consented

to be interviewed. As explained in chapter four (Methodology) of the two, I only

interviewed one, Sally, as the other was unable to schedule a time to meet. Sally

made no reference to these events either in her written responses or in-depth

interview. While conducting in-depth interviews in the regional parish of St

Gertrude's, Dovington, I encountered two former parishioners of the aforementioned

orthodox parish, Leanne and Lawrence, and this couple also made no reference to

these events in their written responses or in-depth interview, though did express

satisfaction with the outcome over dinner prior to being interviewed (pers. comm.

20th June 2011).

With widespread discussion of this event taking place before and after Masses, at the

parish groups and meetings I attended, and in the wider community, I chose to

include this event in the in-depth interviews I conducted after May 2011. Rather

than a specific question I gave people the opportunity to express whatever thoughts

or opinions they wished to regarding Bishop Morris' forced early retirement. The

overwhelming response was of shock, disappointment and anger, with the anger

directed at the hierarchical Church, Pope Benedict XVI and the 'temple police'.

Referred to as 'the Vatican', 'Rome' or 'the hierarchy', Toowoomba's Catholics are

generally critical of the institutional Church in light of the *process* by which Bishop

Morris was assessed, criticised and subsequently dismissed, asking 'Is it political and

is our Church very political?' (Belinda, 30th August 2011) or commenting on the

institutional system, that 'it just doesn't fit having a system, an institution, that still

works on a system of medieval law and power just doesn't fit in a twenty-first

society – accountability, justice, those sort of issues are part of our everyday living

and the Church needs to be accountable as much as any other element of our society'

(Brendan, Interview 12th August 2011). With the Arab Spring unfolding on Australian television sets throughout 2011, one rural parishioner placed these events in that context, saying 'It's interesting that a lot of wars have been fought against countries with dictatorships that have the same sort of approach to things. Free countries have stood up for oppressed people that have been ruled in a similar fashion' (Colin, 12th August 2011).

The Catholics of Toowoomba with whom I interacted are actively involved in their local faith communities, those colloquially called 'practising Catholics', yet have expressed anger towards His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and been critical of his actions regarding Bishop Emeritus Morris. It was reported to me by Fr Oliver that one of his parishioners, a ninety-two year old cradle Catholic, has now taken the Pope's picture off her wall because she's angry with him (Interview 20th June 2011) and the head of a diocesan organisation, Toby, reported the initial response of a young man who only occasionally goes to Church as, 'so the Nazi got him?' (Interview 16th August 2011). Belinda questioned whether or not this actually was the Pope's decision alone: '[H]ow much did the Pope actually know? … [W]hat information has the Pope been fed? Whose decision – was it the Pope or was he just the puppet, in fact, of his, of whoever he obviously relies on? … [A]re they the ones who made the decision?' (Belinda, 30th August 2011). Alyssa, on the other hand, was more vocal in her anger towards his Holiness: 'That's absolutely outrageous, for the leader of the Church to be so dismissive and offensive to one of our bishops because he's done something out of line, according to what the Pope's yes-men have told him, so the Pope didn't even give him a chance to say what he said. I don't like the Pope' (Alyssa, Interview, 24th June 2011).

These few comments are representative of the broadly similar commentary made regarding the *process* by which Bishop Morris was assessed and the *manner* in which he was, effectively, removed from Office. Thus, there now exists a form of *Toowoomba* Catholic identity based on the shared characteristic of anger and disappointment with the institutional Church and its leadership and on the shared us/them identifier of those of 'us' supportive of Bishop Bill and the 'temple police' 'them' who opposed Bishop Morris' episcopal leadership.

Although there arose greater discussion of 'the Pope', 'Rome' and 'the Vatican' significant discussion of the governance structures of the Catholic Church is not included at this time as there was little discussion of the upper echelons of the Church's hierarchy prior to these events as it is not generally relevant to the day-to-day lived experience of Toowoomba's Catholics. Apart from listing 'the Pope' in descriptions of Catholicism (or, specifically, how Catholicism differs from other Christian traditions) when asked either during in-depth interviews or on the Parish Survey forms, few individuals would consider 'the Vatican' to be part of their day-to-day Catholic life-world. It was not until *after* these specific local events of May 2011 in which the diocese's bishop, Bishop Emeritus William Morris, was effectively removed from office by the Church leadership that its relevance to people's lives was discussed. As these were highly reactive comments and not part of the 'meat and potatoes' of their everyday lives that I had shared for the previous twelve months (as a researcher) and thirty-seven years (as a diocesan Catholic) I have not included greater discussion of the Church's leadership as it is not part of the everyday Catholic identity being examined and that is being impacted by the present shortage of priests to serve in parish ministry.

'Temple police'

'Temple police' is a pejorative term applied to, and subsequently accepted by, those Catholics of the Toowoomba diocese (though Catholics operating as 'temple police' also exist elsewhere) who have taken upon themselves the task of 'policing' the orthodoxy of the bishop and priests of this diocese. They do this by attending celebrations of the Eucharist, school Masses, parish services and diocesan events with the aim of gathering 'proof' of the heresies (in their opinion) being taught, the unorthodox liturgies and rituals being celebrated and the disloyalty being displayed towards the Pope and the Church. Usually doing so in groups of two or three, the 'temple police' take notebooks in which they record what they perceive to be errors of orthodoxy or heretical statements during the course of the event or ritual they are attending. It must be noted that the note taking of the 'temple police' is done *during* the service, usually in full view of parishioners and certainly visible to the presider (priest) from the altar; in comparison, my presence and status as a doctoral researcher was known to all parishioners in every parish I visited but I never made notes during a service or when speaking with people at post-Mass social events. Having recorded what they consider to be 'proof' of doctrinal errors, heresies, poor leadership and the like, the 'temple police' then write letters (though the exact numbers of letters written is unknown it is believed each individual may write anywhere from a handful of letters to a steady stream of perhaps hundreds of letters) to the Pope and to the various Congregations of the Vatican (such as the Congregation for Bishops or the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) listing these proofs.

The action of 'temple police' are, to paraphrase Hage (1998), of a group that perceives its own form of Catholicism as having once been the dominant form that is now being encroached upon by the forms of Catholicism emerging as a result of the shortage of priests to serve in parishes. This necessitates their construction of Bishop Emeritus Morris and his supporters as 'others' against whom they must resist in order to preserve them*selves*. They do so by marginalising the forms of worship enacted by parishioners when they are without a priest to preside at Eucharist (Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion) as 'not just immoral, they're illegal'. In this way, as suggested by Saniotis (2004) they are able to define these non-orthodox, disloyal 'others' through their own rituals of allegiance, specifically a priest-centred celebration of the Eucharist. In this way, members of the 'temple police' as well as those supportive of their actions seek to form Turner's ideological communitas (Turner 1992:59, 1982:48) by using their remembered form of Catholicism as the *ideal* model of the Church upon which to build a utopian Church that is without the problems facing the current Church. As Fr Oliver described it, the 'temple police' romanticise one period in time without acknowledging that Catholicism has always changed, just as society has (Fieldnotes, 10th June 2011). In this way they are in conflict with or as Starkloff put it (1997:650), in tension with the normative communitas being enacted by their fellow parishioners, especially those in Lay-Led communities of the diocese.

In the aftermath of the May 2011 early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris the subject of the 'temple police' came up in many conversations, at prayer groups, craft groups and other parish groups throughout the diocese. The first parish group I attended was at my own parish of St Damian's Cathedral two days after the announcement was made and at that time a ninety-six year old woman, Ivy, said that

she knew a woman who proudly boasted of writing to Rome and suggested that this woman was probably one of the 'temple police'. Ivy also spoke of an incident she had witnessed in which a priest saw people at the back of the church taking notes; he walked down the aisle to where they were sitting, said he would not continue while they were writing and asked them to show him what they had written. They refused to show the priest their notebooks and they left the service (Fieldnotes 3rd May 2011).

While 'temple police' numbers are not definitively known, nor are all of their members identified, several have identified themselves as members of this group in local and national media and accepted the term 'temple police' as an identifier; thus, for these individuals the us/them group identity marker is a reversal of that named above – those of 'us' who are faithful to the Pope and the orthodoxy of the Church and (perhaps) everyone else is the 'them' who are being led astray (at best) or consciously committing heresy (at worst). What is known is that there is an active group of 'temple police' in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba (as well as in other Australian dioceses), operating primarily in the city of Toowoomba and the large regional towns of Bindullah and Jacksford, with the support of three diocesan priests. As to whom the three priests are, numerous lists of three were suggested to me by various parishioners with five separate men named in total.

While I had some inkling as to the identity of the oft-rumoured 'temple police', I did not know for certain and approached all people equally in all parishes seeking their comments and opinions about, and experiences of, various leadership models. When asking for interviews I made the same request of parishioners in the self-described orthodox (conservative) parish of St Agatha's as in St Ephram's that many consider

to be progressive (liberal). Although I encountered former St Agatha's parishioners in other parishes with whom I conducted an in-depth interview only two people from St Agatha's parish agreed to be interviewed and only one was able to make time to be interviewed. Of those Catholics I had encountered in parishes of the Toowoomba diocese that I later learned to be members of the 'temple police' – when they identified themselves as such in local and national media – none agreed to be interviewed; some ended the conversation and walked away when I asked them to consider being interviewed while others agreed verbally but would not take a Letter of Consent to peruse, provide their contact details to me or take my contact details with them. Thus, I acknowledge that my brief discussion of the 'temple police' is a decidedly unbalanced one featuring the negative opinions of those not identified as such but is without the 'temple police' members' own views due to an unwillingness to participate in my research, as expressed by those identifiable few I met.

A house divided?

While it has been suggested by some Toowoomba Catholics that the diocese has been divided by these events, I believe this suggestion is unwarranted as it implies that the anger and bitterness that was voiced in the wake of Bishop Emeritus Morris' forced early retirement has *led* to the creation of two distinctive groups within the diocese. Given the existence of the 'temple police' predates these events, the existence of separate ways of being Catholic or of viewing Catholic identity that the liberal (progressive) and orthodox (conservative) represent are not a sudden or new division within this diocese or any other diocese in which they exist. Rather, they represent Sarah's description of Catholicism as 'one very large, dysfunctional family' with these two extremes and the majority of those somewhere in between all

'part of my church family' (Interview 20th April 2011). The small numbers of 'temple police' also belies the notion of 'division'. Given these small numbers appear to have had a voice disproportionate to their size, the most 'divisive' aspect of these events, as Rosanna expressed was: 'There's only that few, isn't there, but they're so vocal' (Interview 26th June 2011).

Rather than dividing the diocese, the shared history of this event provides the Toowoomba diocese with a clearly demarcated 'we-ness' that encompasses the bulk of its territorial members. As Gloria from St Finian's, Davidsfield said of the stronger voice of the diocese's members, 'with Bishop Bill's problem, this diocese has come out and said things we'd have never said before; we've expressed beliefs we probably *had*' (Interview 12th August 2011). Glen from St Jerome's, Oakford, also suggested that although 'the minority, the vocal minority are trying to shape the Church … I think the people, the people power … to stand up for what they see as the Church; rather than what the minority see' is the future (Interview 26th June 2011).

Conclusion

During fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in eight parishes located throughout the Catholic diocese of Toowoomba I engaged with approximately three hundred parishioners in informal interviews (guided conversations) at various parish services groups and meetings. In addition, I conducted structured, in-depth interviews with forty-one individuals from rural and urban parishes, including parish leaders (laity and priests), those born into the faith (cradle Catholics) and those who have entered the Church either recently (neophytes) or sometime in the last fifty years

('converts'), teenagers, women and men. These Catholics worship in parishes representative of the three leadership models in place in this diocese – a parish priest, a shared priest or lay leadership – and their responses reflected theological concerns regarding the significance of the Eucharist (Mass) to Catholic identity and Catholicism's ritual life, while at the same time identifying both positives and negatives related to 'priestless-ness'.

The way in which Toowoomba's Catholics are responding to the loss of regular access to Mass reveals the development of communitas and normative communitas that is, at times, preferred even though it ensures continued 'Eucharistless-ness' for these parishes. The liminoid state in which Australian Catholic identity exists in the Toowoomba diocese (as well as its future identity) is due to several factors – the shortage of priests, the failure of the intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity and the changing episcopal leadership across many of the nation's dioceses.

While not directly relevant to this project's research into parish leadership structures put into place in response to the declining number of active clergy, the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris in May 2011 was sufficiently momentous to impact upon my ethnographic fieldwork. Being particularly relevant to the current liminality of the Toowoomba diocese, I included a discussion of the impact of this event and the role of the 'temple police' upon the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba and Catholic identity in Toowoomba.

Conclusion

Introduction

Drawing upon fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, as well as the body of literature related to this subject, this research has examined the experiences, opinions and responses of Australian Catholics to the present declining number of ordained priests to minister in parishes. This so-called 'shortage of priests' has been studied due to the importance of Catholic priests to the ritual life of Catholics, with this research examining the impact that the absence of ordained ministers has upon the ritual life and Catholic identity of Toowoomba's Catholics.

This chapter provides a summary of the results generated by this research by drawing together the broad themes identified related to the 'shortage of priests' and 'Catholic identity', discussing the limitations inherent in the current research and identifying important areas of future study. It concludes by drawing upon this project's findings to suggest an answer to its initial question 'Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia?'

Summary of results

In the initial chapters the 'shortage of priests' was examined in light of the special significance that the ordained minister plays within Catholicism's ritual practice, specifically in the celebration of Eucharist; Australian Catholic identity was defined by drawing upon the Catholic Church's historically, theologically and legally developed definition of 'Catholic identity'; the formation of a distinctly Australian Catholic identity was examined; anthropology's approaches to identity, specifically the 'self' and the 'other' were explored; and a definition for the Australian Catholic

identity that exists in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba was formulated. A review of the current body of literature showed that the future of the Catholic Church, especially in response to the increasingly frequent experience of ageing clergy and decreasing numbers of seminarians, has been examined extensively by theologians, historians and sociologists, but *not* by anthropologists. Further, few of these works focus on the *Australian* Catholic Church, a gap in the current body of knowledge that this project seeks to address by focussing on the Catholic Church in Australia. It was further identified that the various historical and theological approaches taken to examine the 'shortage of priests' as experienced in various places throughout the Catholic world have not explored the various *responses* that dioceses and parishes are taking to cope with this 'downward trend' from the perspective of parishioners. It is the absence of 'on-the-ground' ethnographic study that this project seeks to address.

This research project, therefore, can be placed within the broad corpus related to the universal Catholic Church and the Australian Church in particular; the decline in the numbers of active clergy available to serve in parishes in Australia and elsewhere; Catholic identity; and anthropological explorations of identity. In examining this literature a number of shortcomings were identified relating to the study of the phenomenon of the shortage of priests and resultant use of lay leadership in Catholic parishes in the Australian Catholic Church:

- That present studies of the laity and the shortage of priests do not include anthropological approaches.
- That the existing body of work on this emerging trend is small in nature and dominated by theological and liturgical approaches.

- That there exist few current works on the Australian Catholic Church.

- That there exists a paucity of literature on the Catholic Church within the emerging anthropology of Christianity and anthropology of theology.

I conducted fifteen months of multi-locale, multi-sited ethnographic research in eight of the parishes of the Toowoomba diocese from June 2010 to August 2011. During that time, I spoke with approximately three hundred individuals in general conversations. I was able to conduct informal interviews (guided conversations) with ten to twelve of these Australian Catholics and formal, in-depth interviews with forty-one parishioners. The subjects of these in-depth interviews included Catholics from rural and urban parishes; parish leaders (lay and ordained); cradle Catholics and neophytes; women, men and teenagers; with these Catholics worshipping in communities representing each of the three leadership models in place in the Toowoomba diocese – the normative model of a parish priest; sharing their parish priest with other communities; and the day-to-day leadership of laypeople.

Having outlined the importance of the ordained minister to the ritual life of Catholicism (chapter two, Identifying the problem) and of participation in Catholic ritual to Australian Catholic identity (chapter three, Identity) it could easily be presumed that the present shortage of priests would have an overwhelmingly negative impact upon the Catholic identity of these Australians. However, while the importance of Eucharist (Mass) was routinely acknowledged by these Catholics the experience of 'priestless-ness', and the resultant 'Eucharistless-ness', has had both positive and negative consequences for the faith-communities in which this is a lived reality. At times clinging to their local community, and the new *communitas* structures encountered, the experience of Eucharistless-ness, priestless-ness and the

resultant altered forms of ritual worship has been consciously chosen by some of these individuals and communities; in preference to the loss of the local parish community through its integration into a neighbouring parish or the regular attendance at other communities by parishioners. The use of Lay-Led Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services, or the less used Liturgy of the Hours, has afforded these Australian Catholics new ways of engaging in the ritual life of Catholicism, with more opportunities for personal involvement and leadership.

The negatives experienced when no priest is able to serve as a parish priest in a faith community are experienced by the remaining clergy now struggling to 'fill the gaps' as well as by the communities made 'priestless'. The number of ordained ministers, together with the declining number of vocations to the priesthood, has resulted in the workload being placed upon those still in active service becoming ever-greater; with issues related to 'burnout' expressed most frequently as the greatest concern in the present circumstances. The merged, mega-parishes now served by single priests, coupled with the added responsibilities many are given as 'Priest Director' of a nearby parish (or parishes) is placing a heavy burden on an ageing population of clerics, particularly in the geographically large dioceses of Australia such as Toowoomba's 490 000 square kilometre diocese. The distances travelled by these men is a common concern expressed by parishioners while the added administrative duties associated with being the pastor of so many once-separate communities is drawing them away from their *pastor*al duties at a time when parishioners are coming to terms with the loss of a key component of their Catholic identity – the celebration of Eucharist.

The ambiguity surrounding the authority invested in a 'Priest Director' or a non-ordained Lay Leader/s either in the Church's *Code of Canon Law* or the local diocesan structures is contributing further to the 'burnout' experienced by priests and by the laypeople in parish leadership roles. In addition, the confusion in the minds of many parishioners about the roles and authority of the visiting 'sacramental ministers' is further muddying the waters of effective leadership. In terms of Catholic ritual life; while the loss of regular celebration of the Eucharist in their own faith community is recognised as a major negative it is the pastoral and spiritual presence of an ordained minister that was identified by most parishioners as the greater concern when faced with, or experiencing, 'priestless-ness'. Although the negatives experienced when there is a shortage of priests formed the majority of parishioners' responses a number of positives were articulated by Toowoomba's Catholics, both ordained and lay.

While no specific positives *for priests* were identified, many of those interviewed indicated that the need for the laity to 'step up' in support of the diocese's ordained ministers was a positive outcome of 'priestless-ness'. For laypeople lamenting the loss of the spiritual presence of a resident parish priest the taking upon themselves of as much as they can of the non-spiritual, non-sacramental responsibilities of priests was seen as a way to 'free up' the priest for these specifically priestly duties. Both priests and laypeople voiced their satisfaction with the increased participation of the laity in the life of the Church; with several identifying the fulfilment of the 'priesthood of the baptised' as one positive and others, particularly lay parishioners, speaking of the 'empowerment' and 'ownership' experienced with greater lay participation in their local communities.

Australian Catholic identity was defined in chapter three (Identity) as being a baptised Catholic who is actively engaged in the faith-life of their local parish community and who would identify Catholicism's sacramental tradition as a marker of that identity, with regular attendance at Eucharist (Mass) as a measure of adherence. Australian Catholics would further identify Catholic Christianity as distinct from other faith traditions (Christian or non-Christian, though not in terms of exclusivity or superiority).

Given that the shared characteristics that mark this 'we-ness' of Australian Catholic identity includes the Catholic Church's ritual tradition, especially celebration of the Eucharist, the absence of regular access to this shared characteristic is viewed negatively by many of Toowoomba's Catholics. The most vocal of these are the self-described 'orthodox' Catholics who fear the 'Protestantisation' of the local Church through the reliance upon Liturgy of the Word plus Communion services in the absence of priests to preside at Eucharist. Though few others in the Toowoomba diocese would share these particular concerns, the transition that 'priestless' and 'Eucharistless' communities are passing through, from the normative leadership model of a resident parish priest as pastor to a future leadership model yet to be determined, places them in a liminal state that is neither-this-nor-that in terms of present Church leadership structures. Further, experiencing this *transformation* within an industrial country like Australia makes this betwixt-and-between state in which these priestless parishes now exist more akin to Turner's liminoid due to the mobility afforded to parishioners by Australia's effective and widespread transport system.

The way in which Toowoomba's Catholics are responding to the loss of regular access to Mass reveals the development of communitas and normative communitas that is, at times, preferred even though it ensures continued 'Eucharistless-ness' for these parishes. Thus, the conscious choice of parishioners in several 'priestless' communities to maintain their local community rather than to travel to the accessible celebrations of Eucharist in nearby parishes (where this is feasible) places them in a liminoid state from which they *could* emerge if they were to sacrifice the normative communitas to which they currently cling. The 'wait and see' approach adopted by the diocese, and these communities in particular, following the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris in May 2011 places the entire diocese into a state of liminality as it awaits the appointment of a new bishop and the decisions he will take regarding the diocese's present shortage of priests and the lay leadership models currently in place.

Like any form of identity, Australian Catholic identity is self-defined and includes *shared* characteristics that help to distinguish between the 'self' ('we', 'us') and the 'other' ('them'). These characteristics are shared between individuals and across generations through the intergenerational transmission of an identity's (in this case Catholicism's) shared knowledge, language, history and practices. Catholicism's sacraments of initiation, together with regular participation in the ritual life of the Church (primarily through attendance at and participation in the celebration of the Eucharist) transmits this Catholic identity from preceding generations to future generations. However, this intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity has been interrupted in the Toowoomba diocese, with many of its parishioners expressing concern about the resultant absence of succeeding generations in its parish congregations.

Although these concerns regarding the future of Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Toowoomba was discussed briefly (see chapter six, Discussion of Results) I was unable to adequately address this concern in this dissertation given the focus of this research was the church-going people of the Toowoomba diocese. I did, however, gather extensive data about the perceived future of the broader Catholic Church and Catholic identity by asking Toowoomba's Catholics to envisage this future in terms of how their own Catholic identity has changed over their lifetimes, the forces acting upon the Church today and how they believe the Church will change in the next fifty years. Older Catholics who have already experienced the significant changes of the past fifty years (both broader societal changes and those within the Church following the Second Vatican Council) acknowledged many more changes in their own Catholic identity over their lifetimes than did Catholics of the post-Vatican II generations. Opinions were expressed about mandatory celibacy for (Latin) Catholic priests, married priests and the ordination of women. Placed within the present context of declining numbers of clergy and active parishioners, together with the increasing secularisation of Australian society and the Church's present leadership (specifically the Pontiff and Roman Curia), Catholics of all ages pictured a future Church greatly diminished – in terms of numbers, outreach, influence and geographic spread. However, the majority of responses were positive in nature, even when placed in the context of an ongoing decline in vocations to the priesthood and declining congregations.

These positive comments fell into two broad categories – those who saw a re-growth or renewal in the Church's future and those who saw the Church's transformation taking place in the years to come – with one other comment recurring, 'I don't know'. At the national level, the Church's future is being shaped by the number of

new Australian bishops entering episcopal leadership at this time. The period in which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba was the mid-point of the Australian Catholic Church's ten-year period of transition, during which over half of its twenty-eight territorial dioceses will experience a change in episcopal leadership. Hence, the liminoid state in which Australian Catholic identity exists in the Toowoomba diocese (as well as its future identity) is due to several factors – the shortage of priests, the failure of the intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity and the changing episcopal leadership across many of the nation's dioceses.

Although not part of my initial research question, the removal from Office through early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris in May 2011 was sufficiently momentous in the lives of Toowoomba's Catholics to impact upon my ethnographic fieldwork. Being particularly relevant to the current liminality of the Toowoomba diocese, I included a discussion of the impact of this event and the role of the 'temple police' upon the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba and Catholic identity in Toowoomba. However, as this event took place close to the end of the fieldwork phase of my research and the end-date of my already extended ethics approval there was insufficient time to fully engage with it; further, as the previous twelve months of fieldwork had not generated discussion of the Church's hierarchy and leadership in any ongoing manner I consider Bishop Morris' early retirement (forced removal) only in terms of its impact upon the liminality of the diocese and the role of the 'temple police' as it related to Catholic identity within the context of the shortage of priests.

Future directions of current research

In acknowledging the restrictions and limitations of this research in chapter four (Methodology) a number of significant gaps were identified suggesting areas worthy of future research. For example, an opportunity exists for research into the experiences of Australia's Catholics currently being ministered to by large numbers of priests from outside their respective dioceses in many of Australia's Catholic dioceses. This research is particularly necessary when large numbers of these non-diocesan priests are from overseas due to issues related to cross-cultural interactions, linguistics and ethnocentrism.

Incidents cited by a number of parishioners when being interviewed, of theirs or their family's experiences in other Australian dioceses in which overseas priests minister suggest that the integration of linguistically, culturally different individuals within numerous Australian contexts is a process that requires further study; to ascertain the processes that enhance this experience, those that inhibit a smooth transition and the means to facilitate a smoother introduction of outside priests, especially those from overseas. The mono-cultural nature of large areas of rural and regional Australia also suggest that the interaction between foreign priests and local Catholics highlights the ethnocentric biases of each group; an interaction worthy of the attention of anthropology's methodological insights into the nature of 'culture', 'identity' and 'ethnocentrism'.

Further, the Catholic culture of the Catholic Church in the Global South is substantially different to that of the Global North within which the Australian Catholic Church sits culturally. These intra-cultural differences can be readily generalised as being similar to those between 'orthodox' and 'progressive' Catholics. Therefore, these subtle intra-cultural differences may further contribute to or

exacerbate the kinds of difficulties alluded to by the parishioners of the Toowoomba diocese when being interviewed. However, as large numbers of overseas priests do not currently minister in the Toowoomba diocese future research into the introduction of foreign priests into Australian dioceses is necessary.

In a similar way, a gap was identified regarding research into the introduction of the restored permanent diaconate into Australian dioceses. Therefore, there needs to be research into the permanent diaconate in those dioceses where it has been restored, or in dioceses as the restored permanent diaconate is being introduced. Similarly, the introduction into Catholic parishes of married priests who have entered the Catholic Church from other traditions (most notably the Anglican Church) also needs to be researched. This is particularly relevant during the current period when a new Catholic-Anglican Ordinariate has been created by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to facilitate the inclusion in the Catholic Church of whole parishes and dioceses from the Anglican Church.

Pope Benedict XVI's *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, Apostolic Constitution Providing for Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans Entering into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, was promulgated on November 4th 2009 with few such personal ordinariates having been created to date (*Anglicanorum Coetibus: Apostolic Constitution Providing for Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans Entering into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, Promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI, November 4, 2009*. 2009). As of the time of writing, I am aware of Personal Ordinariates having been established in the United Kingdom (U.K), the United States of America (U.S.A.) and Canada. As a new phenomenon globally there has been little opportunity to date for extensive research to be conducted into these Ordinariates. At present, a review of

literature relating to *Anglicanorum Coetibus* returns predominantly canonical and legal discussions (Baura 2010, Doe 2010, Hill 2010, Ladaria & Levada 2010), though there has been coverage in Catholic media (newspapers, blogs and websites) and some published assessments by Anglicans (Slipper 2010), leaving a gap in the literature for numerous disciplined, including anthropology, to fill. Further, as no Personal Ordinariates have yet been established in Australia there is scope for future research into this process and its effects upon Australia's Catholics and Australian Catholic identity.

According to McGillion and O'Carroll (2011:128) 'the largest 'church' grouping in Australia is the 'church' of lapsed Catholics'' whose self-definition of Catholicism is markedly different to those active parishioners included in this project. While the National Church Life Survey Occasional paper 10 of January 2008, *Moving Beyond Forty Years of Missing Generations*, provides some insight into the broader, cross-denomination trend of declining religious participation, it is a question that deserves to be addressed more directly in the context of the Catholic Church, the Australian Catholic Church and the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. In particular, more research needs to be conducted into the interruption that has taken place in the intergenerational transmission of Catholic identity identified in this research.

Paul Collins (1998:117) suggests the Catholic Church is now in a *post*-post Vatican II era in which the bulk of its membership has only known the contemporary Church and for whom the Second Vatican Council is history. The thoughts, experiences and opinions of this *post*-post Vatican II generation needs to be investigated further as they are not just the 'Church of tomorrow' but are the Church of today through whom Catholic identity will be transmitted.

As already suggested, further research is also needed to address the orthodox (conservative) and progressive (liberal) voices that exist in this diocese and within the broader Australian Catholic Church. The interactions between these two broad groupings within Australian Catholicism, as represented by the polarity in the works of Michael Gilchrist and Paul Collins, has direct bearing on the way in which Australian Catholics experience the Catholic Church's rituals and faith-communities, as well as the way in which they identify themselves. That the opinions and desires of one or the other of these groupings may, at times, appear to outweigh the other in the way in decision-making by the episcopate impacts upon the lived experience of Catholicism for the active parishioners of the nation's dioceses. In the Toowoomba diocese such an instance is the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris in which the orthodox (conservative) viewpoint of a numerical minority appears to have been given undue weight in decision-making.

As acknowledged, the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus William Morris is an event worthy of further study. Research is needed into the events that led up to his early retirement in May 2011, the role of the 'temple police', the inner-workings of this group and the ongoing ramifications of this event within the Toowoomba and Australian Church. Whenever a new bishop is appointed to the Toowoomba See, further research should be conducted to ascertain the ongoing liminality of the diocese or its reaggregation into the broader Catholic Church, particularly in terms of parish leadership structures.

As the ethnographic data gathered included discussion of the future of the Catholic Church, both universally and within Australia, a return to these fieldsites in the coming decades would facilitate longitudinal research to be conducted.

Conclusion

This thesis began with an outline of the background to this research, an explanation of the purpose of this investigation and the topic's significance, as well as the identification of the key research questions to be addressed. In subsequent chapters, the 'shortage of priests' was examined as was 'identity', leading to a definition of Australian Catholic identity. A review of literature identified significant gaps to be filled and provided the basis for the methodological and theoretical frameworks employed to address the key research question, 'Is a shortage of priests re-shaping Catholic identity in Australia?' The data gathered was discussed and the impact of the shortage of priests upon Australian Catholic identity examined.

This research contributes to the emerging anthropology of Christianity by taking as its subject a world religion, Catholicism, and to the emerging anthropology of theology by incorporating the insights of theological scholarship alongside that of anthropological theory. It bridges the gap between current research into the shortage of priests and the laity that is dominated by theological and liturgical approaches by utilising the methodologies of ethnographic practice to gather data and the insights of theoretical anthropology to analyse the results. It further bridges the gap between the preponderance of work on the shortage of priests in the Catholic Church of the United States and Europe by looking at the Australian Catholic Church, while contributing these Australian findings to the emerging anthropologies of Christianity and of theology.

This thesis has shown that the presence, or absence, of an ordained minister (a priest) from a Catholic faith community *does* impact upon the way in which parishioners

experience their Catholic faith. The central liturgical action of Catholicism is the celebration of the Eucharist, as expressed by the institutional Church's *Code of Canon Law* and as viewed by Catholics who measure their adherence (or lack thereof) by the frequency with which they participate in it. Therefore, the loss of this central identifier of Catholicism through the absence of the only person able to preside at a Mass 'in the person of Christ' effects the way in which many Catholics measure or define their Catholicism. While the desire to maintain a local community may override the desire to travel away from a local parish to celebrate Eucharist it is still the stated desire of the parishioners of the Toowoomba diocese to have regular (preferably weekly) access to this central action by which they self-define their Catholicism. The greater involvement that priestless and Eucharistless parishioners are having within the altered ritual life of their communities is, for many though not all, highlighting the significance of that which they no longer have – the Mass.

Further, it has identified that these experiences may be both negative and positive, for both the clergy and the laity. The negatives experienced by the ordained ministers, lay leaders and parishioners in these changing circumstances relate to the geographical size of Australian dioceses in general, and the Toowoomba diocese in particular, that sees already large faith communities merged into mega-parishes or now sharing clerics across multiple parishes and within these, among multiple communities. The physical and psychological burdens that the workloads demanded in these circumstances cause for the clerics and those who provide leadership in their absence is the most significant negative identified by this research. Able to be summarised as 'burnout' these burdens relate to the distances travelled by often ageing clergy, the administrative burdens related to being the canonical leader of separate communities when the key duty of priests is seen to be pastoring not

administrative. For the laity, 'burnout' issues relate to juggling multiple roles within a parish (Lay Leader, Finance Committee member, Minister of the Word) in addition to the multiple roles of their own lives (husband/wife, parent, employer/employee). However, despite the presence of these negatives, the majority of those interviewed see more positives in the present circumstances than these negatives.

Clerics and laity alike express great joy at the greater involvement that the present situation demands of laypeople, with many laypeople using 'empowering' and 'ownership' to refer to the level of involvement they now have within their parish community, be it administrative, liturgical or ministerial. The clergy interviewed echo these sentiments, seeing their role to be encouraging this flowering of 'fully conscious, and active participation' by the laity. On behalf of the clergy, laypeople express satisfaction that they are able to free priests from the nitty-gritty of administrative duties to focus on their roles as shepherds, spiritual guides and pastors. For the laity, the clergy at times rejoice in the deepening of engagement with their faith that they see in the laypeople now being asked to 'step up'.

In discussing the development of an Australian Catholic identity I explored the pre-conciliar notion of the 'pray, pay and obey' Catholic of the pre-Vatican II era. In looking at the way in which Australian Catholics in the Toowoomba diocese are now engaging in their parish communities in so many new ways (as Lay Leaders, in Parish Pastoral Councils, as more willing volunteers to numerous parish groups) and are seeing this as a joyful empowerment despite many hats being worn by a few individuals it is easy to see that none will ever return to such a mentality in the way they view their own Catholic identity. With the forced early retirement of Bishop Emeritus Morris coinciding with a period of episcopal change nationally that may

see a significant shift in the future of the Australian Church, these now empowered individuals are now willing, to paraphrase Gloria from St Finian's, to come out and say things they never would have before. Therefore, within the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, the Catholic identity of its parishioners *has* been (and continues to be) re-shaped by the present shortage of priests.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Episcopal permission
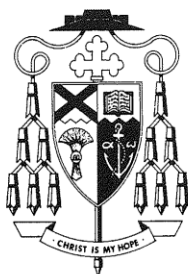
BISHOP'S HOUSE

73 Margaret Street
P.O. Box 756
Toowoomba Qld. 4350
Australia
Tel. (07) 4632 4277
Fax. (07) 4639 2251

28 January 2010

Regina Ryan
158 Drayton Road
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Dear Regina

I have no hesitation in giving you my support and permission to visit communities in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba for the purpose of your doctoral research to obtain your PhD.

I understand your research is looking at the ways in which the Catholic Church is addressing the priest shortage as experienced in various parts of Australia, as well as looking at the way parishes are being led and administered by non-ordained persons.

I take this opportunity to wish you every success in this project and if there is anything I can do to support you please don't hesitate to contact me.

With every blessing

Yours in Christ

William M Morris, DD
BISHOP OF TOOWOOMBA

23 May 2011

Regina Ryan
158 Drayton Road
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Dear Regina

I have no hesitation in giving you my support and permission to visit communities in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba for the purpose of your doctoral research to obtain your PhD.

I understand your research is looking at the ways in which the Catholic Church is addressing the priest shortage as experienced in various parts of Australia, as well as looking at the way parishes are being led and administered by non-ordained persons.

With every blessing

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian V Finnigan, DD
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Toowoomba

Appendix B: Letter of introduction to fieldsites (parishes)

USQ
AUSTRALIA

University of Southern Queensland

<Name, parish leader>

<parish name>

<street address>

<town> Qld <postcode>

Thursday 11 March 2010

My name is Regina Ryan and I am a PhD student at the University of Southern Queensland. In my doctoral research project, I am exploring the ways in which the Australian Catholic Church, within the Diocese of Toowoomba, is responding to the decreasing availability of active clergy to meet the needs of parishes. In particular, I am paying attention to the increasing use of non-ordained lay leaders in parishes.

Having sought, and received, permission from Bishop William Morris to conduct my research project in the Diocese of Toowoomba I am now contacting parishes in which to do field work, including your parish of <parish name>. I am aware that Bishop Morris has written to you introducing me and my research project, and explaining that he has given me permission to conduct fieldwork in this diocese. As the <leader's title> of <parish name> parish I am now seeking your permission to conduct research in your parish. Attached is a *letter of consent* that details the kinds of data I hope to collect as well as your right *not* to participate in my project.

I am a practising Catholic, worshipping at St Damian's Cathedral in Toowoomba and, as a Catholic; I am interested in exploring how our Church will respond to the decreasing availability of active clergy. Also, please be assured that this is purely an academic research project that will not at any time be used for commercial or political purposes. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me on the following number:

0437 632 481

Or you can contact my PhD supervisor Dr Lara Lamb on:

(07) 4631 1069 or

Lara.Lamb@usq.edu.au

As I said, your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate in, or at some future point to withdraw from, the study, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your treatment in this study. The results of the research may be published, but your name, as well as the name of parishioners and the parish, will not be used. If you choose to give me permission to conduct field work in your parish I ask that you sign the letter of consent and return it in the *reply paid envelope*. If you choose not to participate, please return the letter of consent, un-signed.

Thank you very much for your assistance,

Regina Ryan

Doctoral Candidate
School of Humanities and Communication
Faculty of Arts
University of Southern Queensland

PUBLIC MEMORY RESEARCH CENTRE

Toowoomba • Springfield • Fraser Coast

usq.edu.au
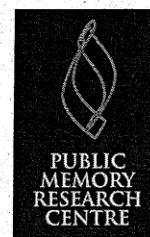
Appendix C: Letter of Consent, for parishes

USQ

AUSTRALIA

University of Southern Queensland

Letter of Consent

Dear <Name, parish leader>, <title, parish leader>, <parish name>, <town>

My name is **Regina Ryan** and I am a **Post-graduate candidate** under the direction of **Dr Lara Lamb, Lecturer in Anthropology** in the **Anthropology Department** Faculty of Arts, School of Humanities and Communication at the University of Southern Queensland. I am conducting a research study at **<parish name>** that will explore **the ways in which Australian Catholics respond to the priest shortage, paying attention to the different leadership choices that are made in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.**

I request your approval to –
- [ ]   allow me access **to your parish's religious services, pastoral activities and parishioners.**
- [ ]   copy documents **such as parish histories** .
- [ ]   audio-tape interviews with **parishioners who consent to be involved** on several occasions over the **five days** duration of this project. These audio tapes will be kept by me for five years after this project.
- [ ]   photograph **pastoral activities, parish events and parishioners.**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your treatment in this study. The results of the research may be published, but your name, as well as the name of parishioners and the parish, will not be used.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation will help to improve the transition process experienced in other parishes of this diocese, and other dioceses of Australia, as they also respond to this issue. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me on **0437 632 481 or 07 4631 1023** or e-mail me at **Regina.Ryan@usq.edu.au.** You may also call my supervisor **Dr Lara Lamb** on **07 4631 1069.**

Should you have any concern about the conduct of this research project, please contact the USQ Ethics Officer, Office of Research & Higher Degrees, University of Southern Queensland, West Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350, Telephone (07) 4631 2690, email: ethics@usq.edu.au

Sincerely

(signature)

(Miss) Regina Ryan

I give my consent to participate in the above study.

_____   _____
Signature   **Date**

Appendix D: Newsletter notice introducing researcher to parishes

PhD research at <parish name>

My name is Regina Ryan and I am doing my PhD research on the Australian Catholic Church in the Diocese of Toowoomba, paying attention to the different leadership choices that are made in response to the decreasing availability of active clergy to meet the needs of parishes. Over the next twelve months I will be conducting anthropological field work in a number of parishes of the diocese, with permission to do so from Bishop Morris and each parish's Parish Pastoral Council. For the next four weeks you will see me around the parish, at services, meetings and events, participating in and observing the life of the parish and talking to parishioners. Later in the year, I will return for another four weeks, to continue this work and to interview those who agree to be interviewed, about their experiences in the parish and as a Catholic. I have been a parishioner of St Damian's Cathedral for almost fifteen years and will happily answer any questions you may have.

Appendix E: Letter of Consent, for individuals

USQ
AUSTRALIA

University of Southern Queensland

Letter of Consent

My name is *Regina Ryan* and I am a *Post-graduate research student* under the direction of *Dr Lara Lamb, Lecturer in Anthropology* in the *Anthropology Department* Faculty of Arts, School of Humanities and Communication at the University of Southern Queensland. I am conducting a research study at your *parish* that will explore *the ways in which Australian Catholics respond to the priest shortage, paying attention to the different leadership choices that are made in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.*

I request your approval to –

☐ *interview you*, either one-on-one or in a small group, on several occasions.

☐ *audio-tape interviews with you*, as a *parishioner who has consented to be involved*, on several occasions over the *eight weeks/two months* duration of this project. These audio digital records and transcripts will be kept by me for five years after this project.

☐ *photograph pastoral activities or parish events in which you are involved.*

☐ in your presence, *interview your child* _____.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your treatment in this study. The results of the research may be published, but your name, as well as the name of fellow parishioners and the parish, will not be used.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation will help to improve the transition process experienced in other parishes of this diocese, and other dioceses of Australia, as they also respond to this issue. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me on *0437 632 481 or 07 4631 1023* or e-mail me at *Regina.Ryan@usq.edu.au.* You may also call my supervisor *Dr Lara Lamb* on *07 4631 1069.*

Should you have any concern about the conduct of this research project, please contact the USQ Ethics Officer, Office of Research & Higher Degrees, University of Southern Queensland, West Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350, Telephone (07) 4631 2690, email: ethics@usq.edu.au

Sincerely

[signature]

(Miss) Regina Ryan

I give my consent to participate in the above study.

_____

Name

_____   _____

Signature   **Date**

PUBLIC MEMORY RESEARCH CENTRE

Toowoomba • Springfield • Fraser Coast   usq.edu.au

Appendix F: Parish Survey 2010-2011

USQ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND fulfilling lives

Parish Survey 2010

Please complete the following and return to Regina Ryan, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, School of Humanities and Communication, University of Southern Queensland.

Parish Name	
Name	
Address	
Phone number	
E-mail address	
Gender (please circle)	Female Male
Age (please circle)	18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76-85 86+
How long have you worshipped at this parish?	
Parish leader/s	

What key words would you use to describe what it is to be a Catholic?
What is the most *positive* thing about being a Catholic today?
What is the most *negative* thing about being a Catholic today?

What does it mean to be a Catholic? Has this changed during your life?

Think of your parish leader (parish priest, religious sister, pastoral council):
Describe this person's *strengths*, as a leader: Describe this person's *weaknesses*, as a leader:

What lay roles exist in your parish?

Are there any roles in your parish that you think a lay person is more suited to?

Do you wish to make any further comments?

I give my consent for this above information to be utilised in the research project of Regina Ryan. I acknowledge that my participation in this study is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, and that there will be no penalty and it will not affect my treatment in this study.

I understand that the results of this research may be published, but my name, as well as the name of my parish, will not be used.

_____   _____

Signature   **Date**