

Keynote paper

Implications for ministry

Janiene Wilson

Introduction

I have been asked to address some of the implications for Catholic ministry of the child sexual abuse crisis. This is obviously a huge area to consider in a brief paper, so I will confine myself to outlining what I consider to be the most important areas of concern that I believe require attention.

My credentials are, firstly, becoming a Catholic in the late 1970s, when I encountered personally the truth of the Gospel, then working at the Sydney Archdiocesan seminary for 10 years from the mid-1990s to 2004, teaching seminarians and laity at the Catholic Institute of Sydney for the last 26 years, and working with priests, brothers and religious as a clinical psychologist for the last 20 years.

The current child sexual abuse crisis troubles me deeply, but not only because I am surprised or shocked at the extent of the sexual dysfunction that has been uncovered – that, of course, is truly devastating. I am troubled because the problem of sexual dysfunction amongst Catholic clergy has been known about for ages by both clergy and laity. However, the ability to see and evaluate that dysfunction, which was right before the gaze of many – hiding in plain sight – had been conditioned out of many of those who possessed the authority to intervene. There has been only a diminished ability by those in authority to sense that something very wrong was happening and to respond accordingly.

I want to focus on what has been hiding in plain sight. I will address four issues:

1. seminary formation
2. models of priesthood
3. selection and screening of individuals for ministry training
4. supervision.

When I began work in 1992 as a young Catholic psychologist at the Sydney archdiocesan seminary, St Patrick's College Manly, I noticed that there was no program to address formation for a celibate commitment. In my first six months at Manly, I received many confidences from students which indicated that all wasn't well with how they were travelling personally, especially in areas of sexual attraction and orientation. However, there was a reluctance on the part of students to tell any of the clergy staff, because this sort of problem might not be tolerated and the student might be kicked out. So, gradually tiring of all these de facto confidences, I dared to approach the Archbishop of Sydney at the time, Cardinal Edward Clancy, about the possibility of a program of psychological literacy, which would include a component on celibacy. His response was an impatient and dismissive one: 'Young woman, if people like you would stop talking about this, it would cease to be a problem'. I was left in no doubt where I stood. I hasten to add that, over the next ten years, Cardinal Clancy and I got to know each other well, although he never could remember my name, and when I left the seminary, we parted as friends.

However, his response to me has been emblematic of a particular and deeply held disposition influencing clergy formation, based on a faulty anthropology which has held sway for many generations. This is only now starting to give way, because it has simply been so humanly destructive of so many good people.

Faulty anthropology

My experience of working therapeutically with so many clergy and religious over many years, has shown me that this faulty anthropology has underpinned most of what has passed for spiritual formation for ministry in the Catholic Church.

Let me clarify what I mean by 'faulty anthropology'. I am using this term to refer to a purely theological understanding of the human person, across time and culture, drawn entirely from scripture and tradition, without reference to any of the sciences. It has been handed down for generations and continues to 'inform' ministerial formation processes. The psychological sciences are starting to provide

valuable information those processes, but this still meets resistance in many quarters. For instance, the extent of the knowledge about the emotions that content some seminaries, seems to begin and end with St Thomas Aquinas!

The Redemptorist Mater seminary in Chester Hill, Sydney, and Vianney College in Wagga have, as I understand, no psychologically-informed formation program, although I understand that psychological assessment is now utilised in both seminaries for aspiring candidates. I think the Royal Commission is at least partly responsible for this concession to contemporary scientifically-informed knowledge and practice.

Now, back to this faulty anthropology. It appears to me to be based on the following assumptions, which all stem from the long-standing dualistic perception of the human person as body versus spirit:

1. Human sexuality and a priestly vocation are mutually exclusive, or at the very least, in a problematic relationship.
2. Human sexual desire can be contained or suppressed by an ecclesially-inspired, idealised ego structure, and sheer effort of the will.
3. Young men at their sexual peak in their early 20s can make an election for consecrated celibacy without, in many instances, being encouraged to undergo the path to radical self-knowledge that this entails.
4. The rational faculties are dominant and the place from which all behaviour should emanate.
5. Emotions are to be distrusted or damned with faint praise. The human psychological reality, the subjective world of thought, feeling and meaning making is problematic and best ignored. As we noted, Thomas Aquinas had the last valuable word to say on emotions.
6. Goodness and rationality are co-extensive.
7. Consciences can be formed, in the absence of consciously undergoing the primary human experiences of guilt, shame and wrongdoing, by simply following the rules.
8. Psychological wisdom and knowledge is a secular discipline which, at best, is regarded as an optional extra in priestly formation.

What has been overlooked by these assumptions is that the primary place of God's revelation is human experience and that all theology is based initially on the experience of the one theologising (it is either that or it is nit picking the work of others who have gone before). And that human experience includes an experience of the body, sex and sexuality, which the tradition of priestly formation tends to treat as unimportant.

Formation for ordained ministry

To understand what needs to happen to improve ministerial outcomes in the Catholic tradition, we must begin with an examination of training for ministry. This may have some application to ministerial formation in other denominations, but I am not familiar with processes other than those within the Catholic Church.

In 1983, the Cistercian abbot, Andre Louf, wrote a paper entitled *Humility and Obedience in Monastic Tradition*.¹ I found this when I was searching for guidance for my seminary formation work. Louf writes that the young aspirant to the monastic life often comes to formation with a deep and personal desire for a relationship with God and a need to grow into the truth of who he is through experiencing that desire. What Louf writes is true, I believe, of all religious formation.

Louf uses the Gospel parable of the publican and the Pharisee as a paradigm for the sort of spiritual formation that should underpin and inform priestly ministry. What is needed is for the young man to encounter within himself the truth of his own human limitations, and within those limitations the need for God's mercy and love. This is a disposition of true humility, which is an abiding principle in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Humility is essentially that disposition which orients an individual to the God-given reality of things and his/her place within that reality. It is intimately connected with the formation of conscience.

However, according to Louf, what frequently happens in formation is that this foundational relationship with God is compromised by the need the young man has for the approval of those who will judge him as worthy of profession into a religious order or ordination to priesthood. Instead of his conscience

1. Louf, A. (1983). *Humility and Obedience in Monastic Tradition*, *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 18(4), 261–282.

being formed in true humility, the young man has his conscience replaced by an ecclesial form of the superego. He then internalises the norms of that ecclesial legitimating authority. Those norms can easily foster a clericalism and privileged specialness, and a fearful refusal to think outside or beyond what the legitimating authority deems acceptable. This can lead to a diminishing of individual energy and conviction and, quite frankly, a deforming and compromising of the individual's sense of vocation into compliance with someone else's ideal. I have witnessed students enter the seminary with energy and personality and leave after seven years, angry, blunted and diminished. Sometimes, it appears that they are more concerned with maintaining church stability than sensitivity to human pain and suffering.

In my observation, young men present for formation with a mixed, inchoate but often fervent impulse to move in the direction of a total gift of self to the God they have come to sense as their foundational reality. That their starting point comprises mixed motivations, is frequently obvious to all but the young men themselves. It is the task of formation for ministry to enable those mixed motives to surface and be brought into consciousness, and eventually to be owned by the young man in formation. However, a subtle distortion is likely to occur, and instead of conscience being formed, the young man begins to respond to the subtle pressures that will enable him to find acceptance and approval by the ecclesial authorities which are responsible for his progress towards priesthood.

I was originally employed by the Sydney archdiocesan seminary to supervise seminarians' pastoral work and to teach pastoral counselling skills to those same students. In the late 1990s, those skills were seen to be a necessary part of priestly formation. However, over the years, the number of seminarians taking my courses has dwindled to one or two per year, and they are taken as electives. There was a period in the early 2000s, when students were expressly forbidden to take my courses. In my opinion, there is still wariness and resistance amongst students to embrace the wisdom of the behavioural sciences. (It would be interesting to speculate about the forces that are influencing the students in this regard.) I think this is partly due to the operation of the clerical superego, but these days, such resistance borders on wilful ignorance. I recently provided a number of seminary students in my class with some psychological information to help them understand the psychodynamics underpinning scrupulosity. The students were engaged by the material, even expressed gratitude, but also expressed the fear that they might now become liberals!

Of course, it is the case that clergy are rightly wary of any reduction of their spiritual ministry to merely the provision of psychological counselling or assistance, or of priestly formation proceeding only along the lines of psychological development. There have been some unhelpful applications of the behavioural sciences since Vatican II, which have rather arrogantly attempted to denigrate the theological view of the human person within the Catholic tradition, to replace it with a more humanistic model, and to style religious faith as a long-lasting neurosis. However, the wrong use of a source of information cannot negate its right use. It has seemed to me over the years that before, during, and after their seminary formation, most priests experience a tension between the ideal of celibate priesthood to which they aspire and the realities of their psychological maturity. As the research of Luigi Rulla and others has shown, those entering priesthood or religious life bring with them the normal human conflicts between a variety of conscious and unconscious, positive and defensive, motivations. A sound programme of psychologically informed human formation should give candidates the opportunity to explore and understand their motivations and to grow in emotional freedom. And they should feel safe to do so.

In the current climate, however, where psychological insights tend to be distrusted, this is a terrifying prospect for many seminarians. Typically, the pursuit of their spiritual ideal is – to a greater or lesser extent – a defence mechanism against unresolved psycho-sexual and affective immaturity. There is a fear that any exploration of conscious and unconscious motivations will undermine the religious vocation. Whereas, of course, growth in emotional freedom will in fact enhance one's religious commitment. The seminarian may then be enabled to move from a defensive to a positive motivation for his adoption of vowed celibacy. An education in the theology and spirituality of priestly celibacy is no substitute for the psycho-sexual maturity and emotional freedom required for living a healthy priestly life. And it is an obvious fact that sexual maturity will not be attained in seven years of training in a seminary!

Celibacy must be a deeply personal, hard-won adjustment, owned by an individual. If it is authentic, it is their experiential connection to the reality they call God. It must be a personal quest of spiritual relationship and religious reality based on an unflinching self-knowledge and acceptance of radical truth about one's innermost desires. As a form of sexual orientation, celibacy requires the hard work of self-

knowledge, but the result is evidenced in an interior freedom and integration that unites the person's individuality and their ministry. Current formation does not, and cannot, encourage this level of personal exploration.

A further word here on the impact on psycho-sexually premature development of a celibate commitment. It has been my observation that, in such instances, the intensity of young male sexual energy does not have the opportunity to be tempered, modulated, and humanised in relationship. Where this energy is experienced in the service of loving another, it is less likely to be split off into a solipsistic disposition towards the other. In such instances, sexual behaviour results in a partner being treated impersonally and without empathy and in the service of managing sexual energy which has become troubling.

Competing models of priesthood after Vatican II

The kind of formation for ministry that exists in seminaries is to a great degree shaped and influenced by the models of priestly ministry that currently prevail. Let's now look at these models of priesthood. In doing so, I would like to reference an article by Rev Anthony Gooley published in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in January 2018.² Anthony Gooley is a permanent deacon within the Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese. He suggests that what we are dealing with at the moment is a lack of reception of the vision for ordained ministry as set out at the second Vatican Council. As a result, aspects of ordained ministry are out of step with our current ecclesial reality. He suggests that there are three aspects of the theology of holy orders that can be elicited from Vatican II which are worth considering but are yet to impact upon the prevailing model of ordained ministry in the Catholic Church. These are:

- that the church's ecclesiology must be one of communion
- the concept of a descending theology of holy orders
- a renewed understanding of ordained ministry as oriented toward building up the church for mission.

I will now try to summarise Gooley's thoughts on each of these points.

Ecclesiology of communion

Any consideration of ministry in the church, says Gooley, must begin with a consideration of the nature of the *ecclesia*. If it is, indeed, one of communion, as set forth by Vatican II, then this communion must precede and provide the context for ministry. Gooley says that ministry lost its ecclesial foundation in the period prior to Vatican II, and drifted towards becoming primarily a path towards personal holiness for the person entering the priesthood or religious life; ministry became a phenomenon above, and not within, the *ecclesia*. Now, it is true that there is a shift in such a direction in subsections of the *ecclesia*, such as the Neocatechumenal Way and Opus Dei, but I would contend that these communities do not represent the wider *ecclesia*.

A communion ecclesiology permits us to recognise that the baptised are called together into fellowship with each other in the life of the Trinity. Communion and mission are intimately linked. If mission is not grounded in communion, it remains at the level of mere activity and lacks evangelical witness.

All ministries must, therefore, be ministries in communion. Therefore, ordination like all the other sacraments is an ecclesial act, and the grace received is for the life of the church. This grace of the sacrament of ordination is for the building up of the communion of the church. Prior to Vatican II, much emphasis was placed on the ontological change that was said to be brought about in the person of the priest. This almost completely obscured the teaching that baptism too brings about ontological change. To say that a sacrament effects an ontological change in a person, is to identify that change in the depths of the person and in who he or she is. Such a change affects the person's relationships with others, and, in particular, with the ecclesial communion. Those who are baptised enter into the life of the Trinity by being incorporated into the Body of Christ, and become a new creation. Likewise, the grace of ordination affects who a person is, and hence how he is related to others, namely as one now ordered to service within the community.

However, the personal and the communal dimensions of ordination within the ecclesial communion have become separated in our understanding. What has come to be emphasised is the personal dimension. Ordination has become a personal gift, a path to personal holiness, and to personal power and authority, rather than something profoundly ecclesial and an expression of the deep bonds of the mystery that is the communion in which the whole church participates.

2. Gooley, A. (2018, January). A theology not received, a practice out of time, *Australasian Catholic Record*, 95(1), 35–50.

Ministry has traditionally been something done to a passive laity, and we now have a two-tiered model of ministry. Ministry is identified with clergy, and the laity for the most part are passive recipients. Yes, there are pockets within the church where the laity is welcomed into co-leadership, but these are the exception not the rule, no matter what some current ecclesialogists try to tell us.

Descending/servant theology of priesthood

Since the thirteenth century and up until Vat II, ordination to the priesthood was the pinnacle of holy orders. A man rose up through the ranks as he made his way in the seminary through seven steps that culminated in the priesthood. These stages are still represented in some of the stained glass windows in the Sydney archdiocesan seminary chapel. This *cursus honorum*, or 'course of honours', had been in place since the 10th century. It involved four minor orders and three major orders. First came tonsure, followed by the minor orders of porter, reader, exorcist and acolyte. The major orders were subdeacon, deacon and priest. It was only in 1972 that the minor orders were renamed *ministries*, and only reader and acolyte were retained. The major orders were reduced to that of diaconate and priesthood. The bishop was not the pinnacle of this *cursus honorum* and does not appear in the sequence. Priesthood was the highest rank because, according to a long tradition exemplified by both Abelard and Aquinas, priesthood involves the power to consecrate the elements of bread and wine at the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the church. And no power is greater than that which makes the church. This is clearly an ascending theology of holy orders. A man ascends from the lower to the higher rank, reaching the pinnacle of priesthood and accumulating power as he does so.

Gooley writes that Vatican II gave the church a new way to think of ministry, as 'descending'. Perhaps a less confusing term might be as 'a model of service'. Ministry is the work of Christ made present through the Holy Spirit. This ministry comes down from the church through the Holy Spirit in the ordination rite and is received by the church as a gift from Christ in the Holy Spirit. This descending model is developed in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*,³ and the Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*.⁴

A renewed understanding

The grace of the sacrament of ordination is therefore not understood as primarily directed to the one ordained, and as a special gift that only he possesses, but rather as a grace which is directed *through* the one ordained *for* the good of the church. The ordained minister is engaged in a work of the Holy Spirit, constituting and forming the communion of the church for mission, of which he himself is a part. Vatican II was the first council to teach that episcopal ordination was a sacrament. Becoming a priest is not about ascending to a position of power and prestige, but about allowing oneself to descend to a place of service in imitation of Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. This is why the path of humility, and the psychological dynamics of repentance and self-knowledge explained by Louf, are critical to priestly formation. (We might also think here of the Rule of St Benedict in which the monk 'ascends' by 'descending' the steps of humility.)

Gooley then states, provocatively, that this descending model provides a basis for the evaluation of the effectiveness of those who have received the commission to build up the church in communion and mission. Ordained ministers may be judged as faithfully carrying out the commission or mandate they received, if those to whom they have been sent judge that the mandate has been achieved. In this model, says Gooley, evaluation is not an optional extra, but rather an essential dimension of the commission itself.

Now, lest we be tempted to think that this model exists simply within the optimistic imagination of a few academics, I came across an interesting example of the recognition of this descending model of ministry in a report about the ordination to the transitional diaconate of a young man, Anthony Vesorio Coloma, in the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle in late June of this year. In his homily, the Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Bill Wright, pointed out that: 'Anthony is being ordained not into the clergy, but for the people of this community who have come to know him.' To Anthony he said:

You've had a longish journey – it's a life story – also a story of a calling and a leading and assent. It's important to maintain that sense that we have been chosen by God.

3. See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 1964, s24–29, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

4. See Vatican Council II, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, 1965, s18–20, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html

*You are God's man – but not in the sense that 'It's me and God'. You must strive to be a person of communion – and you will always be a deacon, even though, please God, you will be ordained priest shortly.*⁵

This, I believe, is an example of what Gooley is talking about. I hope that I have done Gooley justice. His article is, as I have said, provocative and well worth thinking through.

What it will take for the reception of a descending/servant model of priesthood to replace the current model is not clear. The Royal Commission shake-up will go some way towards it, but it will also take the concerted awareness of individuals – ordained and lay alike – who are committed to the truth of the Gospel, to allow further change to occur. For it seems that, in general, the Catholic imagination still has this privileged view of the priest as someone set apart with special powers. This has resulted in two polarised responses. Firstly, there are those Catholics who no longer buy into it this model, and who now denigrate priesthood. The current crisis has reinforced their disillusionment. Secondly, there are those who staunchly maintain a focus on the special charism that attends the ordained as one set apart and imbued with supernatural uniqueness.

Screening and selection of candidates for ministry

Let's now address selection and screening of candidates for seminary formation. This process is obviously going to be affected by the prevailing ascending model of priesthood. Let us keep Andre Louf's perspective in mind here. I believe the implications of the ascending model of priesthood for selection and assessment are threefold:

Firstly, the prospective candidate is at pains to indicate that there is nothing wrong with him, at least nothing wrong that a deep belief in God's vocational call can't overcome. In this instance, any early and unresolved sexual abuse or psychological trauma may result in a young man believing that his personal worth can only be obtained by continually striving to be good, doing better, and forgetting self in the service of others and their needs.

Secondly, the young male aspirant, in their 20s, confesses a belief that he is able to forgo the fulfillment of committed spousal sexual love and the joy of children, and often does so with great conviction, but without the psychological resources to weigh up the consequences realistically and in a personal way.

Thirdly, the young male who is same-sex attracted will firmly keep the closet door shut and bolted, and attempt to forget the closet exists, only to have it flung open later when the real demands of life in middle age force him to reach into the reality of his own existence for ballast. This often happens at others' expense and with disastrous consequences for all concerned. I believe that, in dealing with this issue, the church is at its most confounded pastorally, because it is clear that the Catholic priesthood has within its ranks many, many good pastors who are gay. In 2005, the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education issued an instruction, approved by Pope Benedict XVI, solemnly entitled 'Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders'.⁶ It directed that men with a homosexual disposition should not be admitted to seminary formation and should not be priests. This statement of 13 years ago was apparently ratified by the current pope in 2016.⁷

Unfortunately, the original statement was largely influenced by the work of priest-psychologist Mgr Tony Anatrella, who apparently is himself gay, and who has recently been accused of sexually abusing seminarians who came to him for psychological assistance. Whether the charges are true is yet to be determined; however, it is the case that, in 2015, Mgr Anatrella, when addressing a group of newly ordained bishops, said that bishops were under no obligation to report matters of child sexual abuse to

5. Edstein, T. (2018, 26 June). Bless and sanctify this chosen man, *mnnnews.today*, <http://mnnnews.today/your-diocese/2018/32033-bless-and-sanctify-this-chosen-man/>

6. Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders, 2005, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html

7. See Vatican Congregation for the Clergy, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Vatican City, 8 December 2016, <http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf>

the police, and that this was a matter to be left to victims and their families.⁸ So, for the last 13 years it would appear that the legitimating authority requires that the closet door be shut tight and firmly bolted. And that legitimating authority knows very well where the closet is.

Honest conversations about an individual's sexual orientation are thus now truncated, and tend to be replaced by language which is now pious and outdated. Phrases like 'the church is a spotless bride', and 'the church is pure, and I decide to be pure and chaste to serve her', have begun to creep into seminarians' discourse. Far from indicating that the individual is delusional, it illustrates what Louf said 35 years ago: the individual will be prevented from owning his own humanity and finding within it a need for Christ, and will replace it with an idealised self-structure that may survive in the rarified atmosphere of the seminary but will be no solid base from which to minister in the fragmented ecclesiological environment that is the Catholic Church today.

In my experience of seminary formation in the early 21st century, young men who were homosexual were invited to own their sexual disposition, and although this was initially awkward, an atmosphere of honesty and sheer humanity began to be inculcated. Those in authority were endeavouring to leave behind the deformation of their own seminary days, and although uncertain at times how to shepherd a new openness and acceptance, at least then it became possible to have an honest conversation with a seminarian about his lived experience, even if it was one-to-one and behind closed doors.

Now, the question must be asked at this stage: How has this faulty anthropology, this incomplete, lopsided seminary formation and ascending model of priesthood contributed to child sexual abuse, abuse of power, and the breaking of personal and professional boundaries? The answer is intuitively obvious at one level, but extremely difficult to accurately articulate. I will have a go. In doing so, I will leave aside those isolated incidences of psychopathic personality disorder, which occur throughout the general population, and within and outside the church.

It seems that the priestly formation system, built on an anthropology that sees sex as problematic at best and sinful at worst, has been dehumanising and deforming of the humanity of individual men. This was particularly so around the mid-20th century. Richard Sipe, in his book *Sex, Priests and Power*, indicates that a young man acquires power as a reward when he joins a system that promotes at least the appearance of sexual continence. Power is the compensation for living a life that is without physical affection, sexual intimacy or parenthood.⁹

I also believe that, in some instances, there is such stark sexual immaturity and undeveloped personal awareness that some sort of sexual acting out is almost inevitable. The individual splits off an awareness of what he is doing to achieve a primitive level of psychological homeostasis. No mature thought is involved and the acting out can involve another who has less personal power, be that a child, a woman, or in some cases other men who do not pose a personal threat. Where a young man has not been treated with respect or had his humanity validated, either in his family of origin or in seminary formation, it can be difficult to esteem the individuality of the other. Occasionally, the sexual abuse suffered by a young man can be acted out when he is a priest with power. Sometimes, in less thoughtful individuals, discouraged or shamed sexual exploration of early adolescence may underpin and issue forth in rage which is then unleashed sexually on a weaker human being. And often, those good men, like my friend Cardinal Clancy, may have conformed to that faulty anthropology, because to do so was, in their minds, to do the right thing by God.

Supervision

It was no surprise to me that one of the recommendations that came from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was that all people in religious and pastoral ministry should undertake mandatory professional/pastoral supervision.¹⁰ My experience of working with clergy over

8. See Hoyeau, C. (2018, 5 July). French priest-therapist removed from ministry for alleged sexual abuse, *La Croix International*, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/french-priest-therapist-removed-from-ministry-for-alleged-sexual-abuse/7980>; Mickens, R. (2018, 6 July). The pope is officially on 'staycation', but he can't stop working, *La Croix International*, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/the-pope-is-officially-on-staycation-but-he-can-t-stop-working/8004>; Alison, J. (2018, 1 August). Homosexuality among the clergy: caught in a trap of dishonesty, *The Tablet*, <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/14068/homosexuality-among-the-clergy-caught-in-a-trap-of-dishonesty>

9. See Sipe, A W R. (1995). *Sex, Priests and Power: The Anatomy of a Crisis*, Brunner Routledge, New York.

10. Recommendations 16.25 and 16.45. See Appendix 3, Royal Commission Recommendations Directed to Religious Institutions.

many years has told me that this is a long overdue initiative. However, I later recalled a faint sense of unease that instituting this project might not be as easy as it at first seemed. Subsequent discussions with various stakeholders confirmed that faint unease. Some ordained clergy have welcomed the recommendation. However, several priests and religious have commented to me that they can't see how this will work, because 'Who can supervise a priest except a bishop, or perhaps another senior priest, at best?' I found this opinion interesting. Given that clerical paedophilia happened under episcopal supervision, there is clearly something amiss in the current accountability structure. The model of ordained ministry inherent in these comments is that of Gooley's ascending model.

If priesthood is to find its identity within the ecclesial reality that is best described as a mystery of *communion*, then it is within this *communion* that supervision should be offered (by those who have been determined suitable to offer it), as a support and enhancement that further strengthens the priest to carry out his mandate of building up the church. What might constitute such supervision? While, at first glance, this might seem rather obvious to some, it seems that supervision of persons in religious and pastoral ministry cannot be merely an imposition of the kind of professional supervision that is availed of by behavioural science professionals. What does it mean to offer supervision within a descending theology of priesthood? Is the supervisor also required to participate in a theological understanding of *communion*? Is such supervision to be considered a ministry? Addressing these questions is clearly outside the scope of this paper.

However, I would like to reference the document, *Integrity in Ministry*, which emerged out of a 29 November 2002 statement by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Here, the bishops write that they are concerned 'to respond adequately to issues of sexual abuse within the Church', and make a commitment to 'renew our resolve to follow agreed procedures' by accepting 'the need for accountability and consistency in all that we do' and to 'propose that the National Committee for Professional Standards continue to assess and refine these procedures'.¹¹ This document led to the production of a code of conduct for people in ministry in Catholic Church, *Integrity in Ministry* (2004, reprinted 2010). Section 4 of this document clearly sets out what it is proposed that clergy are required to do to maintain accountability. Section 4.1 provides that they should do this by:

- keeping abreast of literature in the area of pastoral care
- attending seminars/in-services related to pastoral care
- reflecting regularly on one's pastoral practice with a competent supervisor or colleague
- ongoing development of one's knowledge and understanding of scripture, church tradition and teaching
- remaining updated in the social sciences and disciplines that contribute to pastoral skill.¹²

Section 4.2 recommends that clergy and religious should develop and maintain the professional skills their particular ministry or way of life requires, through:

- regularly undertaking appropriate professional development
- keeping up-to-date with the literature and developments relevant to their ministry
- active membership of relevant professional associations.¹³

Clearly, the Royal Commission's recommendations are not without precedent. That these suggestions did not make much impact upon the prevailing model of ordained ministry prior to the Royal Commission, is really not surprising and surely reinforces Gooley's depiction of an ascending model of priesthood as largely prevailing.

11. A message from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to the Catholic people of Australia, <https://www.catholic.org.au/documents/493-a-message-from-the-australian-catholic-bishops-conference-to-the-catholic-people-of-australia-1/file>

12. *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia*, National Committee of Professional Standards, 2004, reprinted 2010, s4.1, <https://www.catholic.org.au/documents/1344-integrity-in-ministry-2010-1/file>

13. *ibid*, s4.2

Conclusion

The lay theologian, Rosemary Haughton has written that the most effective way of getting a religious group of people to think theologically is for something to happen to them that contradicts, or at least seems to contradict, their religious beliefs.¹⁴ She cites the example of the Babylonian exile of the Jews, chronicled in the Old Testament, as one such contradiction. The Jews had always assumed that they had constant protection as God's chosen people. Then, after a time of exile and captivity and via the patronage of a gentile king, Cyrus of Persia, it became possible for them to return to their homeland. As a result, there was a significant change in the religious thought of the people and their leaders that gave rise to much of post-exilic theology. This can be described simply as a broadening of the notion of God's will and plan. The Jews could now think of their own destiny as a key part of something much greater than their own national prosperity and significance. This change was a spiritual and theological deepening without which the full revelation of God's plan in Jesus would have been meaningless. It happened because a disastrous experience enforced it.

I wonder if it is not too much of a stretch to see the Royal Commission and its findings as one such disastrous and contradictory experience that must cause a re evaluation of our theology of ministry today. We, as members of a church, may be forced to look in a new direction and notice different things, and maybe thereby create an atmosphere in which it becomes possible for new patterns to appear between clergy and laity and for complementary forms of ministry to emerge, and within which the Holy Spirit can do its work.

Janiene Wilson is a clinical psychologist registered with the Psychology Board of Australia. She is a member of the College of Clinical Psychologists of the Australian Psychological Society, and a member of the NSW Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. Janiene lectures on human development and pastoral counselling at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, and has worked with clergy for many years, including as a psychologist at the Good Shepherd Seminary in Sydney. She has an interest in the convergence of psychology with theology and spirituality, and the unique pastoral dilemmas that the church must now face and address.

14. Haughton, R. (1972). *The Theology of Experience*, Newman Press, New York.