

A PEOPLE'S SENSE OF SACRED:
CATHOLIC IDENTITY
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH BUILDING

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
McMASTER UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
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DEDICATION

TO MY FATHER,
A CONVERT TO CATHOLICISM,
WHOSE LOVE FOR THE SYMBOLS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
DREW HIM TO THE FAITH;
AND
FOR MY MOTHER,
WHOSE ETHNIC BACKGROUND AFFECTED MY ENVIRONMENT,
AND TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE SACRED.

WITH A LOVE THAT IS NOT ALWAYS VOICED.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Fredric Roberts, who has mentored me throughout both my preparation before this project, as well as the preparation of the thesis itself. His proposal for the use of anthropological methodology in liturgical implementation was an inspiration for me.

I also deeply appreciate the contributions of the members of my doctoral committee: Dr. William Brackney, principal of McMaster Divinity College, for his encouragement and scholarly assistance; Dr. Reinhold Kerstan, for his enthusiastic support; Dr. William Wood, who assisted as Director of this doctoral program until his retirement in 1996; and Dr. Andrew Irvine, who is the current director.

I was further assisted and supported by members of my Ministry Team. I would especially like to remember the late James Platte, and also John Lindemann, for his many hours of computer assistance in programming research documents and texts.

This study would not have been possible without the support of our parish staff, who patiently carried a greater work load during my time of studies and research. I thank the seventy interviewed participants, who honestly, and with enthusiasm, shared their experience of what was sacred to them in their church building and in their Church. Their responses were rich, and the time that I spent with them yielded a critical self-reflection that will make a difference to my future ministry.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the Catholic identity of seventy Roman Catholics and how they see that identity expressed in their church buildings. These Catholics have conveyed strong emotions about their relationship with the God they have come to experience in their churches. Since the Second Vatican Council, many of their familiar religious symbols and ceremonies have been adjusted, removed or replaced. This has often left the participants expressing confusion or hurt.

This thesis recommends that pastors and liturgists benefit from some of the applied methodologies of cultural anthropology by listening to the voices of their parishioners and by sharing in their feelings that reflect the importance of these symbols. It is proposed that change and renewal may be more successful when such a process is employed.

The author interviewed forty Catholics in his own parish, a parish he knew well. Later, thirty other Catholics were asked to contribute their input. These additional voices were chosen from three parishes that had different experiences of the liturgical renewal as it affected their church buildings. The entire interview procedure took six months to complete.

The author does not propose that these seventy Catholics represent the opinions of all Catholics on the topic of Catholic identity. Proper cultural anthropological technique would demand a much longer exposure to the customs and

experience of even these Catholics so that richer fieldnotes could be assembled. The author was also aware of bias that may have existed in his role of priest/interviewer talking to parishioner/Catholic. These concerns were kept in mind as the work proceeded.

What does emerge from the research is the benefit of applying social science methodology to Christian ministry. The process of critical self-reflection affects the minister and his/her relationship with the congregation. Relationships can lead to trust, healing and understanding. The major conclusion of this research indicates that when these three elements are active, a more successful implementation of liturgical reform will be possible.

The statements that have been made by these Catholics about their Catholic identity may have a much broader implication. It may prove beneficial compare them to the voices that are heard from other congregations. The results of such studies may yield similar results concerning religious identity as it relates to the experience of the house of God.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE TOPIC

This thesis project is a qualitative study by a Roman Catholic priest of seventy Roman Catholics living in the mid-western United States. The respondents live in four different parishes of the same diocese. This research seeks to discover how Roman Catholic identity is related to the sense of sacred in the church space. In the thirty years since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), those in professional ministry positions have proposed changes in the Catholic church building that have affected this sense of sacred. Such attempts have sometimes met with rejection or criticism from Catholic parishioners.

It is the purpose of this research to propose some anthropological approaches that may assist liturgists and ministers to understand better what some of the critical voices, both professional and non-professional, are saying about how change took place in their church buildings after Vatican II, and how their concept of the nature of sacred is related to their church building. When such information is known by priests and liturgists, they may wish to use this knowledge in the process of liturgical implementation.

The approach to address the concern about Catholic identity is primarily pastoral, utilizing anthropological technique in gaining understanding, and in developing a means working toward solution. Anthropological technique

involves interviewing and observing people for an extended period of time. In a formal anthropological study, the anthropologist would have observed community events for an extended period, perhaps a year. This study has used an anthropological method with modifications and this in itself is a limitation on the results. Generalizations must be made with caution and limits. Further, the participants were not known well to the interviewer. They may not have disclosed all that they could. Fear may have been a factor. These results may be a step forward, in liturgical understanding, if mostly suggestive.

The interviewer gained many insights. The results from Parish One may be particularly significant as these participants were better known. However, interviewing those that are known well may also provide a biased sample.

This approach has raised some questions. Answers to these questions are not clear because the number of samples are low. However, this is meant to be a qualitative study. To do more in this field, additional time would have to be spent with individual communities, sharing their experiences. Each community needs to be studied in this fashion in order to yield fieldnotes that would be elaborate in content.

The results found here are meant further to stimulate pastors and liturgists to listen to their people. While I suspect that the results have general validity, those who labor in ministry at all levels may wish to consider how the results of this study have broader implications.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

In 1994 I completed an M.A. in theology at the Athenaeum of Ohio, with a concentration on liturgy. I was particularly interested in this field out of love for the liturgy and with concern for the practical aspects of my priestly ministry at worship. My thesis: "Sign and Source of Blessing: The Theology of Oil," traced the history of the soothing and healing use of ointments by human beings, and how holy oil was used in this way by the Church throughout its history as matter for sacraments.¹ I suggested that this application of oil was indeed one that affected the senses of those who participated in its use and that this effect should be recognized and further encouraged. Through the years, the use of oil had become less familiar to North American Catholics than its use had been to Christians in the early Church and elsewhere in later years. This research proved to be exciting and had an effect upon how I perceived my functioning in liturgical ministry.

Mentors in the M.A. program encouraged me to continue studies at the doctoral level. I was hesitant to continue because of the time and effort this endeavor would require. I discovered a doctoral program that could provide both further education and practical implementation while I continued in ministry. This was a good solution to my concern. Academic studies for two years would prepare me for the research which I would conduct and would assist me in being able to produce a thesis which would be a contribution to ministry.

Early in the academic work for this degree, there was a requirement to submit a preliminary thesis proposal. The topic I chose then was: "The Effects of the Sensate at Worship." I suggested that anthropology indicated that we were a living, breathing, sensate people that thrives in a culture of sign and symbol. In recent years in the church environment, many of these signs and symbols had been lost, for varied and diverse reasons. I would examine the effectiveness of signs and symbols at liturgy.

I began my second year of studies in a course called "Churches and Canadians" taught by Reginald Bibby, a noted Canadian sociologist of religion. I was enthusiastic about this course for its practical value. It was based on statistical data, and it was informative in relating what Christians were saying by their attendance, or lack of attendance, in Christian Churches across Canada. It was Bibby's intention to assist me in looking at tangible ways in which Churches can get in touch with their members, minister to their diverse needs and interests, and in the process find new life in the Church. I prepared a paper for the course entitled, "Affiliates Alienated by Liturgical Change: Addressing the Need". In that paper there was reflection upon the statistical analysis of church attendance in the Catholic Church since Vatican II. The research examined what both parishioners and scholars were saying about the response of the people in regards to what they had seen happen in their churches since Vatican II. It is my argument in that paper that the needs of the people

can and must be addressed by the Church. As I hope to be a leader in the third millenium of Christianity and I am concerned with the future structural appearance of the Catholic Church, a study of both history and current trends seems essential.

The knowledge I gained from this course experience could also benefit my future research. "Churches and Canadians" provided me with valuable groundwork in preparation for listening to what some Catholics would say about their worship space.

As I moved towards the preparation of a formal thesis proposal, I recognized the need for research into the field of religious ritual studies. I wished to attain some background in ritual and better understand how ritual affected people's lives. Further, I wanted to understand what religious ritual means to people as I participate, encourage and implement liturgical renewal. This I dicovered I would be able to do at the University of Notre Dame, an institution renowned for its expertise in liturgical studies and for its distinguished faculty. In addition, I was currently a member of the Liturgy Network organization at Notre Dame, which is a gathering of liturgists with graduate degrees in liturgical studies from across the United States and Canada. This society is dedicated to keeping liturgists informed about liturgical developments and keeping them in touch with each other.

The Rev. Dr. John Melloh is the director of the homiletics and liturgical studies program at Notre Dame. He agreed to

assist me in a course on ritual studies. Ritual studies is a relatively new field within religious studies which differentiates and relates its task to liturgical theology, symbolic anthropology, art criticism, history of religions and psychology of religion.² A noted scholar in the field of ritual studies is Ronald Grimes. He earned a Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1970, and since that time has conducted research in ritual, performance, and story-telling. He is currently teaching at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. According to Grimes, the major goals of ritual studies are to mediate between normative and descriptive as well as textual and field-observational methods, to lay the groundwork for coherent theory that can account for the free range of symbolic acts, and to study ritual in a manner that does not automatically assume it to be a dependent variable.³

My many trips to South Bend yielded inspiration, theory and reflection. I was better able to understand how ritual affects people and what ritual means to people as I participate, encourage, and implement liturgical renewal.

Two particular texts assisted in this understanding. Ronald Grimes' Ritual Criticism made it clear to me how rites can be found wanting, can be improved upon, and can even fail.⁴ Any action can be ritualized, but not every action is a rite. I learned from Grimes that ritual criticism involves discovering, formulating, ritualizing and questioning presuppositions and criteria. The way to remain faithful to the Christian tradition is to adapt the liturgy

to culture.⁵ In another of his writings, Beginnings in Ritual Studies, Grimes defines the Christian in terms of gesture rather than in terms of theology.⁶ Ritual is an activity to be studied in a field. The methodology consists of the map of formal categories and questions that are carried into such a field. I learned how ritual is broader than liturgical ritual, as people invest their spaces with a sense of significance. There are more rituals than formal ceremonies and more ideas in people's minds that they might personally construct about their sense of sacred times and spaces. These revelations made me want to study more about how Catholics are reacting to the rituals they are experiencing. I then searched the university library for reference materials that would further assist me. I informed Dr. Melloh and other contacts at Notre Dame of my search, and it was through them that I was able to discover an anthropologist who would serve as an instructor for a final course. The Center for Pastoral Liturgy directed my attention to an article in Liturgy Digest.⁷

VOICES CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

In his article "Conversations Among Liturgists," Fredric Roberts, who at the time was acting chair of the anthropology department at Michigan State University, described a situation that was indeed my own.⁸ I considered myself a liturgist and all the alarms of recognition were ringing. He portrayed liturgists since Vatican II as feeling that they have been on the front line most of their

adult lives."⁹ I felt that. He described the "only force powerful enough to sustain liturgists" through the storm of criticism was "love, love for the liturgy."¹⁰ That was true for me. Roberts wrote that "Self is very much defined by the voices of the surrounding others."¹¹ This was my experience. He said that liturgists often find themselves in the job of liturgical policemen and are resented for it.¹² I had been in that position many times. In the past I had been asked to "police" or enforce the regulations of liturgical documents as they were put into effect in ceremonies at the local level.

Roberts proposed that as liturgists minister to Catholics it would be prudent to examine some issues raised by anthropologists. He came to this opinion after he interviewed and observed liturgists as they practiced their craft. He heard the voices of liturgists telling of their "bruised and battered" condition because of the reaction of some Catholics. These liturgists noted that they were attempting to do what they felt was implementation of the liturgical reform.¹³ Dr. Roberts also believed as an anthropologist that if he really wanted to understand a community or a culture, this would require listening to as many of its significantly varied voices as possible.¹⁴ He recognized that liturgists had selectively used anthropology, yet they further needed to look at themselves, at their relationship with the laity, and at how they were constructing the perceived problem between their message and its reception by the laity. An openness to dialogue was

proposed by looking at the self and at others. Anthropologists use a method that recommends self-reflection as they examine the behavior of others. Their experience is often one of alienation from their own societies. Liturgists may face a similar alienation as they labor to promote the liturgical reforms of Vatican II.

When Roberts visited Notre Dame in 1995, he suggested that some of the cornerstones of the Notre Dame approach to ritual that were attributed to anthropological insights may be in need of radical re-thinking.¹⁵ The existence of primal symbols and the need for the liberal use of symbols may be some examples. In my M.A. thesis I had embraced the liberal use of symbols theory when I proposed that a more generous use of holy oil might make the symbol more effective. What I have encountered since in my pastoral experience is that some of my academic approaches may be in conflict with what I am able to do pastorally. In my experience some Catholics have not received such use of symbols well.

Roberts noted that

Critical analysis of current liturgical theories and practice from the perspective of cultural-anthropology is appropriate if it helps liturgists develop a sort of healthy, critical detachment toward contemporary issues that many now have attained towards their earlier efforts at liturgical reform as a result of increasing historical distance.¹⁶

He also related

...findings and concepts have unconsciously reflected culturally constructed fears, desires, fantasies, alienation and power agendas of the researcher's self...¹⁷

Questions have been raised concerning fieldwork (participant observation) and ethnographies written from the process as the observer is part of the traditions of western academia.

Roberts suggested that liturgists take seriously the concepts of participant observation, culture, and thick description, incorporating into their own theory and practices some fundamental criticisms of those approaches.¹⁸

He further submitted that

...in order to move beyond current intense conflicts with others in the Church, (liturgists) need to develop a dialogical approach to self/other relationships, including a critical self-examination of themselves in terms of reflexivity and of representation.¹⁹

Liturgists must consider "whether there are elements in their own selves... (e.g., tastes) that could distort and seriously limit their understanding of others' experience."²⁰ It was his hope that liturgists would better advance liturgical reform if they listened and tried to comprehend the voices of their people.

As I read more, I began to believe that there might be some hope in this anthropological method that Roberts was proposing. I contacted him at his university, and he agreed to introduce me to the methodology as I pursued an academic course with him. If this method answered some questions for me, Roberts could also assist me in a later thesis project.

WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHOD?

Roberts and I decided on a course in which I would learn

about anthropological methods so that I could use some of these methods for research and analysis related to liturgical issues. I was willing to take on the hat of an anthropologist and use methods of the discipline in my quest for knowledge. The readings and the literature of the course examined anthropologists as they practiced their craft. I wanted to understand better the method of research proposed by anthropologists.

One of the first concepts that I noticed was participant observation. Clifford Geertz, of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton New Jersey, spoke of descriptive images in anthropological reports and the importance of the sense of "truly being there" as being essential to the anthropologist.²¹ Dr. Roberts wrote of the practice of a highly-descriptive form of participant observation.²² It was possible to observe a culture to some extent, but difficult for the observer to claim total objectivity.

The readings in this course related how anthropologists practiced participant observation. They observed behavior, listened to voices, and talked to participants. As this process continued, they wrote a detailed account of their experiences called fieldnotes. Those fieldnotes were later written in the form of texts. Those texts were put through more transformations before the final product was composed.

Jean Jackson is the former head of the Department of Anthropology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She received her Ph.D. from Stanford University, and has conducted research in indigenous rights in the north-west

Amazon region. She has written articles concerning ethnography. Jackson's article "I Am a Fieldnote," found in Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology, described the process of taking fieldnotes.²³ I discovered here how I would learn in my research to supply context and use my notes as a device for triggering new analysis. Rena Lederman is associate professor of anthropology at Princeton University. Her interests in research include the fields of socio-cultural anthropology, feminism and anthropology, and gender. She has carried out detailed research into the practice of gift-exchange among the natives of Papua-New Guinea. Lederman's article in the same book, "Pretexts for Ethnography: On Reading Fieldnotes," introduced three types of fieldnotes: daily logs, typed files and personal journals. She also described the point of ethnography as inviting the reader to share her field experience.²⁴ James Clifford's article: "Notes on Fieldnotes," related three distinct moments in fieldnotes: 1) inscription: a recall of what has been said referring to a prior list; 2) transcription: an answer to a response; and 3) description: a coherent representation of observed cultural reality.²⁵ These readings made it clear that ethnography cannot, in practice, maintain a constant descriptive relationship to cultural phenomenon. There must also be the element of the personal involvement of the ethnographer.

A good example of ethnography was found in reading The Madonna of 115th Street,²⁶ the work of Robert Orsi, a professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He has

done research in gender and piety in American Catholics. This book told the story of a group of Italians in New York City and how their ancestors had immigrated from Italy in the nineteenth century. They brought with them a particular devotion to the Madonna. These people could not live without their roots. A great change had happened in people's lives because of immigration and this change would affect what was acted out in culture. The Madonna became the symbol of their fate and the annual festa was the place where they could watch and act out their fate in the streets. This bonding of the people with the Madonna called attention to the bond of their community and their homes. I was particularly moved as I read this account and related to the experiences of this group of Italian people with whom I share a common cultural heritage. To learn more I called a priest who currently works in the parish described in the book. He was a native son and had translated a book about the devotion to the Madonna. He sent me a copy of that book, which proved to be another side of the story, written from a priest's perspective. The Crowning of a Queen told of how the parish priests carried out their duties in ministering to the Italians of the region who wanted to continue their devotional customs. This also enriched understanding.

Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn was another example of reporting using anthropological methodology.²⁷ This book was written by Karen McCarthy Brown. She received her Ph.D. from Temple University in 1976, and has studied extensively the topics of the sociology and anthropology of

religion. Her research has covered the field of structural analysis in Caribbean religion, especially on women and in Haiti. This book was a remarkable account. The author constructed a portrait of the vodou religion as lived by Mama Lola and the people closest to her. The author eventually was accepted into that close society. As she traced that path, a chorus of voices could be heard, including Mama Lola, the scholarly and intimate voices of the author, and the voices of the spirits of Haitian vodou that playfully told ancestral tales. The spirit of the peasant farmer "Azaka" reminded me of the spirit of the Italians of 115th street, as he reminded devotees of their roots in Haiti and their need for family. The story of the author's relationship with Mama Lola is one of healing transformation from mistrust to acceptance. The author realized that the stories only have authority in the territory between cultures and so she bridged her culture and Mama Lola's culture. She constantly referred to her reactions and feelings. She showed how ethnographic research is a form of human relationship.

The skills in fieldnote-taking and methodology that I learned in this course were put into practice when I attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Center for Pastoral Liturgy at Notre Dame in December 1995. I recorded fieldnotes as the conference progressed, and I was able to recognize how language was used, the type of questions that were asked, and the reactions to what was said. I acted as participant-observer for the first time.

What I will attempt to do in this thesis will be similar. I will recount the story of this particular group of interviewed Catholics describing to the reader the effects of their Catholic heritage as they relate to their church building.

Throughout the course I interviewed members of my local parish. My method was to take advantage of the skills which I had learned in participant observation. Roberts had suggested this method in his instruction to liturgists of the Liturgy Network at Notre Dame for a proposed project on American Catholic identity and the Church. I would follow that suggestion in my observations. Participant observation is complex. I would not only be listening to the voice of the person as he or she spoke, but I would also be trying to understand the "how" of what had occurred. I noted the home environment and how this related to what each person said about the church environment. I wanted to hear stories and the memories of each person's past and experiences in his or her childhood home. I wanted to know about their ethnic background and customs. What was not said in an interview could be significant. Further, I wanted to note my own reactions to the experience and to the person. I attempted not to impose my own agenda on the other person by being aware of what I saw and and what I heard from each person on which I might agree or disagree. These statements and reflections were recorded in fieldnotes notes to be reflected upon at a later time.

This method would become the procedural focus for future

research. If my hypothesis was correct, then this method should have some effect on ministry in proposing a sensitive and fruitful implementation of liturgical change.

BEGINNING THE RESEARCH

In December of 1995, Roberts had invited Liturgy Network members of the University of Notre Dame's Center for Pastoral Liturgy to participate in an ongoing project (Appendix A). The research had flowed from his article in Liturgy Digest and a seminar he directed at the Pastoral Liturgy Conference at Notre Dame University the previous June. Originally, the project was intended to encourage liturgists to interview people on the issue of the placement of the tabernacle in the church. In recent years some liturgists had experienced controversies over tabernacle placement and other concerns surrounding environment and art in Catholic worship.²⁸ When some regional liturgists gathered with Roberts in Chicago in November 1995, they discussed whether the tabernacle controversy was not better approached as expression of a broader issue: the conflicting views that might exist about Catholic identity. They also hoped that liturgists would become better listeners and reflect upon their relationships with their fellow Catholics. I participated in this project, submitting two interviews that were disseminated for reflection in December 1995. In light of the much larger study I was to undertake, these interviews could be described as preparatory.

To begin my own thesis research, I planned to solicit the

support of many Catholic individuals who had experienced the liturgical renewal in the Catholic Church from 1963-1996. It was my intention to focus on an age group of people who would remember the pre-Vatican II Tridentine liturgy, would have seen it change, would have experienced the years of experimentation and implementation of changes, and would have developed opinions about these experiences which they were willing to share. It was also my intention to reflect upon how this experience may be similar to any experience of change that might occur in anyone's life. In this way, some universals on the experience of change might apply and be cross-referenced.

THE LITURGICAL RENEWAL

It may be important at this point to explain the background of the impetus for renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church was held in Rome from October 11, 1962 through December 8, 1965. Heralded as a great ecumenical council, it gathered together the bishops of the Catholic Church from around the world.²⁹ It was the hope of Pope John XXIII, who convoked the council, that one day there would again be unity among all Christians. He expressed his hopes for the future with the words "ut unum sint," that they may be one.

Since Vatican II, Church leadership has attempted to implement the Council documents. There has been a great impact on Roman Catholics as they try to understand what is 'Catholic' in their lives. The first document to emerge from

the Council was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The sessions held by the bishops on liturgy were completed first, and the document was approved on December 4, 1963. Implementation of this document by Church officials would be the first test of how the vision of the Council would be visibly carried out. More than a theological discussion would be sensed; the renewal of the liturgical life of the faithful would be noticed immediately as they experienced their Sunday celebrations. Those in professional ministry positions proposed changes in the church building that were based on their interpretations of the documents of Vatican II and the various commentaries that were later published. An immediate effect of the reform was the celebration of Mass in the vernacular. A second and very visible alteration was the placement of the altar in such a position in the sanctuary so that the priest would be able to face the congregation while standing behind the altar. This produced some concerns. Many churches had large high altars, difficult or impossible to move without destruction. The tabernacle was often on the high altar and served as a central focus. Roman Catholic teaching on the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist states that Christ is actually present in the form of bread and wine from the moment the Eucharistic Prayer is said by the priest. Whatever is not consumed by the faithful at that Mass is placed in a tabernacle and is meant to be taken to the sick when needed at a later time. Secondly, the reserved species are placed in the tabernacle for what the document Holy

Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass

5 (1973), calls "the giving of Communion and the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the sacrament."

Devotion for the Eucharist reserved in this way has been emphasized by the Catholic faithful in the past with the customs of genuflecting to the tabernacle in central focus, the use of a constantly burning lamp to indicate Christ's presence, and the continual reverence given to the tabernacle throughout ceremonies. Jesus is God, and God is present in the church building at this location. To avoid perceptions of disrespect, such as the priest having his back to the tabernacle, during post-Vatican II renovations, many churches decided to move the tabernacle to a side position, removed from the focal range of the celebration of the Mass.

From time to time in the last thirty years, I have heard the concern arise from many of my parishioners about the placement of the tabernacle. Liturgists have taken seriously and have implemented the Roman instruction Eucharisticum Mysterium (1966), which states:

Consequently, on the grounds of sign value, it is more in keeping with the nature of the celebration that, through reservation of the sacrament in the tabernacle, CHRIST not be present Eucharistically from the beginning on the altar where Mass is celebrated. That presence is the effect of the consecration and should appear as such.³⁰

The same document also emphasized the presence of Christ in the assembly of the faithful, in the Word, and in the person of the minister. The text encouraged that the

faithful be instructed in the principal modes that the Lord is present to his Church in liturgical celebrations. These modes were recorded in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 7. Encouragement to place the tabernacle in a separate chapel suitable for private prayer was also found in subsequent documents including Inter Oecumenici, 95 (1964), Eucharisticum Mysterium, 53 (1966), Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, 9 (1973), The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 276 (1975), Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, (USA) 78 (1978), The Code of Canon Law, 938.2 (1983), and The Ceremonial of Bishops, 910 (1984).

WHERE HAVE THEY TAKEN MY LORD?

In recent years complaints about liturgical renewal have been made by some Catholics to the Catholic bishops of the United States. Some of these complaints referred directly to the directive concerning tabernacle placement.³¹ This shift of focus was one of the first of what was reported to the bishops by some of the laity to be a long line of poorly communicated strikes against the sense of sacred of many Catholics. According to these protesters the reasons were either not explained to the faithful, or, what is more significant, the protesters did not accept the reasons given as valid. These protesters did not feel they were listened to, and changes such as tabernacle placement and standing during the Eucharistic Prayer were imposed on them. Those who did express some concern to me regarding the tabernacle

placement recounted that they were not confused or distracted by the presence of the tabernacle in the sanctuary during the celebration of Mass. Yet, the reason given to them for the move was that this adjustment would avoid confusion. They have indicated that they are concentrating during Mass on the actions of the priest and the ministers.

The protest of some of the laity in many parts of the United States and elsewhere, has evoked deep concern among the liturgical community. A fear has been expressed that the bishops might consider halting or delaying the reforms in light of the widespread concerns over the tabernacle issue, as well as other concerns about art and architecture, and rubrics.³² Some bishops have already begun to question the translations of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). This body of liturgists was established by the bishops of the English-speaking countries to oversee the translations of the official Roman texts into English. The expertise of this Commission would also include answering questions on the implementation of those texts at diocesan and parish levels. In the past ICEL had made recommendations to the American bishops on translations for some of the prayers at Mass. Articles have appeared in Catholic newspapers in response to the proposed translations.³³ ICEL refers back to arguments that occurred in 1973 questioning the rationale behind the use or lack of use of specific words. Some people wanted absolute and literal translation with little concern of how this would

sound when proclaimed in public. ICEL made the point that there are different syntaxes in language that make language intelligible. Objections arose again from the laity in 1984, when ICEL briefed the Bishops' Commission on the Liturgy concerning the texts for the Ordinary Time of the Church year. A doctoral dissertation at the University of Notre Dame has recorded ICEL's work and the reactions that have come from various sources.³⁴

Lectionary and Sacramentary translations are also in question at this time. The bishops have begun to make decisions on these matters, but at present they seem to have paused to reflect upon the reaction they are receiving from some American Catholics. Obviously, the question of the translation and the tabernacle placement is part of the wider issues concerning the church building and its symbols.

MANY VOICES, ONE CHURCH

This seeming polarization between the voices of those opposing liturgical reform and the voices of those promoting liturgical reform may not be polarity as much as polyphony. The fact that there has been an organized reaction in the American Church is evidenced by the plethora of articles and letters to the editor that have appeared in many American Catholic newspapers in recent years. These articles report the emergence of organized groups with hopes that their voices will be heard by the hierarchy to whom they appeal. These groups have agendas that are more than simply the classic reaction of conservatives against liberals.³⁵

Monsignor M. Francis Mannion, president of the newly formed Society for Catholic Liturgy, has developed his own classification which describes the voices that he has heard coming from current-day Catholic circles. I have given this proposal the title: "The Mannion Typology." Mannion has emphasized that he is neither attempting to classify everyone in a particular box, nor is he saying that everyone is able to be placed in one category or another. It may be noted in this research that it is possible to observe the respondents exhibiting characteristics such as those described by Mannion. Briefly, these are: (a) those whose principal agenda is advancing the reform of Vatican II and its subsequent documents; (b) those who advocate restoring the pre-conciliar liturgy; (c) those who propose the the Church return to the beginning of the reform and begin again; (d) those who embrace an enculturation agenda (that liturgy must strongly reflect the culture to which it is present and that this element may be more important than adhering to the universal texts); and (e) those who promote the recovery of the elements of Catholic heritage, ethos and architecture. As this thesis proceeds, there is hope for some discovery of what underlies this typology and how it applies to those Catholics that were interviewed.

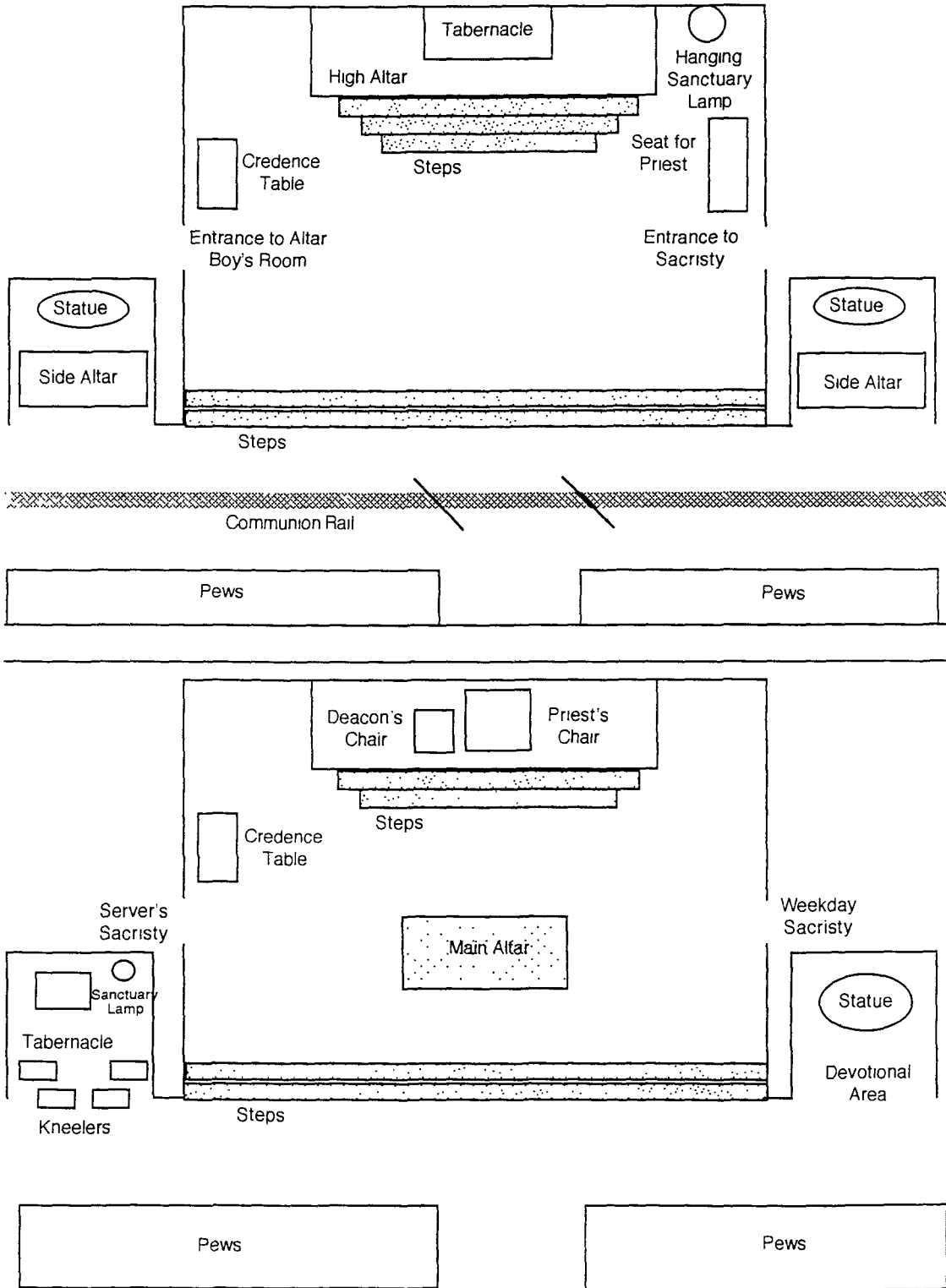
Mannion also made a contribution to the study of the people's sense of sacred when he spoke at the South-West Liturgical Conference Week in Salt Lake City, January, 1996:

My first thesis is that architecture plays neither a social nor merely a functional role, but rather a sacramental role in Christian worship;

the place of worship is neither temple
or meeting house, but sacramental
dwelling.³⁶

This research wholeheartedly supports Mannion's point. Many Catholics who were interviewed responded that their church is the house of God for them. . This is not in opposition to the church being the house of the Church. Mannion calls these two aspects "mutually constitutive."³⁷ These points will be developed, as well as other relevant views on church art and architecture in the following pages.

Example of the Sanctuary of a Roman Catholic Church
Before and After the Renewal



MY OWN INTERVIEW

I would be remiss if I did not locate myself in this research. The context of my own background is pertinent. My religious formation was nourished by a positive experience of religion in the home, and in twelve years of Catholic school. I hear stories from others around me who do not relate tales of such a positive reception in their formative years. My reaction was one of respect for authority, love of history, and love of symbols as they are found in the liturgy. The strong presence of ethnicity in my family only encouraged these elements. My experience of my Italian background was that my mother's family exhibited many traditions and customs that involved the use of family heirlooms as a point of reference. I remember these family events with warmth and have perpetuated their celebration in my adult years.

It is important to realize that my teenage years coincided with the beginnings of implementation during and after Vatican II. I do not remember being jarred by this renewal, although I distinctly recall being less than impressed with the revolution occurring in society around me.

On the day I was ordained twenty years ago, I was ready to accept a mission: to faithfully advance the reforms of Vatican II. This mission has often placed me in a great deal of stress. There are so many voices that have opposed the reform agenda. I find that in pleasing one voice, another is alienated. I am told that it is impossible to please everyone. I reluctantly agree. Yet, something is missing.

Certainly it must be possible to attain a sense of peace amid the voices. As a priest, I believe that I must be a listener. My ministry, and what I see as the very nature of ministry, is to listen. One listens first to the Word of God, and then to the voice of God which is a call to Christian vocation. In choosing to be servant, I find myself called to bring the Good News to others. It is natural for me to ask: Am I being heard? It is good also for me to ask: Is the message I bring, from time to time, affected by my own agenda, which has been to promote the official reform? I believe prayer before action is a good axiom. Further, I am directed to listen to what others are saying and feeling. More and more in today's Catholic Church, people will tell you exactly what they feel about how you function in ministry. This would not be evident in the behavior of anyone who would subscribe to a model that would see their priest as a person beyond criticism.

No matter what the response may be to me as I minister, if I truly love others, should I not attempt to understand them so as to better serve them? What is their experience? How can it enrich my own? How is God speaking to me, consoling me, or even directing me through the lives and experiences of others? Throughout this investigation I have asked myself these questions.

AVOIDING THAT GLAZED EXPRESSION

Armed with the above experiences, I felt that I had reached the point where I could go out and begin the

interview process. My initial fear was that I would experience that glazed expression coming from those I questioned who would not understand the language of liturgists. For example, it was common for me to refer to their church as a "worship space." This may not be the way the person that was interviewed thought about his or her church. How was I to speak in the language that would be understood? I had already done extensive research into my own parishioners and their parish history in the first two years of this degree program. One of the courses in the first year studied the Church and ministry in historical perspective. Roles and methodologies in contemporary ministry were discussed in the context of the Church's history. I learned about social science methodology and its use for answering questions concerning the Church as a social institution. I conducted a self-analysis of my ministry in light of historical roles witnessed in ministry. The final paper developed an organizational history of my congregation, noting social, economic, and ecclesial factors. I also analysed the theological heritage and denominational tradition.

An on-going project that was required throughout the first scholastic year was the preparation of a diagnostic analysis that included a community profile, a record of leadership and ministerial roles, financial and numerical data, and facility and space usage. The project for year two was an exercise to build upon the diagnostic analysis that had been prepared. There was a requirement to produce a strategic

plan with the assistance of team members chosen at the parish. Together, a plan was prepared which reflected the needs of the parish, set priorities, and provided reasonable and accomplishable goals.

When this process was initiated, I hoped to clarify what was the long-range goal of the parish and to create objectives, strategies and tactics to achieve that goal. The methodology of this project was instrumental in achieving that clarification as well as initiating action. This process made it clear to me that collaboration is essential in such an endeavor. I also noted that my parishioners needed leadership and are willing to take leadership roles. Parishioners were anxious to respond once they saw that their leadership was serious about encouraging growth and willing to take the action required so that it might occur. This experience re-inforced the need in me to show my parishioners that I was willing to listen to them. I only needed to make it known to them that I believed that their input was essential in building up the parish family. It also had to be made clear that the finished product, as well as the direction in which we would proceed, were created by them and not a creation imposed on them. It would then be possible for the parishioners to take ownership of the projects that would be proposed.

This is what I feel is practical ministry in the collaborative model, a model which I embrace. This method is reflected in the process of this thesis. I will be listening to what people are saying about their sensibility of the

sacred in their church building, and I eventually hope to propose an implementation method for liturgical renewal which will be inclusive and collaborative in nature.

In light of the research that was conducted locally, I began this project by choosing Catholics in my own parish from the various dimensions of parish life. I chose the long-time faithful, the active ministry participants, present and former staff, representatives of the various weekend Masses, members of organizations, school parents, liturgy commission members, and those involved in past renovations of the church building. I attempted to write a qualitative description of the parish. Social class, sex, and age were included. Who were the major people involved and what were their relationships to the parish history? I examined the significant dimensions of parish life. As I had been a member of this local community for three years, I had a head start as we shared some experiences in common.

Forty individuals were interviewed in this stage one process. I proceeded by visiting each person in the home environment.³⁸ In this, I was following the instructions for Roberts' Catholic identity survey in which I participated. I felt that this visit was important for various reasons. Primarily, it was important to see the sights and symbols found in each Catholic home. I wished to note how their experience of being Catholic was reflected in each particular environment. This aspect continually proved beneficial in confirming what was said with what was lived out. This can be described as the reality of "habitat".

My concern with context was referenced regularly. How was I welcomed? How was I perceived? Would the fact that I was a priest affect the responses? What were all the externals and what did they say to me? How did I respond to the stimuli? How did I respond to each person? What was unique about this story? A continual reference to context would be necessary so as to keep the interview authentic.

On completion of this sample of local parishioners, I chose to interview thirty Catholics from three other churches in the same diocese. I contacted the offices of those parishes and received lists of Catholics that were taken from the various aspects of parish life and ministry. The pastors each gave their permission for their parishioners to be contacted. Many of these Catholics were informed by the parish as a means of introduction before my initial contact.

Each of these churches had experienced an aspect of liturgical renewal different than the first parish. The second church was built within the last ten years. Parishioners had all brought their experiences of previous church spaces with them to this new building. What would be important to them in that new environment? Did they create this space or was the environment created by someone else? Did they take ownership of their church today?

The third congregation had experienced a complete renovation of the sanctuary space only. I was particularly interested in the responses relating to focus. The sanctuary is traditionally the center of liturgical activity.

The fourth parish church was completely gutted and renovated twenty years ago. Archival records indicated that this was a time of great upheaval. What would the reaction be after all these years? What was learned from this experience and what was stored by them for future reference?

The addition of voices from these three other parishes would qualitatively enrich my listening experience. In the coming chapters I will present to the reader the results and implications of what was voiced by the Catholics I interviewed.

VISITING THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews always began with the question which Professor Roberts recommended in his research proposal: "What makes your church building Catholic for you?" I often noticed that such a question needed clarification. Each person understood from a voluntarily signed agreement that they were being confidentially interviewed about their opinions on liturgical implementation since Vatican II.³⁹ On this topic everyone seemed to have an opinion. Some reacted with emotion; others responded intellectually. However, in responding to what is "Catholic," a slight pause usually ensued. Perhaps a clarification would be necessary: "What are the things in your church building that make it Catholic for you?" This inquiry led people to respond repeatedly as to what objects or decorations in their church were specifically "Catholic" to them. There was often a comparison made to the furnishings in their church that are

not found in the non-Catholic churches of their acquaintance. They preferred to see these appointments as evidence that they were truly in a Catholic church.

The attempt was not made to adhere rigidly to a list of questions or identify a patterned set of answers. The questions asked rather flowed from those unique responses given by individuals. I would only later reflect upon how they were similar or different. I noted whether they confirmed my experience or whether they were refreshingly surprising. There was one further question that was asked of all participants: "How did you develop this opinion?" I wanted to know what they had read and to whom they talked about such interests. What external education process was occurring in their lives? It was important, again for the sake of context, that I understood how their opinions were developed. Who were these people listening to? I had accepted the fact that the liturgical debate had become a recurring media topic. Was the person that I was interviewing responding or reacting to these stimuli? These questions and this methodology followed the direction of Dr. Roberts, who had recommended the procedure, both in my course with him, and in his recommendations to the Liturgy Network members at Notre Dame.

The results from my questions show that Catholics are not living in a vacuum. Indeed, they are listening, reading and sharing their opinions. Their concerns are sometimes confirmed when they hear the opinions of their fellow Catholics. It may be recalled that these were the same

people with the glazed expression on their faces. They were the ones who do not quite understand the language that was being spoken to them by those who promote liturgical renewal.

What is significant is that they are in fact listening and that they find the information coming from those voices unacceptable when they relate it to their own experience. Such changes as those relating to what is placed in liturgical space and what is removed from liturgical space may be examples of what some Catholics see as their experience. This may be an affront to those of us who, in the spirit of loving the liturgy, are simply trying to advance faithfully the reform. It is at the heart of the deep frustration and disappointment felt by liturgists who rightfully feel unappreciated and certainly are disrespected when they are mocked as "terrorists" or "the liturgy police." The interviews confirm that the liturgists' feelings are to some extent accurate and justified. Such has also been my experience. This thesis attempts to propose another path, one that I have chosen to travel to see if answers to this dilemma may be found with the assistance of cultural anthropology.

CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION

In proposing an anthropological methodology, the reader is asked to embrace an ethnographic approach to the voices I have experienced in my fieldwork. It is my intention to assist in the understanding of something of interest which

has perhaps not yet been practiced by liturgists, a sharing of field experience. This experience has directed me toward a re-thinking of received categories and a re-orientation of perspective, in other words, critical self-reflection. I have been, and will continue to be, part of this experience, unable to separate myself from the others involved. The understanding of Catholics and their culture has required that as many as possible of significantly varied voices be heard. This has been kept in mind when choosing participants.

ACCOUNTABILITY

It has been a concern to protect the confidentiality of the people I interviewed. A clear statement of ethics was provided to each participant (Appendix B), and each pastor (Appendix C). In response to this understanding, no names are used in reporting individuals or parishes. There is a realization that my relationship with the material indicates my familiarity with the respondents locally. I do not sense that these responses contain material that would cause harm or prejudice against any person or group. Avoiding such a possibility has been a priority in the trust relationship that is held sacred. Therefore, there is information which has been received during the interviews that is unable to be included for fear of compromising the confidentiality as promised in the statement of agreement. Parishioners, liturgists and pastors continue to work together in ministry despite the possibility of minor differences in opinion.

They have often developed a working agreement that could be affected by a third party such as myself. Such questions might be perceived as an intrusion or may unappreciatively bring a study of that working relationship to the forefront. On several occasions I noticed a hesitancy to respond to questions that related to such relationships and how the parties involved were affected by them. I believe that the interview agreement sufficiently addressed the concern for confidentiality, and I was careful to assure that each participant understood its principles. The fact that some information made known to me has been omitted does not greatly affect the validity of the material that I will present. It is my belief that some statements could have been reinforced by including specific statements. However, that decision could have risked revealing the identities of the participants, a breach of ethics that I was not willing to permit.

The reader should be aware that my own personal experiences are also elements in hearing, reporting and responding to interview materials. I have attempted to reflect upon what was said, and to report exactly what was reported to me, within the context of the personal experience of the interviewed individuals. Fieldnotes that I recorded at the time were committed to text immediately after the interviews. Later, after some time had passed by which it was possible for me to assimilate the wealth of input, I analysed those responses and created additional text. My own input was also noted, so as not to confuse or

impose my own subjective material upon the responses of those Catholics who were interviewed.

In the beginning, I may have been guilty of imposing an agenda upon my participants. I expected to hear that the placement of the tabernacle was a problem in their notions of how the sacred had been affected in their church building. Indeed, the true presence of the Eucharist is a tenet of faith for which this particular generation of Catholics has been catechized. The general consensus seemed to point to the fact that they had observed a noticeable lack of devotion and reverence for the Eucharist compared to the experience they had prior to Vatican II. However, what did surprise me was that the majority did not point to the tabernacle as the primary focal point that makes their church Catholic. They would immediately react to its importance if encouraged, but the question was rather one of their concern for a focus rather than the focus. When they observed the removal of symbols, color and objects, this seemed to strike at the heart of a need for touchstones that elicit feelings of home and belonging. There was no reaction that these things were a distraction. In fact, there was a constant reporting that they had no problem focusing upon the liturgical moment, despite the many symbols that could abound in the worship space. The arguments from some liturgists about distraction and lack of focus did not seem to apply to them. "The real distraction," claimed one gentleman who had weathered the storm, "is not having those (symbols) which I loved."

OTHER RESPONSES

There are more common concerns of note, and I will discuss them in future chapters. Many of those I interviewed replied that they were not ready for changes when they occurred. This pertains to the issue of communication directly, and the fact that the information about changes that has been relayed to the faithful by those in authority may not have been accepted by many Catholics.

Trust is a critical issue. There is an element of the assembly who are beginning to believe that some changes may be a mis-interpretation of the documents of Vatican II.⁴⁰ They have seen changes come and go as often as their priests and liturgists. It has led them to believe and to remark that the Church cannot seem to make up its mind on these concerns. Other Catholics are beginning to trust that if they wait long enough the old ways will be back. They have seen this happen with fashion trends.

What are Catholics looking for when they enter a Catholic church? What do they expect to see? Why? Repeatedly, respondents speak of a sense of respect for the sense of history. What is history for them? Much of history is their history, their experiences. I will listen to those experiences and attempt to learn from them.

CATHOLIC, WITH A CAPITAL C

The responses that have been received from those that were interviewed reflect serious concerns about the nature of contemporary Catholic identity. I have had the opportunity,

through research and parochial experience, to attain a new insight into some people's feelings of what they have heard or understood about liturgical change throughout the past thirty-three years.

It has been indicated that the first question to these individuals was: "What makes a church building Catholic for you?" Their answers reveal their concept of what it means to be Catholic in this age. It is my contention that Catholics take a certain ownership of their church building that goes beyond the ritualistic and public expressions that occur there.

Specifically, this research has brought me to the conclusion that Catholics may often see their building as a religious haven, in and of itself, apart from public liturgy. There has been a reaction against any attempt to develop a liturgical space which seems to consider the purpose of the church building as only a place for public worship.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy directed:

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of liturgy.⁴¹

Direction such as this has often maximized the efforts of liturgists to promote involvement by focusing upon what they feel could remove distraction or improper emphasis.

It may be argued that public liturgy is the prime focus and indeed the purpose for the existence of the church building. However, what has often seemed to have been

relegated to an insignificant place is the fact that what consecrates the building in the minds and hearts of many parishioners is a sense of peace and home. These elements can and do often lie outside of the public worship. They have become for them characteristic of the building per se, within its symbolic furnishings.

Objects, art, and ambiance have a special meaning to many Catholics. This may be heard in the research again and again. Repeatedly in the interview process I recorded a confusion that was voiced as to why this sensibility has been ignored. The church building was described in expressions that did not refer to participation in liturgical ceremonies.

The building was created for the action. The action was not necessarily created for the building. If this axiom is true, it may be understood that when the "action" has attempted to recreate the building it has been met with strong "reaction!" The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states:

That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress, a careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. This investigation should be theological, historical and pastoral. Also, the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indults conceded to various places. Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms

already existing.⁴²

New forms growing "organically from forms already existing" seem to indicate a dependence upon the forms that were existing, as opposed to a dismissal of those forms to create a new form. This research suggests that the Catholics interviewed often felt that a sense of respect may not have been given to those sound traditions with which they are familiar.⁴³ A new agenda has been proposed to them, one which they are reluctant to accept.

THE DATA

Reference was made above to the qualitative nature of this work. It is not my intention to indicate that seventy individuals, or one hundred and fifty hours of interviews, definitively portray the opinions of all American Catholics. However, there is a definite quantitative result that may be drawn from the data and to which I will refer in the following chapters.

Upon completion of the interview phase of the research, reports were produced on the results, listing them under various categories. Individual parishes, pastors, liturgists, and characteristics of the various weekend liturgies, and responses to questions were noted. This data will be presented to indicate how the respondents related to each other. Different responses by groups will be noted as important. Questions that elicited clear responses will be assembled to help the reader understand which questions were successful in eliciting responses and which questions might be used for later possible quantitative research.

THE DIFFICULTIES

Throughout this process I have had to consider the possible difficulties of such an endeavor. The first concern was to elicit the cooperation of people who had a wide variety of Catholic backgrounds, yet assure rich and meaningful results. This concern has been addressed by the choice of individuals from different aspects of parish life, as well as the choice of individuals who have had a diverse experience concerning their liturgical environment.

The second concern was to be able to develop the trust necessary to discuss personal issues that might involve hurt. There was no doubt that people had been hurt by change. The overwhelming aspect of their response was that they were pleased that someone in the Church was willing to listen with a sympathetic ear. There is also a large element of Catholics who are happy with the changes or at least think the vast majority of changes have been good. Many of these admitted that the explanations for change had been weak or non-existent. They yearned for answers to their many questions, and to receive some hope that what they were feeling was neither wrong nor rejected by the Church.

I determined early in the endeavor that it was not to be my role to defend or to criticize the individuals who were the principals in the history of local reform. There was not much hesitancy in relating their stories and my listening was well-received. The mixed emotional response to change was evident.

The issue of trust was also addressed as the interviewer

was presented as a priest. There is some understanding of confidentiality already integral to the priest-parishioner relationship. I had to be aware that occasionally they thought that they were required to give expected answers. This is reflective of the days when children responded to the priest's questions on the catechism. As each interview proceeded, this expectation was somewhat diminished as I presented a non-confrontational interview.

BENEFITS FOR MINISTRY

What has occurred throughout this process has had a personal element. I wished to observe myself as I reacted to the materials. That definitely happened and will be evident as the story unfolds. The major goal of this thesis has been, as Dr. Roberts has said, "To gain additional insight into how to listen and understand the other voices by learning from the methods of cultural-anthropology."⁴⁴ I envision that this method can lead to an improvement in my ministerial method, that is a change in how I present and practice liturgical implementation, and a modification of the experience of frustration and confusion that I have all too often found surrounding the process of liturgical renewal.

NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

¹William Turner, "Sign and Source of Blessing: The Theology of Oil", (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Athenaeum of Ohio, 1994).

²Ronald Grimes, Research in Ritual Studies (London: Scarecrow Press, 1985), 1.

³Ibid.

⁴Ronald Grimes, Ritual Criticism (Columbia: U.S.C. Press, 1990).

⁵Grimes, Chapter II: Notes on Liturgical Renewal 1963-1988.

⁶Ronald Grimes, Beginnings in Ritual Studies (Washington: W.U. Press, 1982).

⁷Fred Roberts, "Conversations Among Liturgists," Liturgy Digest 2 (Spring, 1995), 37-123.

⁸Ibid., 40.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 41.

¹¹Ibid., 82.

¹²Ibid., 113.

¹³Ibid., 41.

¹⁴Ibid., 45.

¹⁵Ibid., 56.

¹⁶Ibid., 60.

¹⁷Ibid., 67.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 86.

²⁰Ibid., 105.

²¹Clifford Geertz, Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1988), 4.

²²Roberts, 46.

²³Jean Jackson. "I Am a Fieldnote," Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

²⁴Rena Lederman. "Pretexts for Ethnography," Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

²⁵James Clifford. "Notes on Fieldnotes," Fieldnotes: the Makings of Anthropology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990).

²⁶Robert Orsi. The Madonna of 115th Street (London: Yale, 1985).

²⁷Karen Brown, Mama Lola: A Voudo Priestess in Brooklyn (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1991).

²⁸Fred Roberts. "American Catholic Identities and the Church: A Proposal for a Research Project by the Liturgy Network", (November 15, 1995).

²⁹A scholarly commentary was conceived by the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, and written by theologians who were closely connected with the Council: Herbert Vorgrimler, ed. Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967).

³⁰Eucharisticum Mysterium 53, 1966.

³¹Liturgy Training Publications in Chicago has offered an article from their office on Why We Have a Tabernacle, edited by David Philippart. This was written in response to the many calls and letters they had received from priests and laity on the concern over placement of the tabernacle. Similar concerns have been addressed by the Society for the Renewal of Catholic Liturgy.

³²Adoremus Bulletin, February, 1996, warned its readers concerning the "New Year's Resolutions of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions." One of the headlines stated tht the views and plans and recommendations of this commission affect every Catholic in America. Liturgy was the main topic of the U.S. Bishops meeting in Portland, in June of 1996.

³³Many articles have been found in the newspaper Adoremus Bulletin, the official organ of the Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy.

³⁴Jeffrey Kemper, "Behind the Texts: A Study of the Principles and Procedures of Translation and Adaptation of the Original Texts by I.C.E.L." (Doctoral Thesis: Notre Dame University, 1993).

³⁵Terms such as "conservative" and "liberal" are relative, often misunderstood, and sometimes cause offense. For the sake of my purpose here "conservative" might define a person who exhibits appreciation for personal experiences up to a

proposed change and who is hesitant to accept change immediately; "liberal" could be defined here as one who is more enthusiastic about proposed changes.

³⁶M. Francis Mannion. Notes from the Southwest Liturgical Conference Week, "Toward A New Era in Church Architecture", (Salt Lake City: January 19, 1996).

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Instructions for the Liturgy Network survey may be found as Appendix A.

³⁹An example of the understanding may be found as Appendix B.

⁴⁰Mike Aquilina in his article "The Council's Unfinished Liturgical Agenda," The Catholic Register, March, 1996, said that his research indicates that some Catholics doubt that the reform as the Council envisioned it, has been carried out properly.

⁴¹J.L.Gonzalez, ed., "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1972), II:14.

⁴²Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 23.

⁴³Orsi in his book The Madonna of 115th Street, speaks of the Italian concept of "rispetto", respect given to individuals and customs in this culture. Such a respect model may also be at play here.

⁴⁴Roberts, "American Catholic Identities and the Church: A Proposal."

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMMUNITIES: A DESCRIPTION

This chapter will describe the communities that were encountered as the research proceeded, using some of the approaches of cultural anthropology. Cultural anthropologists consider that it is critical to provide the context of the situation and the subjects which they describe. Ethnographic interviews were used in this procedure. Interviews do not provide the richest possible understanding of a culture or group of people, as some people may not be willing to reveal how they truly feel. Participant observation involves more than interviews. However, these descriptions will enlighten the reader on some of the contexts and some of the physical features of the churches depicted. Later in this thesis, the participants will describe their experiences as they relate to their faith and to their buildings.

THE DIOCESE

In light of a cultural-anthropological goal, this section will describe first the liturgical portrait of the diocese from whence came the four parishes that have been chosen as examples. The Code of Canon Law describes a diocese as

...a portion of the people of God, which is entrusted to a bishop to be nurtured by him, with the cooperation of the presbyterium, in such a way, that in remaining close to its pastor and gathered by him through the gospel and

the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular Church. In this Church, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly exists and functions.¹

This particular Church, found in the American Mid-West, has various characteristics of note which must be related for the sake of context: It was created in the twentieth century and has had four bishops in sixty years. It has a current Catholic population of over 200,000. There are approximately 180 priests, including 40 who are retired or active outside the diocese, and 65 permanent deacons serving 87 parishes. There is an organized Catholic school system. Catholics compose 14% of the entire population of the area included in the diocese. The diocese can be divided into four geographical regions, each with a city at its center. Each region functions somewhat independently within the diocesan structure. When one notes the statistics of the American Catholic Church, the status of this diocese would be placed at mid-size, with a larger than average number of priests per capita of Catholic population.²

At the end of the Second Vatican Council, the bishop of this diocese, like many of his brother bishops in the world, returned to his diocese and attempted implementation of the council documents. In the area of liturgical renewal, he encouraged his priests to begin study sessions with parishioners on what had happened at the council and how it would affect the liturgical life of the local Church. Many of these groups met at the local parish. Others gathered at parishioners' homes. These sessions were well received by those who noted that they had attended. However less than

10% of the Catholic population actually participated. The majority of the faithful were to only hear of the changes from announcements and visual indications found in their worship space.

The bishop set up a Diocesan Liturgical Commission composed of representatives of the various regions of the diocese as well as those who had talents in the liturgical field. It was at this time that the National Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions was formed by the American bishops, and this diocese was one of the first to join this new organization. This federation was formed to act as a national liturgical commission which would be a voice from laity and priests on liturgical matters to the American bishops. It would also be a source of communication for diocesan liturgical commissions in the United States.

The history of the liturgical life of this diocese will always be connected with one particular priest, who would later become a bishop. Through his efforts in establishing a liturgical printing press, the diocese became known in the United States and in Canada. His purpose was also to assist parishes by providing manuals for the various liturgical celebrations. He accepted liturgy as a hobby as well as a professional necessity. The press still flourishes today.

His successor attempted in the 1980s to create a liturgical office with the mandate to assist parishes in the training of people for liturgical ministry. Members were chosen from the various regions of the diocese to serve on the commission. Later in the 1980s, a religious sister, who

had received her M.A. in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame, was chosen to direct an Office of Worship. In 1990, this office published a professional document for the diocese describing principles to guide the process of building and renovating the worship space. Each priest and parish was given a copy. Directives such as those pertaining to baptistries, Eucharistic reservation chapels, and liturgical art, while reflecting the Documents of Vatican II and subsequent liturgical documents, were met with some resistance at the parish level. It is of note that the work of this liturgical office was supported and encouraged at a time when many dioceses throughout the United States were closing their liturgical offices for lack of funding. In some places other priorities superseded the need for paid worship specialists. In 1995, a priest-graduate in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame was chosen to direct the office. This was another indication of the administration's support for the need of liturgical assistance. In the time of a general shortage of ordained clergy in parish ministry, the appointment of a priest to this position may seem to give status to the Office of Worship among the other varied staffed positions who do not have a priest assigned to them on a full-time basis.

It is well to note that within any diocese there are many parishes, each with its own history. Yet, each has a lifeline to the diocese for support and direction. Therefore, the activities of the diocese and of its administration do have some effect on each parish, depending

upon the parish circumstances.

THE DENOMINATIONAL TRADITION

A religious group of believers or a community of believers may come together and be called by the same name. Denomination may be considered as the opposite of sectarianism:

Denomination was adopted as a neutral and inclusive term. It implied that the group referred to is but one member, called or denominated by a particular name, of a larger group- the Church- to which other denominations belong. ...The Protestant Churches were able to develop a functional catholicity which was to find expression in the creation of a whole system of voluntary societies...³

In general, denomination plays a high profile role in the life of Catholics. They see themselves as part of a greater Church and its structure. Local concerns are under the umbrella of that greater Church. This is the opposite of an independent Church that would call its own pastor and would only be loosely associated with a wider organizational structure. There is a commonality that may be observed from parish to parish that is made evident in liturgical practice and in diocesan policies. As daughter parishes are taken from original territories, there is a further feeling of "mother church" as an additional denominational bond.

The method of functioning is also an important consideration. During the years 1969-1972, an anthropologist by the name of Melvin Williams studied a community of Pentecostal believers in Pittsburgh. I first encountered his work upon studying ministry in an historical perspective. He

reflected upon how that community functioned, and came to the conclusion that members of a congregation are usually divided into the elite, the core, the supportive, and the marginal.⁴ It may be assumed that the Catholic churches from which my participants were chosen have functioned in this way. A few people (the elite) have set goals, led the congregation, and have been the visible authority in the parish. There has always been a core of workers to carry out their projects. The majority of the congregation has been made up of supportive members who attend church regularly, are proud to be part of the structure, and donate to its upkeep, but simply have other concerns that keep them visibly active elsewhere. Finally there are the marginal members. They may have played a greater part in the past, but for various reasons they no longer attend church with the exception of once or twice a year. They willingly refer to themselves as Catholic, and they have a parish as a connection. They neither physically or financially support that parish to any extent. Melvin Williams referred to these categories in his research, and when they were applied to the Catholic Church and to the four parishes to be studied, his hypotheses were proven to be accurate.

The above groupings have had distinct periods in recent church history. In the parishes concerned here, the following common characteristics are true according to the research:

| | 1950 | 1965 | 1995 |
|----------|--|--|---|
| ELITE | PASTOR 1% | PASTOR ASSISTING PRIESTS KEY PERSONNEL 5% | PASTOR ASSISTING PRIESTS COMMISSIONS 10% |
| CORE | ASSISTANTS VOLUNTEERS 10% | LADIES SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS 20% | LADIES SOCIETY COMMITTEES FUND RAISERS 30% |
| SUPP. | SUNDAY ATTENDERS 89% | SUNDAY ATTENDERS 75% | SUNDAY ATTENDERS 60% |
| ----- | | | |
| MARGINAL | (Percentage of those who register as Catholic, but do not attend.) | | |
| | 10% | 40% | 60% |

These figures reflect the following patterns:

The original Church structure centered the elite category on one man, the pastor. Today a greater number of people are called into decision-making and are seen by the community as authority figures in their areas of expertise. A greater number of core membership reflects varied interests from a greater number of elite proposals. More volunteerism and ministry decrease the supportive category. Only 40% of those who consider themselves Catholics attend church with any regularity. This figure is four times greater than in 1950.⁵ This reflects that the Church is trying to grow, learn and develop with 60% of its membership having no idea of what is happening or having a say in that growth. Day by day, they are becoming foreigners in their own land. It now becomes clearer why Church leadership is stressing evangelization as an important issue today.

One caveat may be brought to bear at this point. Not

everyone in these parishes fits neatly into these categories. Some have shifted in and out of their parish, as well as back and forth between parishes. It must be also taken into account that many consider their involvement here as one aspect of a many-faceted lifestyle. Although the Church would like to encourage active Christianity encompassing their lives, Church activities are in fact, only one area in what is a modern hectic schedule of events. Individuals need varied interests to be in a healthy mode of existence. An enemy of community health and growth can be power or control and the need for individuals to be in an elite sphere of influence. As the elite category transforms and a new model of consensus decision-making emerges, this concern may be adequately addressed.

One cannot ignore that the geography of a parish reflects the direction that may be taken. Unlike some Churches that draw their membership from an entire region, the vast majority of Catholic parishioners tend to come from parish boundaries restricted to a small section of an urban area.⁶ This is a specific geographical space, a space of families. Family concerns will need to be addressed. Catholic teachings have stressed the importance of family repeatedly. Modern movements of spirituality are surrounding it, and the current Pope constantly refers to family in his writings.

Perhaps it is indeed the experience of Catholics worshipping together that speaks to Catholics best about their denomination. Ceremony is an important part of the Catholic Church. The fact that the first document from

Vatican II was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy confirms the emphasis and effect that this element of Catholic life would have on Catholics. It is probable that each parish would receive and act upon this input differently. It is therefore necessary to describe the contexts of each of the parishes that have been chosen.

PARISH ONE

The first parish could be described as a dominant church in an area between outer and inner urban.⁷ The parish includes upper-middle, middle, and lower-middle class housing stock. With some exceptions, most of the neighborhoods are generally maintained with pride. Despite the usual move to the suburbs, the parish has been able to maintain a younger population, some of whom are attracted by the parish school. A parish of 1000 families has been maintained, although at one time 1400 families were present. There is a sense in the neighborhood that the parish is well-established and indeed a community church. The cost of operating a parish school has increased sharply with inflation and the loss of religious sisters as teachers who worked for small salaries. Buildings are aging and in constant need of upkeep. The first building had been erected in 1922.

The present church seats 650 people. It was built in 1952 at a time when many churches were constructed with long aisles and high ceilings. In this case, it was the pastor's vision to create an interior where no one in the church

would be further than sixty feet from the altar. He therefore constructed the interior to be more square than oblong. When the liturgical changes came after Vatican II, this space was simpler to renovate and meet the needs of the new liturgy which reflected community participation and closer contact between minister and congregation. The tabernacle, which had rested on a high altar in the center of the sanctuary stage, was easily moved to a side altar and the communion rail was removed. In 1981 new pews were installed at angles that directed the congregation to focus on the sanctuary. Major renovations were not necessary. The walls of the interior are made of light brick. Statues that have been painted in neutral colors are placed in niches around the church. There is a gathering area at the front doors that is closed off from the main body of the church and also serves as a cry room for children during weekend services. The building has been maintained through the years, and its cleanliness indicates that this maintenance is on-going.

A study of the parish financial records brings to the forefront the reality that some parishioners have taken stewardship seriously. The handling of parish finances has caused serious divisions in the community that have only recently been addressed with the establishment of a more consensus-based model of administration. David Moberg, the American sociologist of religion, wrote of such models. While teaching at both Bethel College, in Minnesota and at Marquette University, he was particularly interested in this

field of study. What is happening in this area is what Moberg would call a movement from disintegration of an old model to incipient or organizational model.⁸ This development had its history in the parish with the establishment of the first parish council in 1968. Parish records indicate that there was a meeting held to discuss this new procedure that would change the way the parish would function. Some at the meeting said that it was no more than "Protestantizing" the Catholic Church. They reflected how the Church had already de-emphasized the rituals to look more Protestant. Others were more positive and excited about becoming involved. It seemed they wished to give their opinions on these matters and let their voices be heard.

The acceptance, or lack of acceptance, of this model of community responsibility has been a struggle in many Catholic churches since the 1960s. The revised Code of Canon Law (1984) mandated that all parishes have a pastoral council and functioning commissions. What had been optional from the sixties, or even at the whim of a pastor, is now Church law. Some still resist. This parish has moved ahead in establishing the Council and commissions as required by law.

There are questions that should be asked, in journalistic style, about anything with a history that is to be examined. James Wind received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago with a specialty in modern American religion. He has directed the Congregational History Project there. In his concise book, Places of Worship, suggests that we ask

specific questions of our parishes and so I will apply them here.⁹

Who? This parish began with 120 families. A pastor with a vision built a church. He then built a school. The congregation grew. These were the days of the giants. Twenty-four nuns taught in a large school operating at peak efficiency. Everyone in the area seemed to have some connection with the parish. In the sixties a new pastor faced the changes of the age and in the Church. True to the founding pastor, education for the young was a high priority.

What? What is the vision for this parish as they plan for the future? In the beginning there was a vision of building up the Church. The creation of a mission statement in 1994 pledges the parish to deal with all issues by consensus, to listen to the needs of the members, to heal any old wounds.

When? From simple beginnings there has been growth. Through the leadership of three pastors, there has been an experience of new directions and affirmation of faith in customs and expressions.

Where? One square block of buildings is a strong presence in the neighborhood. The buildings are in good condition. Some care is taken to plant flowers and maintain the lawns. A great deal of activity surrounds the school buildings where nearby the children play on the parking lots. There is hope for future growth and development.

Why? There is a belief that in word and sacrament comes the strength to carry on in our lives.

How? More than in the past, parish members are being called to exercise their ministry in leadership roles and with consensus decision-making. This method demands that all members of a committee be heard, that their opinions be a part of the decision-making, and that the decision made is a decision that all members agree to accept. This new model (1993) has been very successful in this parish. It has begun the work of binding the parish together. There is emerging the beginnings of a very positive response as people become involved.

There are five weekend liturgies at this parish. Each has its own character. I observed the different atmosphere at each Mass that can be described also by assessing the congregation that frequents the liturgies. Many seniors tend to worship at the Saturday afternoon service because of the daylight hour and to avoid rising early on Sunday morning. It is therefore a Mass of convenience for them. The congregation knows that they will be home in time for supper. Of note at this Mass, and indeed all Masses, is the distribution of communion under both species of bread and wine. It is not common to hear of a parish offering both species, and certainly not at all Masses. Many priests have told me that this is a complicated procedure that requires planning. It requires additional effort as each communicant goes to a minister holding the cup and receives from that cup after receiving the host from another Eucharistic minister. This requires more Eucharistic ministers as volunteers. Ministers at this parish have generously

volunteered, and the process runs smoothly. Not everyone wishes to partake, (in fact only about 35% do), but the parish is offering the opportunity to all. Reasons for lack of participation range from sanitary concerns to those who do not wish to wait in a line.

As in many parishes, the early Sunday Mass is "quiet" or moderated to meet the needs of a smaller congregation. All ministers are active and faithful attenders. As there are two priests in the parish, they exchange the services from week to week. One has a reputation of being slow-paced; the other is faster-paced. The congregation is given the opportunity to choose the Mass that is said by the priest they prefer.

The third Mass may be noted for its family orientation. Children are in attendance in greater numbers and come forward to present their monetary offerings at the appropriate time. The congregation lingers in the church after the service, which sometimes clashes with the pious who arrive for quiet prayer before the next Mass. The congregation is invited to refreshments in the parish hall after the service, and this event is well attended.

The fourth Mass has a long tradition of being broadcast on a local radio station. The full choir sings, and the congregation has tended in the past to enjoy listening to them. Only recently has there been an attempt to encourage more musical participation from the pews. The priest must, by necessity, keep his eye on the time so that he will not exceed the prescribed hour. Many parishioners report that

they attend this Mass as they have faithfully done so for years.

The final Mass is held on Sunday evening to a congregation that is 90% from outside the parish. The time has appealed to people who come from all over the city. A visiting priest has been hired to preside. The music is lively due to the skill of the organist who leads that ministry.

What is happening at these various services is not unlike many consumer-oriented congregations found in the Catholic heritage. There seems to be something for everyone. This can be a blessing or a curse. It is a blessing in that varied needs are met. However, if this situation were not pastorally managed, it could become a curse, dividing rather than unifying, the parish.

The pastor indicated that there had been liturgical progress within the last few years. He was interviewed in his office, which was spartan and simple. One could have the impression that his personal effects are elsewhere. He noted that he saw his role as setting the tone by his devotion and faith. He said that he attempts to encourage groups to work together and tries to increase membership on commissions and committees. He is a listener. However, a liturgical commission did not exist here until 1993. The reaction to a slow pace by some parishioners is one of frustration rather than anger. It may be noted that both elements are involved in other situations where a pastor is decisive. Observers may be led to wonder whether this pastor may not be on the right track.

What makes this parish unique? The five services tend to be unique in that parishioners are able to look for an expression that is officially Roman Catholic, yet varying in modality. The fact that there have been three pastors in seventy-five years could be interpreted as stability. There is a modern worship space that is meeting the parish liturgical needs. There is a rich history of supported school education. A large St. Vincent de Paul Society provides a remarkable amount of food, household items and clothing to the poor in the immediate area. Many men from the parish are involved. The women of the parish are organized into active smaller groups for parish projects.

The above activities reflect an active parish that is alive and planning for its future. Many parishioners are currently involved. I knew this parish well, as I had experienced it for three years. Interviews in other settings could be compared to my personal experience here.

PARISH TWO

The second parish from which people were chosen for interviews had been established and the building constructed within the last ten years. It was felt that studying this parish might yield a different context to the topic, in that there had not been such a long history to this particular space. However, the parishioners would have experiences from other churches.

The founding pastor exercises an administrative style with an upwardly mobile congregation. The area surrounding the

church is known for its affluence. The pastor related that many of the congregation are living slightly beyond their means. Diocesan figures indicate that the parish is burdened with a debt so large that payments to the diocese are currently only covering the interest on the loan. Sunday collections currently are not reducing the liability. Despite this restraint, the parish continues to expand its programs and its growing school. The pastor reported that his congregation is "basically conservative" and therefore he chose conservative lines when building his church. His explanation was that his people appreciated the more traditional church architecture, and so he had built a church that was along these lines. He wanted to include some liturgical appointments that would reflect a sense of church history. He had searched out and found used items such as the organ, the lights, and the crucifix. He had hoped to receive furnishings from a church within the State that was closing, but was unable to do so. When I visited the church, I took notice of these furnishings which had been brought from other places. I wondered if they might reflect the many parishioners who had formed this new parish as they too had come from other places.

The building exterior was reminiscent of an abbey in a country setting, with its bell tower and extended facade. Inside the building, corridors and offices surrounded the church space. The interior of the church was, indeed, traditional, with a long nave and large sanctuary. The tabernacle was in the sanctuary on a large pedestal. The

ceiling was high, and the aisle gradually sloped down to the sanctuary. Despite the fact that there were many furnishings that had been brought from other churches, the distinct condition of the construction materials still attested to the young age of the building.

The pastor reported very strongly to me that he proceeded with his plans as he knew his people best, and that rigid adherence to local liturgical directives might not be appropriate. It became evident to me as he spoke that he was making the decisions in the liturgical area. He also noted that liturgy is not his particular interest. This parish is a new parish. Understanding the methodology of the founding pastor is therefore critical in understanding the parish itself.

The church seats up to 1200. Myths might be developing about numbers and involvement to attract and please perspective members. Yet, the building is done in traditional lines in an era of what could be described by architects as contemporary spaces and churches in the round.

The church has published a leaflet in which it welcomes new members. It is a detailed description of the building accentuating its beauty and its many furnishings. A short history relates the construction process. It could be noticed that no mention was made of events or services that were held there. This was done in the style that one would expect to see in a guidebook for a museum. A final note added that the true beauty was in the people that the parish would serve.

There is no doubt that this parish has the largest population in the area. The pastor has accepted the use of an administrative style. He is known as a great builder in the local Church. As founding father, he is setting the tone and establishing the early history of this parish. As his parishioners were interviewed, this administrative aspect was referred to repeatedly.

This parish could be described as a dominant church in an affluent suburban area. The housing stock is primarily upper-middle to wealthy class. The neighborhoods are spacious and spread over a large suburban area dotted with golf courses and rolling hills. There are currently 1700 families, and the population is steadily growing. Administratively, much of the old model survives. Due to circumstance and personal expertise, the pastor has a definite plan for the future and is systematically carrying it out. Those who were interviewed are aware of this activity. Liturgically, many of the traditional signs and symbols have been respected in that they are present in the building. Noticeable furnishings are a large crucifix, the Stations of the Cross, the statues, and the tabernacle, all of which had been used for many years in another setting. The leadership had opposed outside liturgical influences that did not seem to meet the present conceived needs.

As I attended the various weekend services, I noticed and recorded their characteristics. All Masses were said by the pastor. He specifically told me that he wished to be present at every liturgy so that his parishioners might experience

stability. Congregations varied from 250 people, a simple, "quiet" Mass, with the older faithful engaged in their prayers, to 900 people, composed of younger families and young couples. I recalled thinking how much younger this congregation seemed if I would compare it to my experience in the past. I have never been assigned to a suburban "upwardly mobile" congregation. The final Mass on Sunday night was composed of parishioners and visitors who may have been returning back home from a weekend at the cottage. It struck me as another Mass of convenience.

The liturgies here may be noted for their brevity. They are by no means rushed or disrespectful, but they are definitely completed well within the hour. Some of the optional parts of the Mass, such as extra verses of hymns and longer prayers, are often not chosen. The church fills and empties quickly.

I observed that something else is going on in this parish. Masses were said, but I found myself wondering if they were what this parish was about. I noticed the parish mission statement in the bulletin. It spoke of worship, learning, celebration and support to the parish family. The parish was pledged to serve the community and the world. Also found in the bulletin that weekend was a cartoon of an usher tackling a parishioner trying to leave church early. The caption noting the parishioner's reaction read: "Did it ever occur to you that I might have a good reason to leave before the final hymn?"

PARISH THREE

The third parish chosen for interviews is seventy-five years old. It began as an ethnic parish serving 600 Polish immigrants who were attracted to the city by the employment opportunities at the time. Today 1000 families live in an area surrounded by middle-class homes, many of which are inhabited by aging parents in an empty nest. The area is kept with pride and much of the second generation ethnic flavor remains. Traditional ethnic parties are still held at the parish. There are no longer Masses held in Polish, yet the Polish religious tradition lingers in the memories of long-time parishioners. The parish is a dominant Church in an urban setting. A parochial school is shared with a neighboring parish. This is an indication of the lack of a large number of young families. It may be expected that these parishioners would be particularly sensitive to change in their worship space. A major change in the sanctuary had occurred in the last fifteen years. This parish was chosen primarily for that reason and to hear about that experience as it affected them. This renovation decreased the seating capacity from 800 to 600.

As I visited this church, I considered how it must have looked before renovations. It was simple to do this because the renovation was by no means a complete adjustment. The old high altar was still against the back wall and the tabernacle was located upon it. This original focus was now impeded by the construction of a sanctuary that had been brought forward, and it was not unlike a large walkway.

Parishioners had spoken in jest about hosting a beauty contest or a fashion show. My sense was that it was not as obvious as that, but the sanctuary was now in an area that traditionally had been reserved for the congregation. A ramp was constructed because it was necessary to fulfill handicap regulations that required the sanctuary be accessible to all. This device noticeably took up space. Adornments on the walls seemed to have been the same decorations that were present before the renovations. I considered that it would be necessary to see how the space was used before I could draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of the architectural design.

When I experienced the liturgies here, I noticed a definite leadership control. The same music ministers were at every Mass and provided a similar ceremonial style. The priest cooperated with this method. When I later interviewed the liturgist, he told me enthusiastically that he had a goal and a plan as he ministered here. His thesis is that there should be no difference in what is provided for the people from Mass to Mass on a particular weekend. He felt that this would bring a sense of unity as he provided direction for all the Masses. I thought that this would not be possible at most parishes as they have different directors of music at each Mass and no director of liturgy. He spoke of the move that the music ministers made from the choir loft to the sanctuary. "This was a tough adjustment for the people," he said. He noted that he was now invading what had been sacred space to them. He remembered how some

parishioners were upset because the organ in the loft, which they had paid for, was no longer being used. He tried to accomodate them by playing the closing hymn of the Mass to which the concerned parishioners were known to attend. My sense is that music at liturgy has become a critical issue here. The change of music and style has had ramifications for parishioners at all the liturgies. He said: "People have a pre-conceived idea of what people will adapt to." In other words, I think he believes that he can convert the masses (pun intended). My sense is that he is only scratching the surface. His enthusiasm will indeed need to be deep if it is going to last. In the minds of many I interviewed, there is a sense that there is much effort to engage a new direction that they do not support. There were responses of concern about the music ministry as a liturgical issue. This concern has even seemed to have superseded the original question about the renovation of the sanctuary. The ministers may feel that they are succeeding because the pastor has fully given his approval to the new direction.

The attempt to create the same experience at all Masses is being met with opposition from the people that were interviewed. There were some hesitant responses from the congregation in response to the attempts at encouragement from the ministers. The Saturday afternoon Mass participants acted out their devotions in pious gesturing. The older parishioners at the early Sunday Mass exhibited a sense of confusion as they experienced the volume of the hymn accompaniment. I later learned that this had been the

"quiet" Mass. The next Mass had experienced guitar instrumentation for years. Never a traditional hymn had been heard. A middle-aged group is in attendance. The final liturgy is held at 11:00. This had been the "high Mass" of earlier days. A small choir still assisted. Many of the people seemed hesitant to sing, and I imagined that they had been used to listening to the choir. This was the Mass with families. The children left during the service for private instruction.

The liturgical experience here may be described as an attempt by leadership to change established models. Those interviewed are reacting to the proposal. The pastor said that he doubts that many people in the congregation share his sense of liturgy. He remarked that old-family people have a sense of nostalgia for the church of their youth. "The older you get, the more you remember long ago," he said. I had the feeling he might have also been speaking about his own memories as much as the memories of those who were not able to cooperate with change. This concept seemed to oppose another pastor's view that people seemed more flexible as they got older. I thought that was true as I had witnessed some senior religious women who were much more at peace with change than their juniors.

Despite resistance, this pastor believes that it is his responsibility to inform his parishioners about what the Church teaches. He said that liturgy should be something from within rather than something imposed from without. It may not be easy to understand how this doctrine blended with

his approval of the parish liturgists in their attempts to implement a cross-liturgy common experience.

He was willing to admit that he has an administrative style. Before coming to this parish ten years ago, he pastored a large congregation which boasted a modern worship space in the round. He was used to this kind of space when he arrived here. He believed that what he told his parishioners would ease them into any changes that needed to be made. He referred to congregations today as "T.V. people." They want to see everything. "They may not always hear." This is an interesting concept relating to focus. Is focus centering in with your sight? He noted that the parish has ethnic backgrounds that have created "mini-parishes" within the community. He said that if everyone would rather focus on the Eucharist, division will end as people share this in common. He was suspicious of what he called "easy religion," i.e., one with no mystery. "We need mystery," he said, "the Church has lost a great deal of mystery."

Parish three presents itself as a strong group of people in touch with their roots. There is a great deal of pride in their history, and they are actively attempting to relate to that history. Regardless of the lack of many younger families, it is still vibrant and continuing in its traditional annual parish activities. Although this is no longer considered by the Church as an ethnic parish, the ethnic presence and history are still a very strong element in parish life.

PARISH FOUR

Inner city parishes across the United States have experienced varying levels of decay in the last forty years. As families moved to new homes in the suburbs, and old homes were destroyed and replaced by office structures, parish populations dwindled. In many cases inner-city parishes were closed for lack of funds and of faithful. Some congregations on the brink of closure have fought and lost a battle with the diocese in an attempt to remain open and save the heritage made present to them in the parish of their youth.

Parish four is defined as an inner-city parish in a downtown area. Most of the territory immediately surrounding the church has been taken over by government offices. Families who used to live here have moved away; yet, many have retained their loyalty to the parish and return for the weekend services. The current parish population is 900 families. The lack of younger families has resulted in the closing of the parish schools which once boasted a twelve grade system.

The parish was created in 1866. The present building was erected in 1913 and was the only Catholic church in the city until 1921. The city grew and parishes continued to be subdivided from the original parish, and eventually the growing town became a diocese. Parish four then became the cathedral of this new diocese. This background is essential to understand the liturgical life of the parish.

A cathedral is home to the many different ceremonies that require the space to be set up for episcopal functions.

Eventually the church that had been built as a regular parish would have to be remodeled to meet these needs. The parishioners here were informed in the 1960s that their parish church would be completely remodeled so as to be more appropriate for cathedral liturgies. Many parishioners reacted negatively to the proposed renovation.

Research was begun by reading materials found in the diocesan and parish archives.¹⁰ There were many letters on file that referred to a tumultuous change that occurred in the cathedral in 1968. Repeatedly throughout my interviews of the local area stories were told about parishioners who left the parish in frustration and disappointment. The bishop kept correspondence on file from those who wrote him personally to oppose the renovation. Much of the anger surrounded the removal of an enormous crucifixion scene that dominated the sanctuary area. The diocese and the cathedral administration seem to have felt that they were treading the necessary and proper course. Provision of a proper liturgical space for the bishop's ceremonies was of primary concern.

In the first three parishes many people referred to these changes in the cathedral. They seemed to point to this kind of experience of change as repulsive to them. This was a complete annihilation of a recognized sacred space and its replacement with a new and "modern" theme. Those who left at this time and those who opposed the change from outside the parish seem to have stored this bad experience in their hearts. There were also those who said that they supported

the change and those who worked on the committees at the time. They were, however, overwhelmed by the protest.

I first visited the cathedral thirty years ago. I remember what the interior looked like then, but I have no particular emotion attached to the memory. I recall how dark the interior seemed and how enormous was the display of a crucifixion scene in the sanctuary. The bishop's chair had been placed to the side and gave me the impression that this was a temporary arrangement. When I next visited here, the church had taken on the appearance that it has today. The bishop's chair (cathedra) was placed prominently against the back wall, center rear. A small altar was positioned fifty feet in front of the cathedra. The walls were painted a light color and the stained-glass windows had been restored. There was a large tabernacle raised on a pedestal over a screen that divided the body of the church from a side chapel. The tabernacle was clearly visible from the pews.

The cathedral seats over 1000 persons and is filled to capacity at special ceremonies. Whenever the church is open, there tends to be people praying and engaged in private devotion. The availability of the building in the center of a city seems to have encouraged a diverse group of people to take advantage of this location. The fact that this building is a cathedral may also give it some status among the faithful.

I was anxious to hear what the current cathedral parishioners had to say about their own church. Had they weathered the storm? Had those who entered the scene at a

later date formed opinions on what they saw and what they had experienced as a result of the change?

It is critical to note that the cathedral has had the same rector since 1974. He is known as a fine preacher, a stable influence, an epitomy of equanimity. The people know that he serves as second in command to the bishop, and he is consulted as an authority on church matters diocesan-wide. One of his great accomplishments, repeatedly mentioned by the people that were interviewed, was his ministry of healing the hurts of the past. He had taken action to rectify the perceived abrasiveness of the 1968 changes. Over the years, and specifically in improvements made in 1985, he has supervised the return of many visual symbols to the cathedral, such as the original Stations of the Cross and works of art. Color and painted accents have also reappeared. A museum displaying the history of the cathedral has been constructed alongside a crypt chapel.

The personality of this one priest colors all of the interviews which I conducted at this parish. People have shown approval with their wallets. The cathedral is financially solvent. This does not mean to imply that the vote is unanimous. There are those who would resent such a strong leader.

I interviewed the rector in his office at the Chancery. It was neat, with files he was working on placed here and there. Books, some of which referred to Church discipline, covered one wall for easy reference. Many decisions had been made here.

He told me that he felt that people have a right to liturgy as it is laid down in the official books. I could see that he was reacting to ministers who do not follow the ritual as given, but adapt it to their own needs. He says that within the directions there are many listed options for individual priests. He felt that there is no need to inject his own opinions or impose his own ideas or interpretations. The liturgy speaks well enough for itself. He claimed to maintain a high standard in his homilies which he defined as well-prepared, brief and relating the scripture to the living experience of his parishioners.

He reflected upon the crisis at the cathedral when the crucifixion scene was removed: "Things speak to people. They need symbols. We have to take care that the symbol is not seen as more important than what it represents." He saw the scene as a distraction from the liturgy being celebrated in the sanctuary. Some parishioners saw it as beautiful. He did not think an argument would be won on attacking what these people saw as beautiful. He rather appealed to what he called "the Roman model." Don't get excited, be willing to wait. He thought this was a good understanding of human nature. He told me that liturgical action is the purpose of the space, but artistic surroundings are also essential since people want a "special place outside of Mass." This is my particular thesis, and I was pleased to hear him reinforce it.

This pastor sees himself as an instrument for the bishop and the Church. He feels that if a priest is noticed too

much then that priest is not doing his job. He lives by the motto he related to me: "Observe everything, correct little, ignore most."

The cathedral liturgies, over which this priest presides are reflective of the discipline which he enforces. The music ministry is supervised by one minister. He normally permits no other instrumentation but organ at the Sunday liturgies. I was told by the parish liturgist that, according to the complaints received when other options were tried, this is what the people want.

There was a noticeable similarity with the other parishes in that there was a Mass frequented by the older parishioners, a "quiet Mass" on Sunday morning, a choir Mass, and a family Mass. In addition, there was an afternoon Mass for an ethnic community. This group had its own priest and celebrated its own heritage in the building, but as a separate entity.

The cathedral parish is a composite of people from thirty-three postal codes. Some were once here and later moved away. Some travel here because they see the cathedral as an official second parish. Some come because they trust the rector and know that he will enforce the liturgy that the Church directs. Many of these parishioners tell stories of what they feel are liturgical abuses by priests who are creating their own liturgy. The official liturgy of the Church is requested.

There seems to be five types of parishioners: (1) The people who come for cathedral-type liturgy, the presence of

the bishop, the mother church; (2) Those who attend the weekday chapel for government workers; (3) Those who live here; (4) Those who return here after moving away or those who leave another church in dissatisfaction with other parish liturgies; (5) Finally the element of an ethnic parish served by its own priest. This forms an interesting mosaic of people. Amid the government buildings of the center of the city, there are not many homes left to be inhabited by parishioners. The cathedral has a rich history, a ceremonial and diocesan importance. It represents the diocese in a special way. Parishioners who come here seem to recognize these facts and return here to worship despite the distance they must travel.

The Diocese, and four parishes from that diocese, have now been presented. Understanding the history of a diocese is an important element in the understanding of the individual parishes within its boundaries. In the Roman Catholic tradition, there is a definite administrative and historic relationship between diocese and parish. Offering a portrayal of the various services of each of these parishes provides a richer understanding of the elements of parish liturgical life. This study also makes evident the liturgical preferences of those parishioners that were interviewed. This chapter has also presented the opinions of pastors, liturgists and parishioners, as they envision their parish as part of the wider diocesan Church.

NOTES: CHAPTER TWO

¹The Code of Canon Law (London: Collins, 1983), 369.

²Felician Foy, ed. Catholic Almanac (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 432.

³W.S. Hudson, Religion In America (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 80.

⁴Melvin Williams. Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Athropological Study (Pittsburgh: U. of P. Press, 1974).

⁵Figures like these, which support the opinions of many priests, and reflect my personal experience, are confirmed by the Gallup Poll as published in Religion in America, (Princeton: Princeton Religion Research Center, 1996). Confirmation of the figures related about elite, support and core groups are taken from the history, census and financial records of the four parishes studied. Parish One records (1922-1996); Parish Two records (1986-1996); Parish Three records (1921-1995); Parish Four records (1937-1996). (Available at each parish with copies at the Diocesan Archives.) These figures are further supported by The Code of Canon Law (1983), where Canons 536 and 537 establish the requirement of a finance council in each parish, and recommend the establishment of pastoral councils. No such directions were made in former canon law. This new emphasis does not allow for the possibility of the pastor being the only person in the elite category, as was the case in these parishes circa 1950.

⁶Canon 518 of The Code of Canon Law establishes that parishes are territorial. This law was rigidly adhered to in the past, however today parishioners might choose to attend the parish of their choice. The vast majority of parishioners I interviewed were residents of a church in close proximity. This has also been my experience in former assignments.

⁷James Wind, Places of Worship: Exploring Their History (Nashville: American Association for Local and State History, 1990), 26.

⁸David A. Moberg. The Church as a Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

⁹Wind.

¹⁰The diocesan archives contains published histories and articles of all four of the parishes discussed in this paper. The agreement of confidentiality does not permit me to mention the names of the paishes here.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INTERVIEWS: SOME DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS

This chapter describes the interview process by providing detailed descriptions of three interviews. These are ethnographic descriptions, as defined in chapter one, meant to give a sense of what a whole interview was like. In later chapters, data from these interviews will be discussed and analysed. An understanding of the entire interview process may be beneficial in explaining the context in which such statements were made. In preparing these three reports, fieldnotes were employed, and the accounts were compiled, only after careful reflection.

INTERVIEW ONE

One of the first interviews I conducted was at my own parish. I chose a person I saw regularly, but one whom I did not know well personally, as her involvement in the Church was limited due to her age.

Catherine is 86 years young. I chose to interview her as I was aware of her devotional habits. She is a long-time parishioner at her parish and has raised a large family there. She attends all the religious ceremonial events. She remembers the history of the church and loves to tell the story. I interviewed her for ninety minutes in her living room in November 1995.

As I arrived at the home, I first noticed an old style holy water stoop hanging on the door. I was welcomed warmly

into the home. I immediately noticed that the rooms were filled with signs, symbols, pictures, artifacts, and souvenirs, most of which were of a religious nature. Amid these important mementos, we read together the prepared sheet which explained the research procedure and the voluntary agreement. She decided that no recognition was required for the comments she was willing to make.

Q. What makes your church building Catholic for you?

A. "I have a different feeling in different churches. A bare church for me does not seem to be the house of God. There is nothing there that reminds us that he is our head. We need something there to remind us so that we will think about God."

Q. What are some of the things there that do this for you?

A. "There needs to be a respect when you go into church. When you enter, you bless yourself with holy water to keep away from sin and evil. When I see Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament I have no fear because he is there. When I see the sanctuary lamp, then I know that he is present. That light says that he is alive and with us. If you have a burden, then you may kneel down and talk, just like he is right there. This gives me a feeling of belonging to him. He created me for himself, and what we do counts towards everlasting life."

Q. The presence of Jesus is then very important to you?

A. "As you can see, (she indicated the articles of her home) Jesus is all around me, all over my home. He is the first thing in my life, he is always there. When I sit down and

close my eyes to relax, Jesus comes to me as he is alive. The church is comfortable to me because it is his house, he is there, and I know he will take our burdens."

Q. What is the most important thing to you in the church building?

A. "The Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle is the most important thing. After that, there is the crucifix or the image of Christ on the cross." (She seemed to know about the distinction.) "The image makes you feel that you were there with him as he went through so much for us. Our behavior led to his suffering."

Q. What has been your experience of other churches that you have visited?

A. "Once I went on a thirteen church visit, including those of other faiths. The Protestant churches seemed cold to me." (She said she had done this when visiting another city over ten years ago as she always had wondered what the "feeling" would be like in non-Catholic churches.)

Q. What made them cold in your estimation?

A. "The lack of a tabernacle made them seem cold. Being able to see the Blessed Sacrament is the main thing. If he is not there, then it is not the house of God. That may be why some other churches have an atmosphere of disrespect in my opinion. They talk together as they would outside of church. I think that there is more respect when the Blessed Sacrament is there. The church should be a quiet, a respectful place."

Q. Why do you feel that people should not talk in church?

A. "It is not the place to carry on unnecessary forms of conversation. They should have respect for the Eucharist that is present. You are trying to take Jesus with you." (Catherine did not seem angry, but rather determined that this is the way it should be, and indeed the way it was for her.)

Q. Do you think that people who talk in church have a disrespect for the Eucharist and for the people who wish to pray in silence?

A. "It is hard to keep attentive to prayer when noise is distracting you. I feel that it is also disrespectful to the Blessed Sacrament. When I was little, we couldn't even whisper in church." (She then spoke of her upbringing in a small rural Catholic church. She spoke of the furnishings and how they made her feel at home with God.) "We showed our respect for authority. Today people seem to take their religion too lightly and not seriously enough."

Q. What are the signs for you that people do not take religion seriously enough?

A. "People enter church and often ignore or use sloppily the holy water that is at the door. They half-heartedly genuflect to the tabernacle and sometimes do not genuflect at all. They go through the motions as if from habit, but it does not seem to come from the heart. There is not the same reverence that I experienced when I was young. To me it is a different thing. The majority of elderly people understand. I see them showing more respect."

Q. Do you think that people's attitude has something to do

with how we decorate the church building?

A. "We still have many symbols to remind people, but sacred doesn't seem to mean anything to them. I ask myself: why do they come?"

Q. Why do you think people come to church?

A. "I can't imagine their feelings. Is it that they feel that they have to? They leave so quick when Mass is over. For me, Mass is never over. They seem to forget what they have witnessed and have other things on their minds. It's O.K. to say hello, but secular conversations are out of place in the church. The church is holy and for sacred use. The church is not as holy as it used to be."

Q. What can make the building holy?

A. "More holy things make a more holy place. For example, we used to have angels in the sanctuary. If they were still there I would find the sanctuary a more holy place."

Q. How do signs and symbols help you in church?

A. "It is harder to concentrate on what you are there for if you have little or nothing to remind you. You need to see what Jesus went through. It does something for me to see it. This is what we were taught in school: we are the apostles at the Last Supper. We should feel like we are the apostles at Mass. Maybe I'm wrong to feel this way, but I don't feel that I am as close to God as when I am there."

Q. Many things have changed in the church of your experience. What should never change?

A. "The main thing is the Blessed Sacrament. If they would remove it, I would feel lost. The interior of the church is

God's house."

Q. Is the placement of the tabernacle in different locations a concern for you?

A. "In our church it is on the side. That is not a problem for me. I am happy as long as it is in the church and I can see it when I enter."

Q. Do you notice the tabernacle when you are at Mass?

A. "I never think about the tabernacle when I am at Mass. I am there to witness the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. I am fully concentrating on that and nothing else."

Q. If the tabernacle was located by the altar would that not be a distraction since its presence is so important to you?

A. "No. What would really be a distraction would be the absence of the tabernacle. I want to see him in the space I'm in." (She used the word 'space' perhaps to accommodate the fact that I was using the word.) "I've gone to church every Sunday of my life, except when I was sick. I went to church and communion before school every morning. I was never able to go to high school, but I respect what I have learned. The church was a sacred place to go when I was a child. You felt different when you came out. It seemed like heaven was before you at all times. Today people just don't seem to have their minds on the Mass. Other things should not be a distraction. The bishop once told me that he noticed and appreciated that I was paying attention when in church, not 'gawking around'." (She was proud of this.) "Every week my mind opens up in a different way. That is how

I live. As you can see here, (she indicated her treasures) Jesus is the center of all my displays. He is the center of my life, and I cannot live without him." (She picked up one of the many oddly-shaped stones which she had around the room.) "Just like my many stones; God wants us to see something different in each stone." (She explained what she saw in one of them.)

INTERVIEWER'S REFLECTIONS

My immediate reaction to the witness of this woman was that there was no question that Christ could not answer for her. She looked for him everywhere. The removal of certain signs and symbols would certainly affect her. I too was affected by her words and her environment. There was a respect of the sacred, and a deep sense of the violation that she was feeling. Her church space was not as comfortable for her as it used to be. She was nonetheless committed to her beliefs and would remain so. I asked myself if she had tried to preserve that sacred space in her home, or was everywhere she was made into a truly sacred space? As a woman and a mother she had nurtured and provided a sacred home for her family. There was also provision of sacred things and times beyond the church.

When she spoke of the use of holy water for protection in the home, I remembered that I had once shared this feeling, but now I stressed the point that holy water reminds us of our baptism. When she reflected upon the people she hears carrying on conversations in church, she did not seem angry,

but rather determined that this is not the way it should be. I privately agreed that I, at times, had noticed others praying, and I did not want to disturb them. I realized that I had the same experience as she. I was taught that the church was a place of silence. Her reflections resulted in my calling to mind my boyhood church. This first experience of church both impressed and affected me.

Throughout our conversation, her concern about the problem of disrespect for all types of authority arose. I could sense the disappointment in her voice that others did not share her sense of reverence. I knew that many of her children did not practice the faith which she holds so dear. I also realized that she must have seen the encroachment of crime in her neighborhood, and the society-wide challenge to authority.

She referred to the fact that the church was not as sacred as it used to be. This was an interesting statement. It seems obvious that the sacred and the visual must connect for her, or the sacred is diminished. She felt that all the symbols she saw in the church were important. I could not help but smile as I looked around her living room. It was indeed a 'holy place' by her own definition. I respected her sense of holiness. Each of the things in that room had a meaning for her.

She noted that she felt closest to God in her church. She added that it might be wrong to feel that way. I wondered if someone had told her that it was wrong to feel this. What outside source had made her sense that her own feelings were

out of step? She was fully concentrating on her relationship with her Lord. I recalled how at times I had felt that people were not as focused as they actually might be.

She felt she had to apologize for not being well-educated. She did not seem to be uneducated in the way she spoke or in her wealth of experience. Her experience of "feeling good" after the sacrament of confession was familiar to me. The fact that she surrounded herself with symbols of her relationship with Christ made sense of her statement that she could not live without the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. Catherine wants to bring that sacred presence to others. She needs to see it in the house she calls "God's".

INTERVIEW TWO

The second interview I offer as an example was conducted a month after the first. At this point in the project, I was more aware of not imposing any agenda on the person interviewed. With this thought in mind, I wanted to see if the same issues emerged or at least in what order of importance they did emerge. I carefully avoided either-or questions. The more interviews I conducted, the more relaxed I became with the procedure. The first interviews may have appeared to me to be a little threatening, or at least having the potential of exposing some unknown results. I began to become more comfortable as I found some similarity in responses. Nevertheless, all responses in every interview were treated with respect as I listened and related the feedback to my own experiences.

Bob is a thirty to forty year old convert with a large family. He became a Catholic after he married a Catholic. His family may be considered extraordinary in a day where a number of siblings are a thing of the past. His Catholic charismatic renewal background may explain his raison-d'etre. He obtained a university degree and currently is a salesman. Much of his work involves travel across the United States. I chose to interview him because of his interest and involvement in Church affairs. He is dedicated to educate his children in the Catholic faith. He believes strongly in nurturing family relationships. He has spoken to me before on many occasions of how he would like to envision the future of the church. He also understands and respects the long history of the faith and wants that history to be respected.

As I reached for the doorbell on his two-story house, a metal plaque with the words 'God be with you' greeted me. The door opened and Bob greeted me as well. The family was watching a nature program on the television, and I joined them in the living room for the remaining ten minutes. It seemed to me that watching this type of program was routine for them. At the end of the program, the children seemed to understand by instinct that it was time to leave the room. They did so. There were various religious objects in the room. I had the impression that there was more doing than showing here. His wife was busy in the dining room assisting the younger children with a small project. She entered to provide refreshments and then returned to the parental task.

I presented Bob with the printed details of the interview project. He began to read in silence. That silence was broken when he blurted: "A building can't be Catholic. People are Catholic!" This was an interesting response and I wondered what experience in his past had caused this reaction. He seemed to be saying that buildings were not as important as people. I agreed with that, yet I sensed a more rhetorical statement than one that required a response. Throughout Church history battles had been fought in many religions over iconoclasm. There have been arguments today about the changing nature of sacred space. I let him read on. I mentally scrabbled with the first question I was to ask. I wanted it to make sense to him in light of the comment he had just made.

Q. Some Christian churches are Catholic, some are Protestant. What makes a church characteristically a "Catholic" church for you? (Without a blink of the eye he instantly responded:)

A. "Sacraments. Belief is the most important thing. The seven sacraments celebrated in the building make it sacred."

Q. What do you see in the building that is important to you?

A. "Stations of the cross, holy water fonts, the crucifix, the tabernacle, statues, kneelers (many Protestants don't have these), and the confessionals."

Q. Do all of these things have equal value for you?

A. "The Eucharist is central, so I would say that the tabernacle is critical."

Q. This must be in the church?

A. "Yes, it would upset me if it was not."

Q. Have you ever been in a Catholic church where it is not present?

A. "No."

(His wife broke in from the next room, which was the first indication that she had been listening as she busied herself with her charges: "Yes you have. That parish we were at last year had it in a separate chapel." He seemed embarrassed as if caught in a lie and said:)

A. "That's right, I remember. But it is sort of in the church."

Q. Do you look for the tabernacle when you enter the church?

A. "Yes, it would seem strange without it."

Q. What is the tabernacle for you?

A. "It is where we store the body of Christ that is not used up at Mass. If we run out at Mass (he says this always happens), then the ministers go to the tabernacle for more hosts. I also notice people go there to pray. We should give the Eucharist respect by genuflecting when we enter and leave the church. I look for the tabernacle out of respect. I am a convert and I might not know as much as people who have always been Catholic. I need some catechesis on this. I'll accept something if the Church teaches that this is the way that it is."

Q. What is truly sacred for you?

A. "The sacraments. If one was not acknowledged, that would be a violation of the sacred. I celebrate them in the building and that makes the building sacred. The sanctuary

should therefore only be used by Catholics. I have trouble with letting others use it because the space has been provided by gifts from the believers."

Q. Do you think that there are varying beliefs within the Catholic church?

A. "I am accountable for my family and how I relate to the Church. I am accountable for how much I share about what I believe. I see the building as part of me. The building is sacred as I am sacred. I am like one of the cement blocks that makes up the building." (He had been reading St. Paul). "We also need the tabernacle because it contains a different level of spirituality. It is more important than the people there. We need God. I go to church to be with God, not with other people."

Q: Do you believe that we should go to church to support the faith of others?

A. "I come to church because the body and blood of Christ is there. No offense, but I don't come to listen to sermons either. It is true that I get some nourishment from my brothers and sisters, but receiving the Eucharist is vitally important." (He quoted scriptures to me:) "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life within him." "I travel alot. I know that I can receive Holy Communion in every Catholic church I enter. The same cannot be said about fellowship in strange churches."

Q. Do you see the primary reason you attend the church is for its benefits?

A. "The primary reason is to get; giving is second."

Q: You have been blessed by God in many ways. (I looked around.) Is your home sacred?

A. "In the sense that we live here. Even if the house is blessed, the ritual has no meaning if people are not involved. Things like the shroud of Turin might be sacred. Historical buildings like some cathedrals, they are sacred due to their history." (He added pensively:) "Sacred is a tough thing."

Q. Will the passing of time guarantee sacredness?

A. "This depends on the direction that the people take. A holy place equates to the people's faith tested by time. Other people's sacred could be my hogwash. I would, however, treat other people's sacred with respect, but not hold it personally sacred. My characteristics for sacred space would be the historical faith and the recognition by the Church." (He furled his brow as he thought of a local church that is known for its liturgically progressive and sometimes different liturgical expression). "I don't like it when I hear of a parish adding Gandhi and Martin Luther King to the Litany of the Saints. This is somebody's agenda, not the Church."

(He felt he wanted to add some history of his own.) "My friends tend to be conservative Catholics. I rely on others' judgements, as well as on my basic knowledge. I had the experience of not being welcomed at some Catholic churches because of my Charismatic Renewal ties. A priest told me that I could not belong to the Renewal and also convert to Catholicism. I had to go to another Catholic church for

instructions. It was important for me to share the same faith as my wife. She has more knowledge than me on these matters. People are at different levels in closeness to God."

Q. So you believe that the place is sacred because you have experienced the holy things that have happened there?

A. "Doing, the rites are important."

Q. What would make a rite less sacred?

A. "If it was botched up. If there was disrespect, inappropriate words. If the priest did not believe that anything sacred was happening. If the congregation was being led down the wrong path." (He may have been referring to that 'liturgically progressive' parish again.) "If humanism, what feels good, was the order of the day. Faith is a hard walk. 'Warm and fuzzy' may not be faith at all. The feminist movement may be at the heart of changing the words of what I believe to be the important historical hymns. While I'm not against "girl" altar servers, I see Rome's decision to allow this in 1995, a result of pressure from the feminist movement."

(His wife entered the room. I do not think the feminist movement is one that she would espouse, but she might have felt that her husband was on the offensive or had said enough on the matter. She seemed to know him well and probably had heard this all before. The interview had reached its end and so I took the opportunity to examine the many varieties of cookies that she had provided.)

INTERVIEWER'S REFLECTIONS

Bob presented the insight of a convert to the Catholic faith and the conviction of a person participating in the Charismatic Renewal. Like many who are so involved, there is a conservative approach when the topic is doctrine, family and the order of things. He waits and wants to hear the official Church teaching on the matter. His responses on what "should" be done, such as genuflecting to the tabernacle, sounded like he was obeying the direction of an authority figure. I thought that it was unfortunate that he felt that he did not know as much as people who had been life-long Catholics. Often, converts tend to be well-informed as they have taken time to study the faith as adults. I remembered a former interview where a life-long Catholic had told me that he thought that he was genuflecting to the crucifix. Bob's use of words, such as "catechesis", indicate some education on these matters. His acceptance of "whatever the Church teaches" may place him with those Catholics who have a great deal of respect for the authority of the Church to make decisions on these matters.

His respect for the sacredness of the church space went so far as to exclude its use by non-Catholics. I thought that this opinion was restrictive. I also recalled how different are the opinions of Catholics who use the space. He felt that the tabernacle contained a different level of spirituality, one that was more important than the people who gather in the church. This view seemed to oppose the

opinions that I had been hearing lately from some liturgists. However, I did not agree with the view that one goes to church primarily to be with God. I wanted to defend 'the Church is the people of God' approach.

His decision to remove his children from the parochial school and be responsible for their home-schooling, indicates a commitment to what he believes. It also states that he is somewhat disenchanted with the religious training in the parochial system. He notes that he perceives a "lack of commitment" to conservative values. There is disappointment when he hears from the Church on one hand that parents are the first teachers of the faith, and then receives little support when he takes definitive action. I was amazed at his perseverance, and I told him so.

Bob is determined. His holy place and his faith are being tested by time.

INTERVIEW THREE

Two-thirds of the way through my interview process I spoke to a professional minister working in a local parish that was not her own. My experience is that most paid professionals work in their own parish and attend Sunday services there. I was intrigued by this difference. When I called to check on her availability she seemed very interested. She is currently a parishioner in Parish Two of this study, and she was spoken of highly by the staff there. At the time I interviewed her I was very familiar with the questions I had been asking other participants, yet I wished

to have more feedback from a wide range of individuals. I had learned much from listening to the responses of those I interviewed, and I was particularly sensitive to any new insights that might emerge.

Helen considers herself a professional Church worker. She labors at a parish of 1000 families twenty miles from her own. I chose to interview her initially in her capacity as director of religious education. She had invited me to her office. When I arrived, a large candle was burning and the room was filled with its special scent. There were many decorations to catch the eye, pictures, photographs, nicnacs, and books on education and ceremonies found on shelving and on table tops. I took note of the various sketches and water colors and I asked her about them. "I'm an artist," she said proudly. I could see that she was certainly more talented in art than my abilities had allowed. I normally did not choose the work-place as the location for interviews, but this particular place could certainly be classified as hers, a place where she exhibited her treasures and told some of her story. We chatted briefly about ministry in the parish and how she experienced a recent change in pastors. Her work in education seemed to be so directed that this recent change had not adversely affected it. I noted the great deal of activity in the adjacent office area, and I wondered as to whether we would be disturbed. We were not. She looked over the proposal agreement document quickly and signed it. I was impressed on

how she was able to assess the situation and make an immediate decision to act.

Q. What makes your church building Catholic for you?

A. "My first reaction is to say that the various religious things that are in the building like the crucifix, the tabernacle, the Stations of the Cross and the smell..." (She stopped and thought a while, her eyes raised as she brought forward a thought from the past.) "Yes, I can remember and say 'that smell is Catholic'."

Q. What do you mean?

A. "I am struggling with two worlds. As a pre-Vatican II child, I experienced that being Catholic meant the 'things'. Part of my identity was tied up with those symbols. In the course of trying to implement Vatican II, somebody may have stripped too much away. 'The smell is gone', if you will. These sense things are important to people, in my opinion, at least they are to me. For my kids, if I asked them the difference between Catholic and Protestant, they would not have such a strong sense as I. There is a middle generation of people who are lost due to the turmoil in the Church from 1968-1996. I think that it is important to reclaim what we have lost in the sensual department. My background is more as a 'cultural Catholic'. The young have not experienced so much of the liturgical smells, sights and other senses. These things were critical in my faith experience."

Q. What do you mean by 'cultural Catholic'?

A. "All those things we did and experienced. You know, no meat on Fridays, hours of fasting, weekly confessions,

Tridentine-type liturgies, ladies wore hats in church, etc." (Her brow furled.) "I don't necessarily want those things to come back. I mean that it was a cultural thing for Catholics before. You could spot us from among the rest. We did special, different things that were visual statements."

Q. Was this also true of the church building?

A. "Yes, definitely. There was a sense of the extremely sacred. There were elements of that I liked, but I don't know whether they would be appropriate today."

Q. What particular elements?

A. "Probably the tabernacle." (She breathed out a sigh, like this concern had been referenced before.) "It's a multi-level question. If the tabernacle serves as a focus of adoration without understanding, I see a problem. The Body of Christ is not confined to that box. If it is only contained in a box, then I do not want it present. The Body of Christ is also present in his community." (I understood her to mean that the Body of Christ present in the community is more important for her than its reservation in the tabernacle.) "It's a societal, a cultural problem. We've lost the sense of sacred in all people." (Her view was that we need to see the sacred in people more. Worshipping the sacred in the tabernacle and stopping there was not what the Eucharist was for.)

Q. Do you suspect that people feel that way about the Eucharist in the tabernacle?

A. "Yes, and I have noticed it whenever I have seen or heard about the tabernacle being moved. They seem so focused on it

that if it is moved even in a small way there is a reaction. At one parish I know it was adjusted 45 degrees in the same spot and it caused a minor war. The pastor ended up turning it back again to placate a small group of protesters. He said that it was not worth the trouble it caused." (She thought that he was not willing to stand up for what he actually thought was correct.)

Q. Were the people asked or instructed on the change?

A. "Yes, but they did not buy the reasons."

Q. Do you see any solution to this reaction?

A. "I think much of the time we define reality by our experience. It is dangerous to define reality in terms of what our experience has been. There is a lot more than our experience. For example, I have been lucky enough to have good experiences of both before and after Vatican II. Others have not and are often blinded to the way it has always been."

Q. Do you think that changes have been forced on people?

A. She smiled. "Yes, that has happened too, and very often. A lot of energy is spent on particular agendas."

Q. What would be your method in these situations?

A. "I try to realize that certain 'things' are the way people that I know meet God. Things help them, channeling their prayer and their spirituality. I like to think that I would 'invite' people to look at another imagery of God."

Q. What do you mean by 'invite'?

A. "I mean that I would not try to do violence to their former concept. I believe, however, that it is helpful to

ask if they can expand and look at it in a different way. Is the issue so big that we have to make it a force rather than an invitation? We need a better process."

Q. How do you foresee such a process?

A. "In between Vatican II and now there has been this 'chunk of method' with no process of study and explanation. Remember in the sixties we had Viet Nam, abortion, societal problems, etc. The Church had always kept you connected. Now the sacred got stripped from everything there too. There was no process in opening the windows. People didn't understand that the Church as it was becoming was also sacred."

Q. How do you think this group of people feel about it today?

A. "Some seem to want to return to the time before Vatican II, but we can't do that because there is a whole generation of people who don't really understand what it was like. There is no gut level connection to what was sacred. Of course, they haven't been asked totally. My sense is that there is a segment of people for whom the old symbols have no meaning. The emotional level of connection just is not there. I don't know their real feelings. It is like cod liver oil. I had trouble believing that it was really good for me.

Q. What do you think people like in their sacred experience?

A. "There is a tremendous hunger in people for the spiritual and the sacred. They don't know where to find it. Some of the Church liturgical documents are 'ideals'. I ask myself: why should we dump them on people? Does that make them feel

personally cared for? Does that invite them to grow?" (She gave her solution.) "It is a mistake to impose things on people before they are ready."

Q. How can they be ready?

A. "The Church, as a whole, still wants to treat people as children. I notice how the various documents are, on the other hand, in terms of respecting a process of development in people. People can grow into a sense of the sacred if they are invited into the process."

Q. How do you do that?

A. "I don't know. I think this is a bigger problem than Church. Look at the stadiums and the theatres. They are our secular cathedrals, the gods we worship." (She then referred to a local Evangelical church that was advertising itself as the church with the flags outside. For some reason this church was drawing many former Catholics. She had stopped to see the building. Inside there was, in her opinion, no sense of sacred, no altar, little decoration. Their time and resources seemed to be spent on providing programs and events for the congregation.)

"The sense of sacred takes more energy, more one on one in this society of personal computers. There is an impersonal element to our technology. The Church has to be more human than this. The Church has to be different, pastoral, touching lives." (She emphasized strongly:) "What can be sacred if people are not healed? The symbols must be symbols that touch people's lives. So, in a way, the Evangelical Churches have understood that they must relate to needs.

Unfortunately, they have often neglected people's deep need for symbols. That is why I feel that they have a floating population. People come and go as it suits them. I think what binds Catholics together is that sense of history, belonging to something greater than just our current wants and needs. There is a wisdom in having many years behind us."

INTERVIEWER'S REFLECTIONS

Helen has a sense and an empathy for the feelings of those people to whom she ministers. Her words are often telling of the ability to watch for a reaction and trying to understand it. I sensed that she felt sorry for some people's negative experience of liturgical change. I also sensed that she was trying desperately to be politically correct, lest she claim that others must feel as she feels. I often nodded my support in case she became more defensive. When she referred to what was "appropriate" today, I thought that the appropriateness of symbols would depend upon who you ask. Often there are more to these controversies than the opinions of one person opposed to another.

A significant comment was her realization that some Catholics were not accepting the reasons for liturgical changes. This confirmed what I had been hearing repeatedly. What was there about the method that people in authority positions were using that was not touching the hearts of their congregations? I reflected that often change takes place as a force, rather than as an invitation.

I related to her experience of the beginning of the liturgical renewal. Her metaphor of "opening the windows" was a Pope John XXIII image. I could mentally see him running from window to window in the Vatican, throwing up the sashes, with several scornful old cardinals disapprovingly aghast. Her cod liver oil analogy brought to memory those winter mornings when my mother would force a spoonful of that vulgar liquid down my throat because it was "good for me."

When she compared the church to a stadium it called to mind my feelings that our churches were becoming like stadiums. People get up throughout Mass and go to the washrooms; food wrappings are found in the pews after services; there is much activity in coming and going during the service. A spectator sport atmosphere seems to have been created.

Her comment that she had not seen an abundance of her familiar religious symbols in Pentecostal Churches made me wonder if there indeed was a lack of symbols, or whether people have chosen different symbols than those that are suggested by the traditions of the Catholic Church. The wisdom that she speaks about, a wisdom reflective of many years of tradition, seems to be lacking in this renewal period. The Church may have failed to develop a method that regularly included listening to Catholics.

Helen proposed for implementation what she felt was a "positive chunk of method." She did not consider herself a 'liturgist', but favored implementing the official reform.

She believed in providing people with spiritual and sacred symbols and invited them to look at the various images of God. She was not intent on a result, but more on a process that will eventually yield results in the lives of those so touched. In this type of system, she may be less stressed than if she expected to see certain results to know that the process has been effective.

What I sensed as her great strength was her ability to place herself within the picture as well. She has thought about her history and her experience, relating it to the expression of those to whom she ministers. She did not see her mission as one of enforcing a change on the unwilling. She saw herself as a professional educator. She trusted that this education would be taken up and enrich the lives of others. I remember thinking that I wished I could be as determined in method, yet remain so detached as not to be affected negatively. Helen seemed to have been able to attain a comfortable blend, one that, as she said, did not "attempt to do violence" to the parishioners' sense of what has been important to them.

These three interviews are typical of the procedure that was followed with the seventy participants. The respondents were often enthusiastic, and generally had much to relate about their experience. I was frequently amazed at their honesty, their candor, and the time they were willing to spend for the interview process. As the interviews continued, the wording of questions was improved, based on

the previous input of responses. Perhaps the success of the interview process may be reflected in the enthusiasm of the respondents to speak on a subject that is important to them. The topic may be one where they have often been denied a voice.

This chapter has offered three examples of interviews that represent some of the responses that were received to interview questions. The next chapter will present those answers in greater detail. Analysis of these responses will give a richer understanding of what these participants have said regarding their sense of sacred.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

This chapter will present a quantitative description of results taken from the responses made by seventy Catholic participants. The data is offered with the understanding that these seventy people, no matter how well they have been chosen, cannot possibly represent the opinions of all Catholics, or all Catholics in these four parishes, concerning changes in their church building. However, in the spirit of listening, these voices are presented to the reader, so that some quantitative results may be evident.

The method by which the participants were chosen has already been outlined in the first chapter. The reader should be aware that the choice of participants that was made by the interviewer reflects bias. The participants were all Catholics that were known by the pastoral staffs to have participated in the life of the Church. Minimal participants were not contacted in this research. Individuals were chosen by the interviewer from lists provided by pastoral staffs. While these people were not hand-picked to give certain responses, they were on the list because they were known to some degree.

The element of time limitation in the collection of responses must be emphasized. One interview with a parishioner does provide interesting data, but it may not be interpreted to give total or definitive results. Anthropological technique requires a longer period where

culture may be observed and recorded. What may prove interesting is the various points of agreement, even with this limited sample. These data are offered so that pastors and liturgists may compare their experiences of congregations with the opinions expressed here. If those results are found to be similar, then the validity of these data may be affirmed.

The information will be presented in the following format:

1) Questions: The questions that have been used are divided into five subgroups. These are the questions that elicited rich responses. It is therefore recommended that they could be used by other researchers when either qualitative or quantitative responses are desired. There will also be reflection upon why these particular points were chosen for examination.

2) Question One is the initial question, and the source from which all other questions flowed as the interviews developed. The sub-divisions of that question will be examined. The initial responses elicited by the inquiries will also be noted.

3) The detailed review of the answers given throughout the interviews yields six focus categories. These will be explained in detail.

4) The replies that were given made it possible to note fifteen themes emerging from the focus categories. These are statements upon which there is general agreement from the respondents.

5) The materials will be presented in the form of graphs and

charts. These will also provide the reader with an understanding of how the respondents related to each other.

6) Specific statements will be noted as they emerge from the six focus categories. These will be explanations of what the persons interviewed were saying, both directly from the immediate responses, and from my attempts to further clarify their answers.

7) Finally, analysis of the data will be presented in terms of the impact of parish, sex, education, ethnicity, and social class. Responses that may be noted for their similarities and responses that may be noted for their differences will be reported. As the responses are provided here, the attempt has been made to ensure that terms are well-defined, so that the intended meaning of the respondent's words may be clearly understood.

QUESTIONS

The interview always began with the question proposed by Dr. Roberts: "What makes your church building Catholic for you?" This request would establish the field upon which the discussion would proceed. The topic was established clearly so that the respondents would understand that they were being asked about their opinions on Catholic identity as it is expressed for them in the Catholic church building. Often, these Catholics indicated that they were not accustomed to being asked questions about their opinions on these matters. They had never been interviewed about such concerns in their homes. They were surprised that their

answers would be reported and have written results. Each person was assured before the interview that his or her feelings on such matters were important information that should be made known to others, especially to those Catholics who were involved in liturgical renewal.

The initial question on their Catholic identity, as it was related to their parish church experience, seemed to motivate them. It would elicit memories as well as hopes that related to their experience of the building. This request led them to recall how their building did or did not fulfill their needs.

The initial inquiry evoked responses about the sacred, mystery, and reverence. These topics were often expressed by them as concerns that needed to be addressed. They sensed that some other Catholics did not feel the same way as they felt about these matters. There was a concern that other Catholics were responding differently to these issues today. Something had changed over the last thirty years. Concern about the tabernacle placement would often arise in this context, as well as the issue of the perceived lack of respect for authority in society. They noted that this lack of respect is also evident in the behavior of some other Catholics while they are in the Church.

After these matters were introduced, questions were asked concerning changes in the church building. These questions referred to what they had seen happen in their churches, and to the process that had occurred to bring about these changes.

Next, the request was made about their opinions on those changes. What did they feel were the successes and failures? In their opinion, what constituted change?

The final questions asked were meant to attain responses about their education and stimulate discussions on these matters. It was realized that the interviewer was not the first person that they had talked to concerning their experiences at church. The purpose of these questions was to understand how they had been learning about the changes, and how this learning had assisted them in forming their opinions.

The fivefold question categories may be summarized as follows:

1) What makes your church building Catholic for you? (What is it about these things? How do they help you?)

2) Questions on their use of the concepts of sacred, mystery and reverence, as these relate to the building and their experiences of the building.

3) Questions on their personal experiences of changes in the church building.

4) Questions on their opinions of those changes.

5) Questions about their education on changes in the church building.

Category One: When the question was asked: "What makes your church building Catholic for you?" the respondents sometimes wanted a definition of the word "Catholic". They answered that "Catholic" was related to their experience of

non-Catholic churches. This focus would cause them to call to mind a list of symbols in the building that they felt are found exclusively in Catholic churches. The question was asked: "What must be present in your church for it to be Catholic?" or "What makes the Catholic church building different from other church buildings?" These thoughts led to more specific details of their experience of other Catholic and Protestant church buildings.

Responses to the above questions often revealed what these Catholics felt about the sense of sacred. They regularly answered as to what made their church building sacred for them as opposed to specifically "Catholic". As symbols and furnishings were mentioned the question was asked: "How important are church decorations for you?" "What things in your church building make you feel comfortable?"¹ It became evident that they often had a hope for a sense of focus, something that each person saw as critical. Their responses indicated that they were asking for a visual center for their attention. Once they had focused upon this space or object, they said that they felt more comfortable because of the recognition of something that was familiar to them. It was then asked: "What is your focus in your church building?" This question would elicit a response on the success or failure of renovations made to the interior of their churches. Would the hopes and plans of those who renewed sacred space be fulfilled in the experience of these people? What did my interviewees think was important as a focus?

Once their sense of focus had been established, the question was asked: "What is there about your church building that excites or disappoints you?" It was hoped that the respondents would relate what was sacred for them in a clear manner. "Does your church building reflect your sense of what is sacred? Why? How?"

These initial questions were successful in clarifying the subject matter, and in inviting these Catholics to tell of their experience of Catholic identity, and how they define that identity.

Category Two: The next series of questions was composed based on terms I heard used in category one. Such terms needed clarification. These were not meant to be leading questions, but rather were my response to the words used by the interviewees. As noted above, these were questions about the concepts of sacred, mystery, and reverence, as they applied to the church building.

Whenever the word "sacred" was used, the question was asked: "What does sacred mean to you?" Whenever the tabernacle, or placement of the tabernacle was discussed, the question was asked: "Why is the tabernacle important to you?" or "Why is the tabernacle in the church?" Often there was a sense of disappointment or frustration over what they saw as a "lack of reverence" or a "lack of respect for authority". Sometimes these two concerns were related, other times they were offered with specific examples. The question was posed: "What is reverence for you?" "How do you perceive

the lack of reverence?" "Why do you think that there is a lack of reverence?" "How do you perceive the lack of respect for authority?" The answers often indicated that there was some confusion as to the attitudes of other Catholics on these matters. It was therefore asked: "What is your perception of how people act in church?" "How does the behavior of others compare with your own sensibilities?" "What do you sense that others are feeling about these issues?" These Catholics spoke of a "sense of mystery" in the Church before the renewal began that was now greatly diminished. They were asked: "How do you describe this sense of mystery?" "How would you like to see this mystery function?"

The answers that were given to the questions defined the words that were expressed. The terms that were offered were often dependent upon experiences of the pre-Vatican II Church. There was, therefore, an emotional connection for these Catholics, as they had been part of a Catholic church with a different experience. These terms could be as complex as people are complex. They were based on multi-faceted experiences, just as the history of the Church abounds with multi-faceted changes.

The general consensus seemed to indicate that these Catholics had noticed other Catholics who exhibit a "lack of respect". In other words, the interviewees felt that these other Catholics seem to ignore, or do not appreciate with the same intensity, the sacred things such as the tabernacle, the rituals, or the symbols. It is this

characteristic that is often a sign to the respondents that the "sense of mystery" is much diminished, if compared to the years before Vatican II. Their answers have led to an understanding that this phrase means the recognition of the transcendent aspect of God that is acted out ritually.

Respondents have taken notice of what they call "a lack of respect for authority" in society at large. Some feel that the Church, which is seen by many as an authority figure, is treated in a similar style. They have noticed that the Church has attempted to address the voices calling for change, and this attempt has resulted in a ritual and a sense of sacred that they feel is diminished. They are comparing this ritual to their memories of the former sense of majesty of the Church.

Category Three: Now that the conversation had explored what was Catholic for those who were interviewed, and what it meant to be Catholic in an age of renewal, these interviews asked questions that referred to their experience of the changes in their church buildings. "What was your experience of change in your church building?" "Where did you think these changes came from?" "Who made the decisions locally?" "How were you informed about the changes?" Responses to these questions revealed what these Catholics had experienced in the last thirty years in relation to their church building. It recalled to their minds a chronological series of events.

The next question referred to process: "Were you consulted

on changes made in your church building?" The purpose of this inquiry was to ascertain if they had experienced communication about the change. Finally, to clarify the experiences, the question was asked: "Why were these changes made?" This question was asked so that I might learn if they believed that these changes were necessary.

Category Four: This category of questions was chosen to elicit opinions on change in the church building, and opinions on how the changes had been implemented. They had explained what had happened in their buildings, and now it was important to receive opinions from the participants on the impact of those changes.

The questions began with the process of change which they had experienced. "How should ideas for change be presented?" "What process is successful?" "Who should be involved in decision-making?" "What can be done to include people in decision-making?" "What kind of input do you feel you should have?" "What can you do to affect decisions on change that are about to be made?" These questions would often reveal the process of change that the respondents had experienced in the past. They would frequently give their opinions on the proposed changes, and their reasons for support or lack of support.

Questions were asked relating to their endorsement of change. "Do you ever question the changes being made?" "What were your reasons for supporting or not supporting the changes?" Had they accepted the changes that they had

experienced?

Another question was asked: "Are there things that should never change? What are they?" Here the respondents would speak about the things that they did not like changed, and the things that they felt had a special or sacred significance.

Last in this category of questions, participants were asked to consider: "What were the changes that caused conflict for them? Why?" "How can we meet the concerns of those who prefer that some things not be changed?" The purpose of this question was to establish a relation between what this person felt about changes and what he or she sensed others felt. The same change could have different effects on different people. The participants had noticed the reaction of others. As Christians, they were being called to minister to the needs of others.

Category Five: These thoughts led directly into the last question category asked at every interview: "Where and how do you learn about these issues?" "Who do you talk to about the changes?" "Where have you heard these things discussed?" This question category was meant to elicit both how they formed their opinions and how they were educated. Were they simply accepting the opinions of others or the media? Who had influenced their decisions? As they observed other reactions, had they formed an opinion? Had they considered these issues over a long period of time? These last questions would ask them to disclose their sources for

education about changes occurring in the church building.

QUESTION ONE

The first question was critical in establishing opinions on Catholic identity. Data will be presented that were received as the question was asked of each respondent about what made their church building Catholic for them.

Once they established in their minds that they wished to express which "things" or symbols meant the building was "Catholic" for them, the following information emerged:

The participants would list the things that they felt expressed "Catholic". At the end of the listing, it was not always clear what priority would be given to the objects or symbols.

Reported here are the choices that were named first on their lists:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| The Tabernacle: | 27 |
| The Crucifix: | 18 |
| The Altar: | 9 |
| The Baptismal Font: | 5 |
| The Stations of the Cross: | 5 |
| The Atmosphere: | 3 |
| The Community Gathered: | 3 |

70

As the data were examined further, it was discovered that some of these categories repeated in second or third place on the list. The 70 respondents averaged three items each. Presented below are the item totals as they apply to being mentioned on their complete list:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| The Tabernacle: | 55 |
| The Crucifix: | 37 |
| The Statues: | 27 |
| The Stations of the Cross | 23 |
| The Font/Holy Water: | 19 |
| The Altar: | 17 |
| The Kneelers: | 11 |
| The Windows of the Saints: | 7 |
| The Community Gathered: | 6 |
| The Confessionals: | 4 |
| The Atmosphere: | 4 |

210

These numbers indicate that these Catholics see the tabernacle as a high-priority symbol of the sacred in their church building. The crucifix, which is the representation of Christ on the cross, seems to follow in priority, some distance behind. The altar, which is the location of the consecration of the gifts of bread and wine, is in third place. Although statues were not mentioned to me as a first choice, they rank high in the overall answers. These Catholics seem to be aware that statues are not as evident in non-Catholic church buildings. This may also be said about the Stations of the Cross, the kneelers, confessionals, stained-glass windows that depict the saints, and holy water. The baptismal font, which before Vatican II was not as visible, seems to have been noticed and accepted today as a "Catholic" furnishing. Its recent use in public ceremonies may have contributed to this fact.

It is more difficult to define "atmosphere". When these Catholics were questioned, they responded that atmosphere was a "sense of peace", a silence, a respect exhibited for the house of God. They have observed other evidence suggesting that this attribute was being challenged by a

less formal atmosphere in some churches. There has been some effect from the theology that has emerged from the Documents of Vatican II, which calls the Church the "community" or the "community gathered". Respondents indicate, to some extent, that as the community gathers in the church, it is this assembly that contributes to the concept of Catholic identity in the church building.

In this research, the examples above are some of the aspects that made the church building "Catholic" for most of these individuals. However, nine out of the seventy respondents have chosen to take another approach. Not everyone responded to this question in terms of things or symbols. This reaction may be noticed to a small extent at each of the parishes. Sometimes there was a response that translated the word "Catholic" to mean "universal". This could reflect an approach which places "things" in a subordinate position to a more social-action approach. This calls attention to the gospel message. Such a response would reflect a vision of Church as community, called to spread the gospel. Symbols in a church building might, in this light, be considered secondary, or even insignificant.

It was not a surprise to discover that the pulpit was not on the list of those who were interviewed. These Catholics had not been catechized that the place of the proclamation of the gospel was important or sacred in itself. Since Vatican II, there has been an emphasis placed on the prominence of the Book of Gospels both in processions at Mass and during the reading of the gospel.² The Lectionary

to be used at Mass today includes a three year cycle of readings to assure that the faithful will hear more of the rich body of Scripture.³ Regardless of this emphasis, the respondents did not relate a sense of reverence for the pulpit when they were asked what items made their church "Catholic".

It was discovered that they could not ignore their background as individuals who had experienced the Church before Vatican II. Even though many may have accepted the more recent model of Church, there is a sense, from the scope of their responses, that the entire spectrum of their past to their present has affected their present opinions.

FOCUS CATEGORIES

When the responses from these seventy Catholics were examined, it was discovered that they could be placed into six focus categories. These classifications are not presented to indicate that any or all of these Catholics have only one concern. As the prepared fieldnotes of the interviews were read, focuses of concern became apparent. There were concerns about change in the church building that seemed to dominate the discussion. As all these responses were heard, certain issues were noticed that repeated in six categories. To verify these classifications, the data were presented to another person, who was a Catholic involved in ministry, yet unfamiliar with my research. I explained the definitions for each category. He was asked if he noticed that such a classification could be made when examining the

responses. After he read the response material and examined my classifications, he concurred that these categories could be interpreted as coming from the responses of my participants. Listed below are those categories for the reader, and the number of respondents in each:

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| 1) Communication: | 21 |
| 2) Tradition: | 16 |
| 3) Reverence: | 12 |
| 4) Symbols: | 10 |
| 5) Ritual: | 6 |
| 6) Community: | 5 |

70

The priority of "communication" is significant. Its placement indicates that many of these Catholics see communication as a critical element in what has happened, is happening, and will happen in their church buildings. Respondents were concerned about the decision-making process, who makes the decisions, and how they are to be carried out. The word "collaboration" was often used. This term refers to the process of decisions made with a joint effort, where all voices were heard. This was seen as an example of a good model for implementation.

Repeatedly, respondents related that decisions had been made without consultation. This had begun with the original decisions of Vatican II. In their estimation, this same lack of consultation was present in the decisions of the local parish today. In most cases, these Catholics wanted to be consulted, and sometimes they were willing to become more actively involved. The minimal requirement, for them, seemed to be the desire to be informed about changes. They often wanted to take ownership of decisions concerning the

building and other decisions concerning their Church. The request was made that the administration (priests) listen to the comments and the concerns of the faithful. Since this is the emphasis of this research project, it is a confirmation of efforts to propose a listening procedure that now also comes from the requests of the largest number of Catholics that were interviewed.

The second category also encompassed a large number of respondents. It has been named "tradition". These Catholics had a definite sense of the history of their church, and how these elements should be respected. They expressed a desire for stability. Further, for them, the past is clearly definable. Since the future could not be defined with certainty, it was easier for them to accept what they had experienced in the building, rather than embrace the unknown of change. These participants loved their traditions and did not appreciate the challenges that seemed to be brought against the traditions they preferred. Often this experience had placed them on the defensive against change.

The third category is "reverence". Respondents here seemed to be looking to their church building to reflect what they called a "sense of holy", as the house of God. For them, the Eucharist and many devotional elements are critical, as these are methods for them to meet God in the building. These Catholics look to others to share their sense of "reverence". For them, the building is not primarily a place where people gather, but rather a sacred place where God is present. Behavior in this place is to be expressed in

gestures of piety such as genuflection, kneeling and silence. Symbols that call God to one's attention have a sense of holiness about them. Any tampering with these symbols may be considered a desecration. Answers and concerns about the tabernacle and its placement are particularly evident in this category.

The fourth focus is "symbols". These responses center on the things that they view as enhancing the faith. This concern is similar to "reverence", but this category focuses on the symbols per se. It is not the building which is addressed, but what is specifically inside the building. Interest is concentrated upon the importance of the decorations as those things that lift hearts and minds to God. Often, this can be a matter of taste. Senses are at play, and there may not be an agreement possible on the priority of symbols. An understanding of the symbols that respondents bring into their homes was of importance here. Religious symbols are not only important as to their connection with the church building, but also have significance wherever they may be. The responses seem to indicate that it is in this context that Catholics exhibit a definite sense of ownership. These symbols belong to these people.

The fifth focus is "ritual". It may seem self-explanatory. Liturgists indicate that ritual has both beauty and a repetitive nature. However, ritual is often a point of contention for these interviewees, as it affects Catholic identity in the church building. Those individuals who focus

on "ritual" often respond to the beauty of ceremony and look to the Church to provide an experience that draws them close to God.

For the interviewees, there is definitely a repetitive nature to ritual. This is respected, and not perceived as inappropriate by those interviewed in this category. These Catholics appreciated the connection between the ritual that they have known and the ritual they currently experience. They recognize the Ritual of the Church, and say that they expect to observe its characteristics within their church building. Sacraments are key moments that express this identity. They are outward signs of the benefits that may be received. These respondents would agree that the purpose of the building is primarily the celebration of Catholic ritual. This celebration makes it a holy place.

A number of those who were interviewed focused on "community". They reflected upon the building as a gathering place for a family that has come to worship. The building is likened to a home. They come to receive the support of others and to belong. Protection is found in belonging to a group that is larger than oneself. It is interesting that the Church as "community", a very strong emphasis in the teachings of Vatican II, is particularly important only to the smallest number of these Catholics.

THEMES

Fifteen "themes" developed as the numerous responses were gathered. These themes can also be classified as part of the six focus categories. They are statements that were noted, based on repeated evidence from those who were interviewed. They are statements upon which the majority of the participants would agree. The numbers after each statement refer to the respondents who have made the point explicitly.

1) Communication

a) "These Catholics are in communication about these issues with family, friends, and parishioners. They are listening when something is said about the issues by the priest, and they are reading about issues or controversies in Catholic newspapers or in other media." (70) Responses from those who participated indicated that they had spoken to others about what was happening in their church building. In addition, the various controversies over liturgical renewal had been read when published in Catholic newspapers in recent years. T.V. programs have also been a source of information and opinions.

b) "Many feel uneducated on these matters, but they still have opinions on them." (55) This statement indicates to me that these Catholics have opinions and feel strongly about them. They may have been silenced in the past when an authority figure told them that they did not have enough understanding on these matters. They often wish to express their feelings, but may feel inadequate in their expression

because of their lack of formal education in this area. Despite this limitation, they are reacting to the proposals for change that have been placed before them.

c) "Vatican II is the original authority for the changes." (46) These Catholics lived in the time of Vatican II and saw their sense of identity and their buildings change. They have had thirty years to reflect upon that experience. They recognize that many decisions are made locally, but direction for these changes can be found in the Council documents.

d) "There was poor communication concerning the reasons for change." (34) These Catholics often responded that they were not told the reason that many of the familiar customs, rituals, and symbols were replaced or withdrawn. Some responded that they might be open to developments if and when they were explained. Lack of communication may have caused, or at least increased, the opposition to proposals for change.

e) "The priest (administration) needs to consult, and to listen to the consultation responses." (29) This statement presupposes that priests may not give the impression that they are consulting or listening. They may be functioning using a model of authority-control. They may not trust the opinions of the laity, or they may not wish to act, or understand how to function in a consultative and collaborative model. The voices heard in this survey repeatedly ask for at least some say in the decisions that are going to affect them.

f) "In many cases, changes were imposed." (23) They realize that the Church is slowly moving from a model of administrative control to a model that respects input from the laity. Changes before Vatican II were often made by those in authority and were transmitted by those same authority figures. Changes were often carried out in the same fashion when the renewal began. The Church hierarchical system had not been adjusted by Vatican II so that all Catholics would be given a vote as in a democratic system.

g) "It is difficult to convince all people to accept changes." (12) Respondents note that there has been controversy over issues on changes within the building. They have either been part of such disputes, or have experienced them. They mentioned that they had noticed that individuals involved in such disputes reacted emotionally to the changes that were proposed.

2) Tradition

h) "Tradition, church history, and Catholic culture are concerns." (42) These respondents have opinions on the liturgical renewal and they take note when it respects their history and traditions. They have some concern that the renewal has not respected a continuity with the past, and that it does not encourage a common Catholic experience. Rather, their experience of renewal is that it may often attempt to listen to those Catholics who wish for more widespread reform by removing the emphasis from traditional rituals and symbols. These rituals and symbols connect some

of the Catholics that were interviewed with their heritage.

3) Reverence

i) "There is a concern over the lack of the expression of reverence in the church building and how this is related to what is happening in society." (36) These Catholics feel that others in church may not share their sense of reverence. Genuflection to the tabernacle is sometimes ignored. Some parishioners talk openly in the worship space. Their experience was that the church had been a place of prayer and silence. Some reported that they had seen people chewing gum, ignoring the fast from food before receiving the Eucharist, and allowing their children to come and go regularly from the pew during the Mass. They recognize that this behavior is acceptable in public gatherings, but see this gathering as different from the rest. These participants are looking for what they call "atmosphere", a place of peace and quiet where they may come before God.

4) Symbols

j) "The tabernacle placement is a major issue, but not the only major issue." (51) All those who indicated that they would prefer the tabernacle in the sanctuary said that its placement there would not distract them during Mass. This feeling relates to the issue of reverence as noted above. The tabernacle is seen as the place of the presence of God in the building, much like the tabernacle of the Jewish temple. When the tabernacle was removed from the center of many churches, this left many of these interviewees

confused. A secondary placement may have affronted their faith in the true presence of Christ in the tabernacle. They had noticed the "lack of reverence" that had often accompanied this secondary position. They said that they had visited churches where the tabernacle was still in the sanctuary. They saw no reason why the tabernacle could not be placed in the sanctuary of their church. They neither accepted the directives concerning a separate chapel, nor believed the arguments that a central Eucharistic placement would distract or detract from the celebration of Mass.

k) "There is a desire for a sense of focus in the building." (37) A focus, in this case, is a point within the sacred space to which the eye is directed. This may be different than the focus that is maintained during the celebration of the Mass. That focus may be directed by the activity taking place. Before the renewal, the tabernacle had been a central focus in most churches because of its placement in the front and center. The desire for focus has coincided with the concern over tabernacle placement in many buildings because of this history. Many of those who were interviewed did not necessarily want the tabernacle to be the focus of their church building, but they did refer to the need for a sense of visual focus.

l) "There is more to the church building than the celebration of Mass, and the preparation of a space for that celebration." (28) I consider this a key statement. When this type of respondent enters the church, a personal place is envisioned, with recognizable and familiar touchstones.

They look for a place where personal piety may be expressed. They want to see their "things" in "their place". A plethora of symbols may be an advantage. When they are at Mass, they believe that these symbols do not distract them, and they are able to ignore them, or set them aside, to participate fully in that celebration. They have the impression that those who design and decorate the church do so with only the needs of the celebration of Mass in mind. They see their church as more than that, and they want that sensibility respected as well.

5) Ritual

m) "I liked the initial changes in the Mass, as the priest began celebrating in the vernacular and faced the people." (58) Most respondents recognize these changes as the initial changes. They accept them as they can better understand the ritual in their own language, and they can better hear and see the ritual when the priest faces the congregation. While approval is by no means unanimous, and some still speak of the beauty of the Latin liturgy, the larger dissatisfaction seems to have begun with later changes that occurred regularly, and with little unanimity.

n) "Catholic ritual is an important external sign of what it means to be Catholic." (43) Before the changes were implemented after Vatican II, Catholic customs were often more visibly practiced. It was noticeable that Church discipline required that Catholics not eat meat on Fridays, that Catholics attend Mass every Sunday, and that Catholics

observe holy days. They participated in the Catholic rituals that identified them as Catholics. Much of this identification lingers in the minds of these interviewees. The rituals may have been altered, but they are still Catholic rituals. When these Catholics gather in church, they participate in ritual and they appreciate ritual.

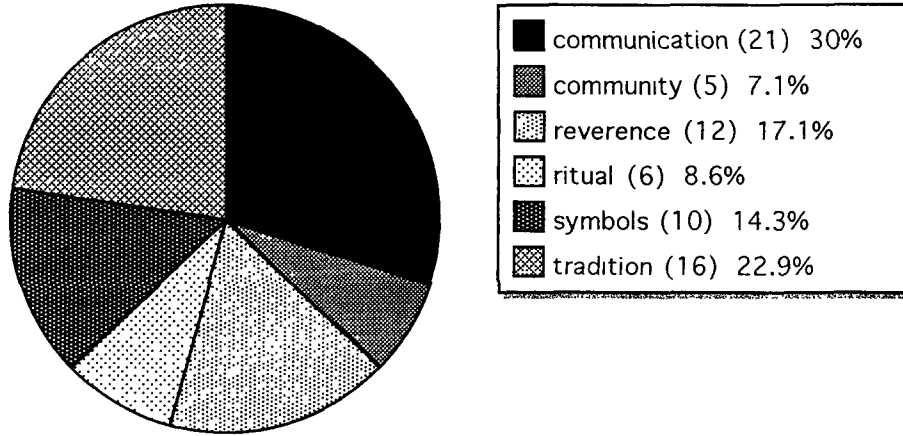
6) Community

o) "There is a sense of identity as we gather into a community of believers in the building." (12) This statement could well be interpreted as: "There is strength in numbers". Further, there is strength in belonging. Respondents in this category recall all that is good about family connections. They have said here that they want to belong, and that they want to receive strength from a larger group with common beliefs.

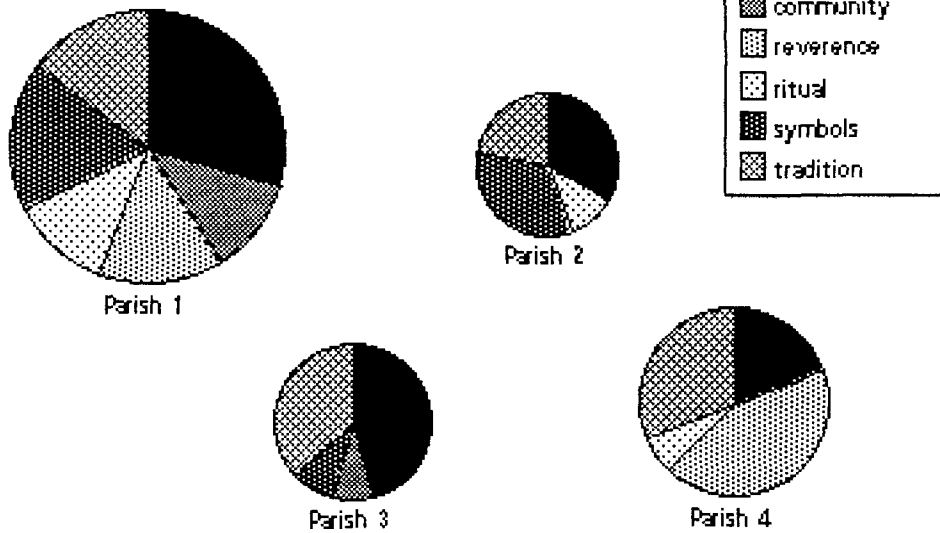
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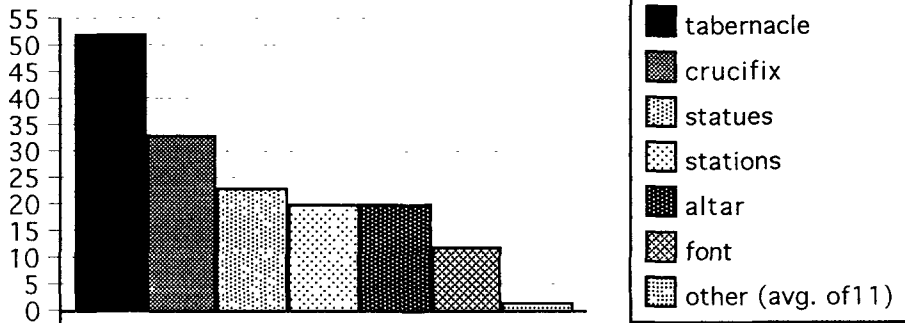
Focus All Parishes



Focus by Parish

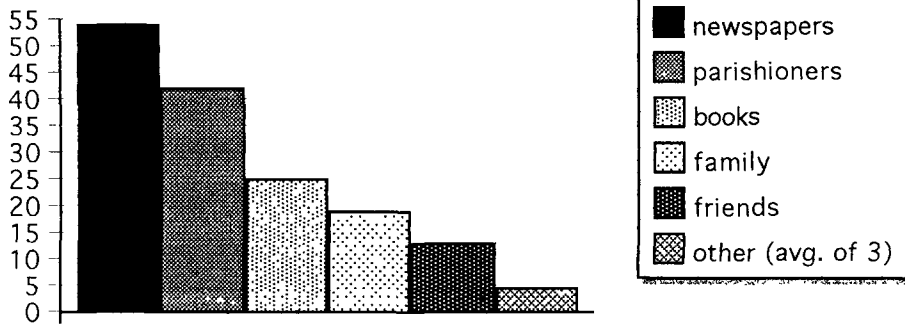


Question 1



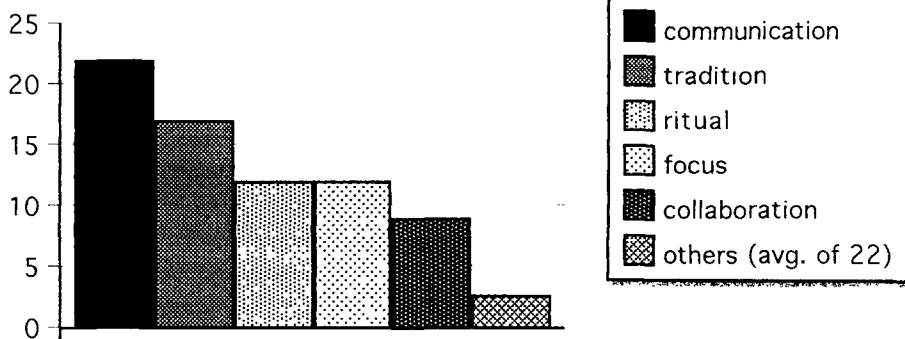
What makes your church building Catholic for you?

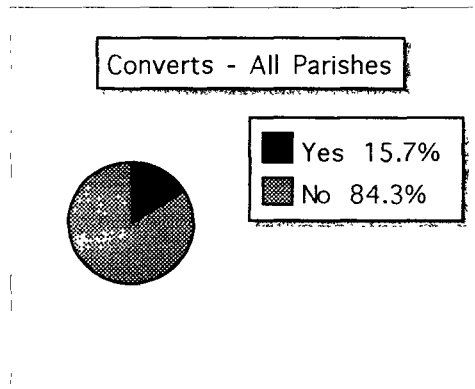
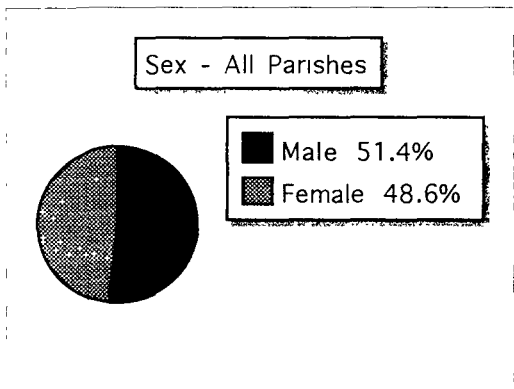
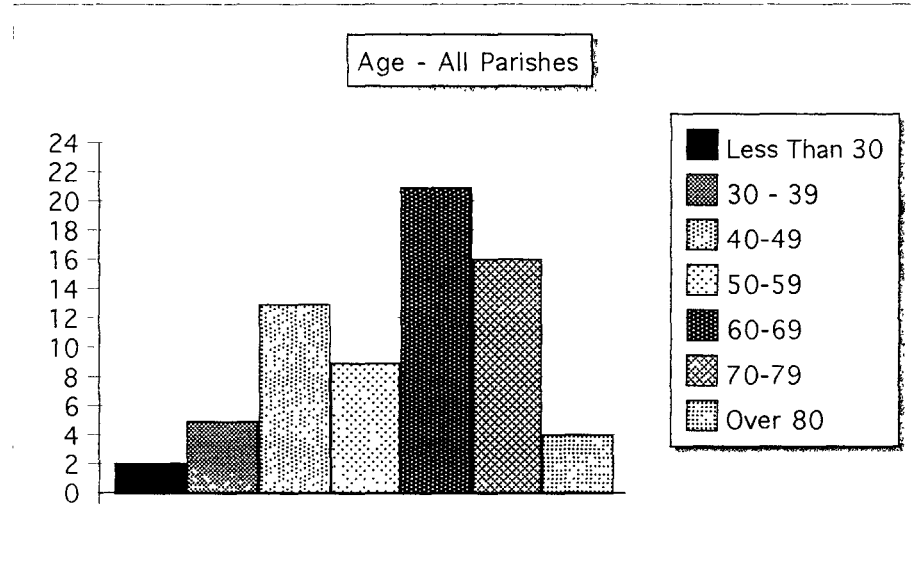
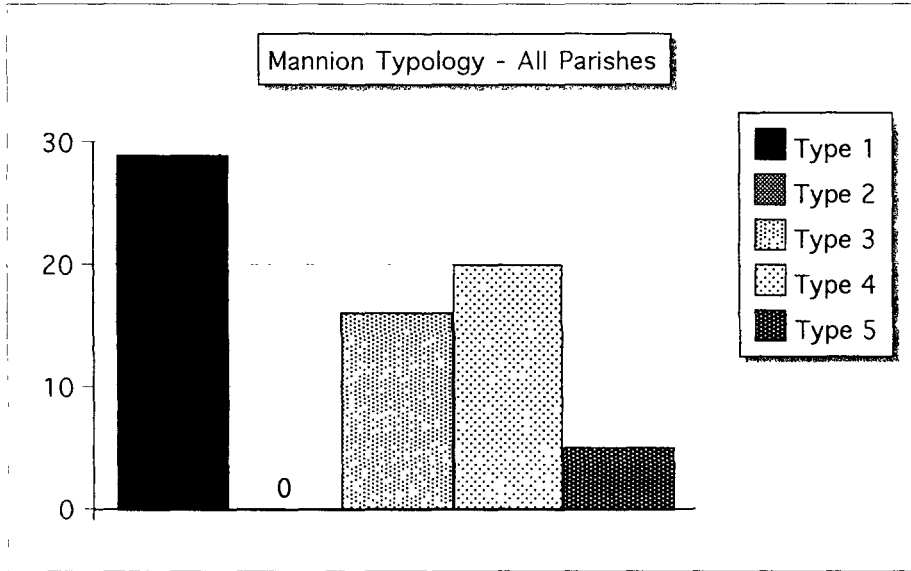
Final Question



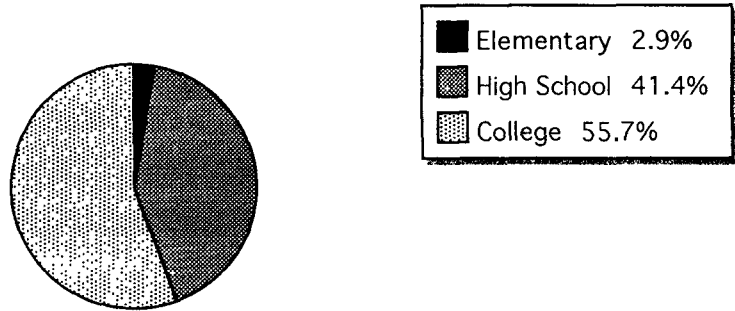
How do you learn about issues of change?

Major Issues

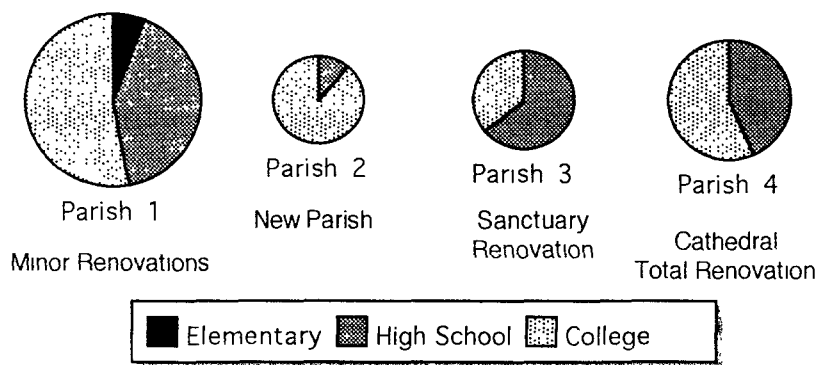




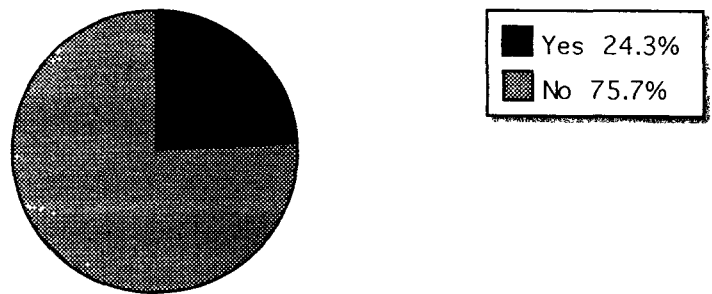
Education - All Parishes



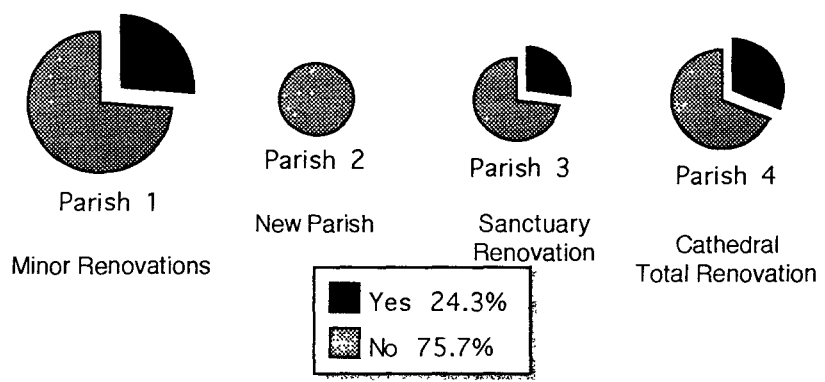
Education by Parish



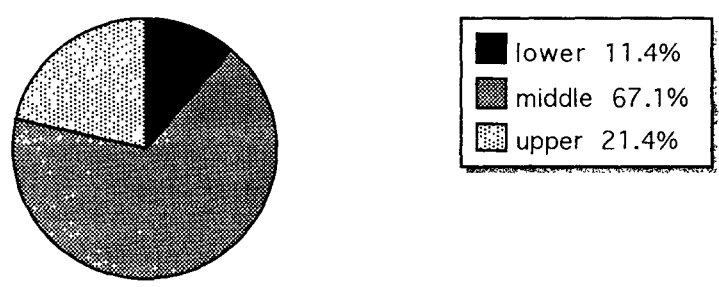
Ethnicity - All Parishes ⁴



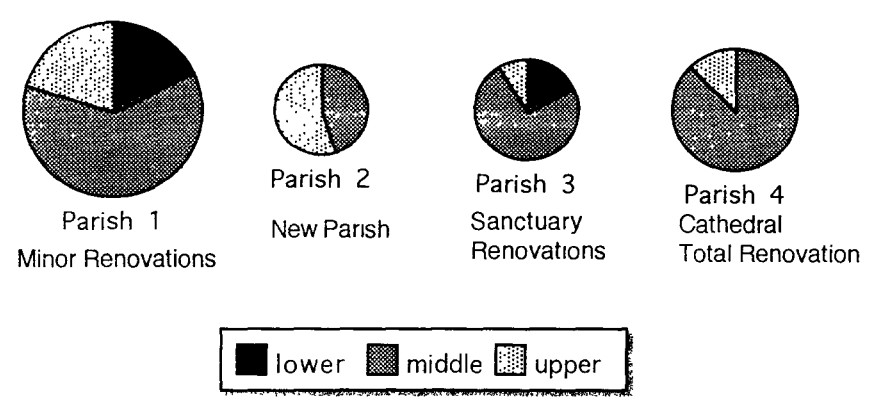
Ethnicity by Parish ⁵



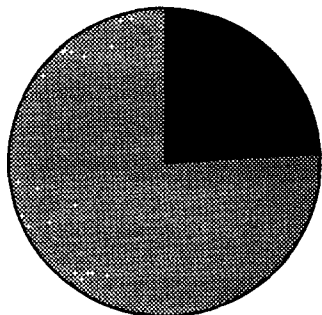
Social Class - All Parishes ⁶



Social Class by Parish ⁷

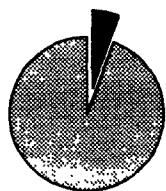


Residency - All Parishes



■ Out of Parish 24.3%
■ In Parish 75.7%

Residency by Parish



Parish 1
Minor Renovations



Parish 2
New Parish



Parish 3
Sanctuary
Renovation



Parish 4
Cathedral
Total Renovation

■ Out of Parish 24.3% ■ In Parish 75.7%

STATEMENTS

This section will now present the data from 230 comments received from those who were interviewed. These statements will sometimes be briefly clarified, so that they will be presented in the same context in which they were presented to the interviewer. These clarifications will be found in the bracketed statements that immediately follow each quote. Some responses relate to more than one topic. These comments will appear in more than one category. There is no attempt made to defend or agree with these statements, only to report and define these responses in terms of their context.

The statements are divided into the following categories:

| | | PARISHES | | | |
|---------------|-------|----------|---|----|----|
| | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communication | 67 | 36 | 5 | 16 | 10 |
| Tradition | 50 | 21 | 7 | 11 | 11 |
| Symbols | 37 | 23 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Reverence | 33 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 11 |
| Ritual | 30 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Community | 13 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 |

1) Communication

a) Process: Parish 1

"If you tell me the reason, I might be persuaded."

"People need to go step by step in a process, and not be immediately presented with a result."

"The average parishioner has no idea who is making the decisions."

"Communication is the key to changes at any level."

"Both sides need to make compromises."

"Group decisions are important today."

"Intelligent discussions make you feel renewed."

"If enough people are informed, then the people who are against the change will not be such an issue."

"We had no say in the decisions of Vatican II."

"Spend some time with people asking them what they like."

"I need more education on these matters."

"Did the authorities pray about these directives?"

"A lot of things go on that I never hear about."

"Perhaps a slower pace, with preparation time."

Parish 2

"The community should have more input."

"The priest's major work should be as sacramental leader."

"There is a difference between building a church and building Church."

Parish 3

"The decisions are made by the authorities with no ordinary man input."

"People want the leadership to be strong listeners. Listening is the key to all relationships."

"The less you know about a subject, the quicker you make a judgement."

"I see the Church as a democracy. We should vote for these things."

"I am bothered by the lack of explanation."

"Leadership should be sure that a process is happening." (This person was commenting on his preference for a collaborative process.)

"I am comfortable in my church when I know what

is going on."

"We should be heard, and some of our ideas should be adopted."

Parish 4

"The priest must encourage consensus at meetings."

"If people are consulted and don't get their way, it is better than no consultation at all."

"Sometimes there are too many people involved, too many cliques." (This person thought that a smaller group made decisions quickly. He did not think that decision-makers should have unlimited terms of office.)

"The pastor should not exercise control over the pastoral council." (She wanted her pastor to make decisions collaboratively.)

"Take the same message and reach a broader base, rather than changing the message."

"We are told, not asked."

"There would be chaos if we were asked about everything." (Same person as above, after some thought.)

b) Reaction to Change: Parish 1

"Small things become molehills, molehills become mountains." (This person felt that the issues escalate in importance as they are related to individual subjectivity.)

"The only force stronger than change is resistance to change."

"The Catholic church seems to have difficulty deciding where and when they want things." (This person had seen symbols repeatedly moved within the building without much explanation given as to the reason for the changes.)

"You touch anything and hell will be raised by somebody."

"Do what you need to feel comfortable, and the Lord will help you to adjust."

"People fear change."

"Stay flexible. What goes around, comes around." (This person said that he had seen his opinions

triumph when he had patience.)

"At different ages, you want different things from your Church." (This person noticed that Catholics of different ages have different concerns. For example, when he had children in school, he said that he placed emphasis on education matters.)

"Explanations did not stop me from wanting it."

"We had it all those years, then somebody took it away."

"I don't like something laughed at or made fun of, when I feel it is so important."

"Wrong people are empowered and put pressure on the priests." (He said that he had seen a few parishioners make decisions without concern for his feelings. The priest did not oppose the decision.)

"I wonder if these changes are for the better."

"The person of the priest has a lot to do with the success of change."

"Is it the job of liturgists to shock people into a sense of their reality?"

"Sometimes I get the sense from liturgists that they feel that as long as they are changing some things they should change everything."

"Sometimes I feel that I don't belong."

"The majesty of the Church has become a matter of controversy." (This person said that some of the symbols and rituals that he appreciated had been changed. In his experience, the new symbols and rituals were implemented even though some of the laity opposed the changes.)

Parish 2

"It is difficult to adapt old church buildings to a new way."

"The sense of sacred takes more energy, more one on one, in this age of computers."

Parish 3

"I flowed with the changes."

"Only ten to fifteen percent of the people are unhappy. The basic nature of people is to fight change."

"Every time they do these jobs, they fall short of their goal." (This respondent said that there are always elements of a renovation that he finds unsatisfying. He noted that there seems to be inherent problems that arise after the renovation is complete.)

"When things are cast in stone, they can become impediments in themselves." (This person noticed Catholics who had a more rigid approach to a controversial issue, and he said that this attitude makes decision-making difficult.)

"It is easier to handle additions than changes."

"It is a bad idea to try to adjust a church building that is shaped like a tunnel into another configuration."

"Eventually people will come around." (It is this person's opinion that eventually people are living with the changes they had opposed.)

Parish 4

"Older people are more open to change."

"These controversies should lead people to realize that faith is at the heart of the person, not the surroundings."

2) Tradition

a) Tradition: Parish 1

"I want a sense of stability." (This person said that he saw the church as a place where his past experiences would be reflected in some unchanging symbols.)

"You get used to your setting."

"In Communist countries, they kept the faith without the buildings."

"I'd feel lost without the Church."

"People fear change."

"I don't like something laughed at or made fun of, when I feel it is important."

"Sacred should be permanent." (This person said that a church committee should not be able to change what he sees is sacred. An example of this might be a change in the placement of the tabernacle.)

"The majesty of the Church has become a matter of controversy." (This respondent saw that there had been challenges made by Catholics to traditions such as novenas and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. he felt that these rituals are solemn and sacred moments.)

"It's not liturgical changes, but conceptual confusion over teachings." (This person felt that change is broader than liturgical change. He had listened to many Catholics who were concerned about moral issues as well.)

"I want the Church to stand for something."

Parish 2

"That smell is Catholic." (This person said that traditional symbols such as incense have an effect on her.)

"It is dangerous to define reality by what our experience of it has been."

"It is the building, and a whole set of experiences tied to a long tradition of rituals."

"Today we only seem to live in the present."

"Religious and clergy dedicating themselves to the Church is part of what makes the Church Catholic."

Parish 3

"Changes often cheapen what we have." (This respondent thought that some traditions, before they were changed, were more effective for him. For example, he liked a solemn ceremony to be celebrated on a regular basis.)

"I accept the changes, but like the old way. I love the Church regardless of change."

"Catholic is believing that the Pope is the head of the Church."

"Older people stay out of loyalty."

"These things do not affect the depth of being Catholic."

"Will there ever be unanimity of practice?" (This person further asked: "Will people ever see the importance of traditions in the same way as I?" He had seen other Catholics reacting differently to changes, as if they were happy with some changes that he did not like.)

Parish 4

"We grew up being intimidated by the clergy. This present experience of freedom is difficult to accept."

"Conformity shows respect for authority."

"I would like to see the clergy protect us from agendas."

"I have no problem, as long as it is approved by the Church."

"It is not conservative versus liberals. It is orthodox versus unorthodox." (This person was referring to the fact that he had noticed that some other Catholics reject some of the traditions that the Church teaches.)

"What is not 'politically correct' is challenging everything. Those I see as the minority have the right to change, but I have no right to keep my traditions."

"Sacred should not be changed." (An example that he gave was the belief in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist.)

"It is more than religion; it is my heritage, a family, a social thing."

b) History: Parish 1

"The Church taught people to be legalistic, so what do you expect?"

"Church history shows that when we involve ourselves in these people matters rather than faith and morals, there is always a problem."

"I want certain things because of my memories."

"Everything changes. You cannot live in the past."

"Before you touch it, know its history."

"We had it all these years, then suddenly they take it away." (This person had seen the altar rail removed. She wanted to know why it was no longer acceptable, when for so many years it was acceptable.)

"My church made an impression on me when I was a child." (This person said that she had a positive experience of ceremonies in her church when she was young that this has affected the way she feels about traditions today.)

"I would like some continuity with years ago."

"When you are confused, you hold on to what you have."

"As a child, I complained about Church discipline and devotions, but they gave me something that has strengthened me through the trials of life."

Parish 2

"I am a product of my youth."

Parish 3

"If you change the basic things we have known for years, you are in danger of losing Catholic identity."

"Older churches tell me that what has developed over the years is still with us." (This person said that he valued a continuity with the past, and that he appreciated that continuity when it is made visible in the church building through symbols.)

"We should keep our traditions as they are our roots."

Parish 4

"Every generation has had to face issues."

"Fear was not a good thing." (This person was referring to his experience of being afraid of God's retribution, and being afraid of authority. These feelings were not good experiences for him.)

"People had more respect before." (This person remembered the tradition of respect for authority that once permeated the Church. For example, in his experience, the priest was once the unquestioned authority on local liturgical matters.)

3) Reverence

a) Customs: Parish 1

"The pulpit is the microphone stand, a thing not holy in itself."

"The altar is an inspiring place."

"I go to church to meet God. If I do not meet God, then something is wrong."

"I cannot remember why I genuflect, but it is God's house."

"I want my children to feel as I do, that this is a place to talk to God."

"Sacred should be permanent."

"I go to church for the Eucharist, which is central for me."

"Everything that goes on in the building surrounds the eucharistic presence."

Parish 2

No comments in this category.

Parish 3

"It is important for me to kneel before my God in submission."

"I go to church to feel like I'm in the presence of God."

"Religious habits are symbols of someone dedicated to God." (She said that devotions in the church, such as kneeling and private prayer, are examples of holiness for her.)

Parish 4

"The building is holy because the Eucharist is there."

"Decorations distinguish a plain building from a sacred building." (Decorations such as the statues and the Stations of the Cross were given as examples.)

b) Their Application: Parish 1

"The church should not be multi-purpose. It is a place of worship." (He felt that the building is consecrated for sacred use only.)

"I don't like it when they laugh or make fun of something that I feel is important."

"The attempt to adjust the translation of the scriptures in a gender-neutral fashion is negatively affecting my sense of sacred in the Word."

"I look to those around me to see how they observe this holy place."

"When you enter the building, the interior space should dispose you for what is about to happen."

Parish 2

"Statues are teaching tools, reminders that bring a sense of sacredness."

"Sacred may be defined as something dedicated to a purpose. Holy bespeaks the presence of God. The church is sacred, but it may not always be holy."

"I go to feel renewed." (This person said that the church is a place of renewal and refreshment. He was often assisted by the prayers and support of other Catholics as he attended services.)

"To be a Catholic, you have to feel the Eucharist." (This person said that the Eucharist is holy, and therefore should have an effect on those who receive it. It should change their lives with its power.)

Parish 3

"The renovations I experienced at one church were a desecration." (This was a reaction to the complete renovation of a church, where all former symbols and furnishings were removed. They were replaced with contemporary furnishings.)

"Changes often cheapen what we have."

Parish 4

"We do not know what heaven will be like. Yet, this sacred place should give you a feeling of heaven on earth."

"The flippant attitude of society has entered the church as well." (The respondent is referring to his opinion of a sense of holy that has been diminished by the actions of some other Catholics in the building. He said that sometimes their actions are no different than the actions they would exhibit at a secular function.)

"The tabernacle is a focus, a visual aid to worship."

"I want to feel a sense of peace in the building."

"Catholic churches are quiet churches out of respect for the house of God."

"Catholic churches should be places without distractions." (This person said that distractions negatively affect reverence for

him. He felt that they are usually caused by the actions of some other Catholics in the building.)

"I receive communion on the tongue as I see that this is a more reverent custom."

"People had more respect before." (This person said that he noticed that the sense of sacred is diminished by some Catholics' actions in the building. These Catholics do not seem to share his sense of reverence.)

4) Symbols

a) Symbols: Parish 1

"The pulpit is the microphone stand, and is not holy in itself."

"The altar is an awe-inspiring place."

"I need some signs of the faith of the people."

"I look for the tabernacle because it bespeaks the Eucharist and the sacraments. "

"I want to see the tabernacle."

"I want to see a portrayal in the furnishings."

"Our things should be our choice, not things imposed from the outside."

"I want certain symbols because of my memories."

"We had it all these years, and then suddenly they take it away."

Parish 2

"Statues are teaching tools, reminders that bring a sense of sacredness."

Parish 3

"Religious habits are symbols of someone dedicated to God."

Parish 4

"The tabernacle is a focus, a visual aid to the worship of God."

b) Their Application: Parish 1

"It is not the thing, but rather what the thing does." (This person felt that the purpose of symbols is to provide an effect. For example, when statues recall to his mind the lives of the saints, he said he was led to imitate their example.)

"Looking back, I remember the Masses I attended, but not the tabernacles that were present." (This person said that the tabernacle is not a distraction for him.)

"What is the Risen Christ doing on a cross?" (This person was confused by the symbol of the Risen Christ on a cross, which had replaced the crucifix in the sanctuary.)

"The Catholic church seems to have difficulty deciding when and where they want these things."

"You touch anything and hell will be raised by somebody."

"A sacred space should speak to those who build it by visible cues."

"We spend a lot of dealing with things rather than people."

"In Communist countries, they kept the faith without the buildings."

"Before you touch it, be sure to know the history." (This person noted that a particular symbol might have an important meaning to a particular congregation.)

"People associate their faith with externals."

"We place too much emphasis on things, and not enough time on evangelization." (This person said that he needs to see more emphasis placed on the acting out of the faith, than on the examination of its elements.)

"Knowing that these signs are here rekindles my strength." (This person said that a benefit he receives from the symbols in the church is the comfort that comes from knowing that they have a nature of permanency. He felt that if they are removed, then this comfort is removed.)

Parish 2

"That smell is Catholic." (She said that incense elicits in her a feeling of Catholic identity.)

"Senses are critical to faith experience." (She said that examples of this are the things that she saw, touched, and smelled.)

"Symbols must be symbols that touch people's lives."

Parish 3

"Church decorations should be simple, so the experience will bring you closer to Christ." (This person felt that there can be too many symbols in a church, and this would interfere with his sense of what is sacred.)

"It is more what is done here than what I see here." (This person was referring to ritual as more important to him than stationary symbols.)

"It is easier to handle additions than changes."

Parish 4

"I do not believe that these things distract you." (This person mentioned that the symbols in the church do not distract him when he is at Mass.)

"For me, it is the building as a home, beyond the decorations." (This person was referring to the community element of the church which is more important for him than symbols.)

"Our faith is very visual. This can be a problem." (He said that there may be too much emphasis on Church symbols themselves, rather than symbols being seen as those things that lead me to live the gospel message.)

"These things help you meditate."

"Decorations distinguish a plain building from a sacred building."

5) Ritual

Parish 1

"I can always find a Mass somewhere that meets my needs." (This person felt that there are varied expressions of ritual available to her in Catholic churches.)

"Looking back, I remember the Masses, but not the tabernacles."

"I look for the tabernacle as it bespeaks the Eucharist and the sacraments."

"You touch anything and hell will be raised by somebody."

"Do what you need to feel comfortable, and the Lord will help you to adjust." (This person said that when changes are proposed that she found unpleasant, she did not let the change force her to participate in an activity that made her

feel uncomfortable.)

"Before you touch it, be sure you know the history."

"We had it all those years, and then suddenly they took it away." (This respondent said that ritual has created customs and practices, such as novenas, that are now a part of his traditions.)

"The building is Catholic as a community of people worship here."

"People associate their faith with the externals."

"The Mass is too casual today. It has lost its sense of mystery." (This person felt that some rituals are not taken seriously enough by some other Catholics.)

"I go to church for the Eucharist, which is central for me."

"I complained about Catholic discipline and devotion as a child, but they gave me something that has strengthened me through the trials of my life."

Parish 2

"The more we practice the sacraments, the stronger is our faith."

"Senses are critical to faith experience."

"It is the building, and a whole set of experiences tied to a long tradition of ritual."

"Ritual is as important as theological issues." (This person said that the decisions concerning what Catholics do as they gather are as important for him as the decisions that are made concerning doctrine.)

"Rituals help you understand the Spirit within, and help you keep the faith."

"Sacred space is not as important as meaningful liturgies."

Parish 3

"The interior of the church building should be simple, as simplicity can bring you closer to Christ."

"When things are cast in stone, they can become impediments in themselves." (This person noted that sometimes other Catholics were too rigid in their ritualizing.)

"Ritual is changeable for me. It can change to keep pace with the world without compromising principles."

"It is easier to handle additions than changes."

"Will there ever be unanimity in practice?" (This person said that he would like to think that he could go elsewhere and find the same ritual being celebrated.)

Parish 4

"I would like the clergy to protect us from agendas." (This person had noted some other approaches to ritual that he thought were unorthodox, such as adjusting the words of a text in ceremonies.)

"I go to church for Mass, not for beauty."

"What remains in the end is what has gone on in the building."

"Our faith is very visual. This can be a problem." (This person said that he watches the ritual, and makes demands upon it from what he observes. He said that these demands are made to assure that the ritual remains the same at each rendering, so that his needs will be met.)

6) Community

Parish 1

"A church should exhibit a stable foundation, providing a feeling like you are coming home."

"The building is Catholic because a community of people worship there."

"Sometimes I feel that I do not belong." (He said that occasionally, he had been alienated from community as a result of changes that were imposed.)

"I look at how those around me observe the holy place." (He said that he looked to see if others, by their behavior, respected the building as I respected it.)

"I need some sign of the faith of the people."

Parish 2

"I wonder if others feel like I do."

"I am the product of my youth."

"Church is a refuge from all that plagues you on the outside."

"Two-thirds of the congregation are happy to attend, yet they are not involved in the parish community in other ways."

Parish 3

"I am a loner. The emphasis placed on community tells me that my way is wrong." (He said that "community involvement" is not his way, and he often heard in church that he should function in this manner.)

Parish 4

"The building is a home for me, beyond the decorations."

"Sometimes the age of a congregation affects the level of comfort." (This person felt that the different needs of the community brought about by the age of the parishioners, should be addressed. He said that older people may have different symbols and rituals that are more meaningful for them.)

"It is more than religion, it is my heritage, my family, a social thing."

COMPARISON OF DATA

Up to this point, results have been reported of these interviews in an attempt to provide an account of the voices that have been heard. This has been done by means of focus categories, themes, and the specific statements of the respondents. To some extent, this material has provided a general understanding of how these Catholics have related to each other. At this time, further information will be presented that will be more specific on these findings. The results will be offered in five divisions: a) Sex (male vs. female), b) Education (high school vs. college educated), c)

Ethnicity (a family background with experiences of ethnic traditions vs. a family background with no particular experiences of ethnic traditions), d) Social Class (lower vs. middle vs. upper class), and e) The Presence of Catholic Religious Symbols in the Home (those participants who have a lot or some symbols vs. those who have none in the public areas of the home). The category of social class may require further definition. Some social scientists may define social class by referring to income and education. The United States government refers to income levels. The United States may be considered a nation founded and populated by immigrants. In England, there has been a more social class-oriented society that includes peers and commoners. For purposes of this research, "upper class" is defined as respondents with independent wealth and investments, who may own the means of production, and would not have to work every day to sustain themselves. "Middle class" are those respondents who have at least some college education, who are paid by salary rather than hourly, and who tend to be engaged in more the mental than the physical labor force. The "lower class" would generally have less education than the "middle class", and would be more likely paid on an hourly basis for more physical than mental labor.

A) Sex

These women favor "communication" in the focus category (17 to 14), and in the major issue category (13 to 9). This response outweighs those of men, who tend to favor

"tradition" (12 out of 36). The answers of the men were divided among other focuses that totalled higher than "tradition" (24 out of 36). This response indicates that these men are more diverse in their responses about focus than the women I interviewed.

Both men and women gave approximately the same response to Question 1. They say that the tabernacle is first in their choice of objects that make the building Catholic for them. They also agree that Catholic newspapers are their first choice of education on matters of change in the building.

B) Education

Respondents with a college education placed "ritual" in a primary position as a focus category. Both high school and college educated participants answered equally that "community" is a focus. "Communication" was the highest response from those who attended high school only. They also mentioned "communication" almost twice as much in the major issue category. Both named "Catholic newspapers" as their number one source of education on matters of change in the church building.

C) Ethnicity

41% of ethnics responded that "tradition" was their greatest focus. 18% mention communication. Non-ethnics responded that "communication" was their greatest concern. 17% said tradition. Both responded in great numbers (72-82%) that the tabernacle was first priority in Question 1. All

ethnics I interviewed had Catholic symbols in the public areas of their homes. 85% of non-ethnics had symbols in the public areas of their homes.

D) Social Class

The respondents from the lower social class placed "communication" higher as a "focus" than did the other participants. 50% of this class gave "communication" as their prime focus. 100% of the lower class answered "tabernacle" somewhere in their response to Question 1. 29% of the middle and upper classes did not mention the tabernacle at all. The presence of symbols in the home is a high priority with all classes of participants. Middle class respondents had slightly more symbols in their homes.

E) Symbols

Those interviewed who had many symbols in the public areas of their homes significantly concentrate more on "communication" as a focus and a major issue, when they are compared to those with no symbols in these areas of their homes. This fact can be made evident in the figures on "focus" (30% vs. 17%), and on "major issues" (40% vs. 17%).

F) Parishes

The statistics show that 43 out of 70 respondents had some Catholic religious symbols in the public areas of their homes, 20 out of 70 had many Catholic religious symbols, and only 6 out of 70 had no Catholic religious symbols in these

areas. Examples of such symbols would be crucifixes, pictures of the saints, holy water, statues of the saints, relics, blessed palm, rosaries, and Catholic prayer books. Parish 1 had a much higher response of "tabernacle" as their primary answer to Question 1. Very few participants from Parish 3 gave "Catholic newspapers" as their source of education on matters of change. Other parishes rated Catholic newspapers very highly in this category. Parish 3 respondents talked to other parishioners about these issues more than respondents from the other parishes talk to parishioners.

Parish 1 participants placed "communication" as a major issue on their list twice as much as the respondents from the other parishes. Parish 2 participants spoke more of "community". At Parish 3, The topic of "tradition" was heard more times than elsewhere. Answers from parish 4 concentrated on a "sense of focus" in their church building.

NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

¹Some liturgists might say that the worship experience should challenge Catholics to grow in their faith, rather than make them feel "comfortable". Many of those Catholics who are concerned with issues of social justice often wish that social concerns be referenced in public worship. These issues often call for a response from Catholics that may not elicit feelings of "comfort". This question was not meant to ignore these concerns, but rather to evoke responses about symbols that were appreciated by the respondents. The question presupposes that the respondent is considering the attributes of the building outside of the public worship experience.

²The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 51.

³The General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 35.

⁴Ethnicity is a socially constructed concept. My interviewees often had multiple identities from which they were able to relate. There may even be debates within a particular group as to the ethnic qualities of that group. I have noticed the recent establishment of Renaissance Fairs, and have often wondered if these events are not constructions of an ethnic identity. In American society, Caucasians are often called "Anglos", even though technically this term means "from England". Indeed, everyone may have some "ethnicity". In terms of my research, I refer to ethnics as those respondents who recall an ancestry that they have experienced as significant in their upbringing, and one that they feel is recognized or accepted by society. An exposition of ethnicity is provided by Mary Waters in Ethnic Options, (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1990).

⁵Ibid.

⁶Social Class is another definition that is complex in many situations. Social Class distinctions are discussed in Eitzen and Baca Zinn's Social Problems, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1994). The rationale for distinctions here may be found on page 156.

⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

An analysis of the data that have been received from these seventy respondents will now be offered. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a clear understanding of what has been said by the participants, relating this information to what has occurred in the liturgical renewal of the Catholic Church in the last thirty years. These data have been gathered using the elements of participant observation, interviews, and critical self-reflection. These techniques, which are found in the discipline of cultural anthropology, provide insights into how these Catholic voices may be heard and understood.

CENTRALITY OF THE EUCHARIST

The comments of these respondents show that they have generally accepted the teaching of the Church on the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This presence of the Lord in the church seems to place other symbols in a secondary position. Although tabernacle placement is not the first concern of Catholic identity, it could be argued that Eucharistic theology is a key factor in the Catholic identity of these respondents.

It became obvious during the interview process that most respondents replied to the question "What makes your church building Catholic for you?" with a list of furnishings that they felt were particularly "Catholic" for them. The reason

for this reaction may be that these Catholics are part of a western world perspective. Societies, such as those found in North America, express religious ideas in terms of ritual, and respond to symbols in that ritual.¹ Many of the respondents spoke of the meaning which they ascribed to their symbols. When there exist closely knit communal bonds, various types of ritual thrive; when these bonds are not so close, ritualism declines. It was the contention of the historian of religion Mircea Eliade that ancient artifacts influenced the human imagination, even when speaking of God.² The God of the Old Testament used symbols such as the potter molding the clay, the sword, and the shield. These symbols were familiar objects in the lives of the Old Testament people. The same could be true today. The respondents seem to feel that religious symbols are important to them, and such symbols should be recognizable to them.

The response from the largest number of participants reflected a preference and a concern for the tabernacle as a sacred symbol. This answer may be the result of catechesis that they had experienced relating to the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This doctrine has most recently been affirmed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.³

The evidence of such a concern may be best summed up in a letter written by a Catholic to an American Catholic newspaper:

Our church is preparing for renovations. The Sister in charge of the Liturgical Office said that it was liturgically incorrect to place the tabernacle in the

center of the altar. She stated that the tabernacle wasn't part of worship, and that praying before it was more of a devotion, like devotion to a saint. She also said that the tabernacle should be removed completely, and put in a small side chapel. Isn't Christ continually present in the tabernacle? Aren't we to worship Christ present in the tabernacle?⁴

The confusion and misunderstanding that has caused this response is evident. Did the Sister of the Liturgical Office actually mean to say that this person was no longer to worship Christ in the tabernacle? Did whatever she had to say somehow challenge this person's belief in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist? In light of this research, this person's questions cannot be accused of being atypical.

What may also be significant is the answer that this person received from a priest assigned to answer such questions for the newspaper. This person reported that he was taught as a child that Catholics must genuflect to the tabernacle as a sign of reverence for the True Presence of Christ present there in the form of the consecrated bread. The response to this letter stated that when the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the body of the church, and people are no longer required to genuflect, they eventually no longer even bow to the altar. Consciousness of the real presence of Christ begins to evaporate. It was noted that pastors are also well-aware that devotion to the Eucharistic Christ diminishes when the tabernacle is no longer in plain view. It was recommended, in view of this, that the parish church could situate the tabernacle behind the altar in a

central location. This Catholic was further told that some in liturgical circles have made the point to suppose a difference in the dynamic presence of Christ in the action of the Mass, and his static presence in the Eucharist. Fascinated by this distinction, they have become ardent advocates for the removal of the Blessed Sacrament from plain view during Mass. It was said that the sense of many Catholics, and many of their pastors, see no conflict between these two "presences".⁵

If, indeed, this is a typical argument from the Catholics who propose tabernacle placement in the worship space, is it also an accurate representation of what is being said in liturgical circles? A concise response is found in "Why We Have Tabernacles."⁶ This response was prepared under the auspices of Liturgical Training Publications, a liturgical training organization of the Archdiocese of Chicago. This document begins by admitting that Catholics say that the tabernacle makes the church a holy place. There is the recognition that the tabernacle deserves a place of honor in each parish church. However, this place of honor might not be the central architectural focus of the building. An older tradition suggests the placement of the tabernacle in its own chapel, such as is done in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The author says that this makes sense because the tabernacle is not needed during Mass. He notes that it is very important that the faithful receive the bread and wine that is consecrated at the same Mass that is being celebrated. Enough bread and wine should be prepared for each Mass. This

direction is taken from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the General Instruction on the Roman Missal. However, my research in this diocese seems to indicate that this directive is not followed. Further research that I have done into this question seems to indicate that there may be widespread use of hosts from the tabernacle for Sunday Mass.

The pastors interviewed in this research did not agree that the Eucharist received by the faithful had to be the Eucharist consecrated at that Mass. These priests, and others across the United States, repeatedly go to the tabernacle at Mass, during the time of the communion rite, bringing hosts to the altar that have been consecrated at another Mass. They see nothing wrong with this, and believe that the faithful do not object to the practice. The data that was received in this research agrees with them, despite the fact that the practice is in opposition to the General Instruction, which says that consuming hosts consecrated at that Mass is most desirable and a clear sign in sharing of the Eucharist being celebrated.⁷ The regular reception of Sunday Eucharist taken from tabernacles may also reinforce, in the minds of some Catholics, the necessity of the presence of the tabernacle.

The emphasis of the Liturgical Training Publications article, however, is a plea to Catholics not to be angry if the tabernacle is not on or near the altar. "Jesus is not being pushed aside." The article then reiterates all the ways in which Christ is present. He is found in the sacrifice of the Mass, in the person of the minister, in the

assembly, and in the Eucharistic elements.⁸ These are the principal ways that the Lord is present to his Church in liturgical celebrations. However, respondents continually refer to the concept of their church building apart from liturgical celebrations. This emphasis has emerged in recent years in the lives of some Catholics by a return to Eucharistic devotional practices. Parishes with chapels of perpetual adoration have appeared. This development indicates that these devotions are taking on a new life and vigor.⁹ Some of this enthusiasm may refer back to Pope John-Paul II's letter On the Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist (1980). The Pope noted that adoration of Christ must find expression in various forms of Eucharistic devotion, including personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, hours of adoration, and periods of exposition. The letter also adds that the value of the worship and the sanctifying power of those forms of devotion to the Eucharist, depend not so much on the forms themselves, as upon interior attitudes.¹⁰

These discussions and reactions have brought tabernacle placement into the forefront of considerations on Catholic identity. It is therefore not surprising that the tabernacle is most frequent among the responses in the focus category. The data indicates that both men and the women interviewed react with the same intensity on this issue. Repetitive and significant responses indicate that the tabernacle is not seen by these people as a distraction during the Mass. These individuals have decided upon a symbol that has a critical

meaning for them. Statements like: "The tabernacle is a visual aid to worship", and "Everything in the building surrounds the Eucharistic presence", may seem to oppose this form of the liturgical renewal, yet indicates an intensity about Eucharistic presence in the lives of these people. One of the respondents said: "To be Catholic, you have to feel the Eucharist". This person believes that the Eucharist can change lives with its power. It can only be imagined how this person's sensibilities can be offended by the removal of the Eucharistic presence from the Church, even if it is only removed to a separate chapel. This may explain the emergence of Eucharistic devotional practices in the lives of some Catholics.

The Church may also reflect upon those who do not consider the tabernacle a serious issue. 29% of the middle and upper class respondents did not mention the tabernacle at all. There might be many reasons for this lack of response, the greatest of which may be the lack of catechesis on the tabernacle in the last thirty years. However, like most Catholics of the age, these Catholics said that they were catechized in their youth about Eucharistic devotion. They have chosen to maximize their efforts along another path. Some said that such a direction called them to a more active role, living out the effects of Eucharist in their Christian lives. This attitude does not bear any disrespect for the devotional aspects of the Eucharist, but may concentrate on its evangelizing potential.

Perhaps a humorous, yet poignant comment was: "I can't

remember why I genuflect." This person acts out the ritual. It may be part of the history that should not be touched, rather than a meaningless habit. It may be a gesture of respect, for this place is seen as God's house, beyond the decorations that have been assembled. There is a sense that "sacred should be permanent", unlike a policy that can be changed or mere external attributes that may change with age. Change itself may be at the heart of the difficulty. As one respondent warned: "If you change the things we have had for years, we are in danger of losing our Catholic identity."

COMMUNICATION: THE LANGUAGE OF LITURGISTS

The tabernacle was presented by these Catholics as their first symbol of the sacred. The first focus of concern about the sacred in their churches was communication. This "communication" is indeed to be the language of liturgists, if there is to be an authentic acceptance of liturgical renewal as proposed by the Church. The methodology proposed here recommends listening to the voices of Catholics so that their opinions and sensibilities about what is sacred in their church building may truly be heard. It is not proposed here that this listening be a one way process. How may the Church, through its liturgists, and others in leadership positions, communicate the message of liturgical renewal, while, at the same time, be sensitive and understand the many opinions of Catholics?

Communication on these matters is a form of catechesis.

Catechesis is meant to help Christians discover the religious dimension of their existence. It must, therefore, meet a person wherever he or she is at a given moment in life, and shed light on that situation as the place and moment God is revealing himself.¹¹ The Church does not ignore the fact that the key to communication is life experience. Communication is found in a language of images and sounds, before it is found in the language of abstract thought.¹²

There is no doubt that many liturgists are convinced about their message on liturgical renewal. What may be proposed is true knowledge of those vehicles of speech, and those symbols that can carry the message. They must be communicated in such a way that Catholics can identify with it and make it their own. Pope John Paul II, in his document Catechesi Tradendae, said

(You) must be linked to the real life of the generation to which (you) are addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and questionings, its struggles and hopes. (You) must try to speak a language comprehensible to the generation in question.¹³

What has been addressed here to catechists may also be said to liturgists, or anyone who proposes renewal.

With this background in mind, the comments from the respondents that have been classified into the communication category are particularly revealing. Their view is that often there is little communication concerning changes that are proposed: "The average parishioner has no idea who is making the decisions." "I am bothered about the lack of

explanation." "I am comfortable in my church when I know what is going on." It may be noted here that this is self-reporting, and may not be an accurate assumption on their part. Many things could affect such an opinion, such as a lack of attention or a misinterpretation of the outward actions of others.

These people want to provide some feedback into such decisions: "Group decisions are important today." "We had no say in the decisions of Vatican II." "The community should have more input."

These Catholics are aware of their need for process in these matters: "Leadership should be sure that a process is happening." "We should be heard, and some of our ideas should be adopted." "The priest must encourage consensus at meetings." "If people are consulted and don't get their way, it is better than no consultation at all." "People need to go step by step in a process, and not be immediately presented with a result."

The responses may indicate a lack of trust in leadership to make decisions that reflect the concerns of the respondents: "Did the authorities pray about these decisions?" "I see the Church as a democracy. We should vote on these things." "The pastor should not exercise control over the pastoral council." "The wrong people are empowered, and put pressure on the priests." "I wonder if these changes are for the better."

Voices can be heard telling of an experience of dissatisfaction with what has occurred in their church

buildings over the last thirty years: "The Catholic Church seems to have difficulty in deciding where and when they want things." "Explanations did not stop me from wanting it." "Is it the job of liturgists to shock people into reality?" "Every time they do these (renovations) they fall short of their goal."

The respondents also tell about their vision of Church: "There is a difference between building a church and building Church." "At different ages you want different things from your Church." "These controversies should lead people to realize that faith is at the heart of a person, not the surroundings. "

These Catholics place communication about change high on their priorities: "Communication is the key to changes at every level." "If enough people are informed, then the people who are against the change will not be such an issue." "Spend some time asking people about what they like."

If it is true that communication is the key to change, then it likewise may be true that, as one respondent said: "Listening is the key to all relationships." Paradoxical as it may seem, as all cannot be said and done, listening may be the best way of communication on matters of liturgical renewal.

TRADITION: ESTABLISHING AN IDENTITY

"Tradition is cultural negotiation, a more or less explicit field of play formed in history."¹⁴ This statement

by Delvin Brown, a professor of Christian theology at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, attempts to define tradition, its "field of play", its stories, myths, doctrines, symbols and rituals, and its cultivated sensibilities. These are elements that establish an identity. Later in his book, Brown refers to change in the "tradition" context.

Change emerges in religious tradition intentionally and unintentionally. Change is provoked by the interaction, usually conflictual, between religious tradition and its socio-political environment. Lasting change is accomplished primarily by the recovery and reconfiguration of elements internal to the tradition. The pragmatic behavior of traditions takes the form of creating, sustaining, and re-creating viable communal and individual identities.¹⁵

The comments of the respondents reflect the truth of this statement. Their traditions have, in many ways, established a Catholic identity: "Sacred should be permanent." "It's the building, and a whole set of experiences tied to a long tradition of rituals." "If you change the things that we have known for years, you are in danger of losing Catholic identity."

The respondents reflect upon the things that they see are traditions, those things that are important to them: "That smell is Catholic." "Religious and clergy dedicating themselves to God is part of what makes the Church Catholic." "Catholic is believing that the Pope is head of the Church." "As a child, I complained about Church discipline and devotion, but they gave me something that has

strengthened me through the trials of life." It may be noted that these things are their experiences, and often they attach a permanency to them, as if they were age-old customs.

They also note the challenges to their sense of tradition: "I don't like something that I believe in to be laughed at or made fun of, when I think it is important." "The majesty of the Church has been a matter of controversy." "Today, we only seem to live in the present." "Will there ever be unanimity of practice?" "I would like to see the clergy protect us from agendas." "It is not conservative versus liberal, it is orthodox versus unorthodox." "What is 'politically correct' is challenging everything."

There seems to be a sense of confusion or disappointment over how they see other Catholics react to their traditions: "People had more respect before." "Conformity shows respect for authority."

Often, these opinions reflect a defensive attitude: "When you are confused, you hold on to what you have." "The Church taught people to be legalistic, so what do you expect?" "You get used to your setting."

What may be significant is that often these respondents relate Church tradition to the fabric of their being as a family, a social connection: "It is more than religion; it is my heritage, a family, a social thing." "I am a product of my youth." "I want certain things because of my memories." "I would like some continuity with years ago."

These seem to be statements that are based on their

understanding that their history is part of what they call tradition. It may not, historically speaking, be centuries old. Yet, it is sacred to them. They ask that this sensibility be respected.

REVERENCE: THIS HOLY PLACE

In this category respondents gave their opinions on their church building as a "holy" place. They compare their feelings, and how they act out those feelings, to the actions of others around them. Much of this reverence will be in association with the tabernacle, which contains, for them, the living presence of Christ.

Statements about the Eucharist, and the importance of the altar are often found here. "The altar is an awe-inspiring place. " "Everything that goes on in the building surrounds the Eucharistic presence." "It is important for me to kneel before my God in submission." "I go to church to feel like I am in the presence of God." "The building is sacred because the Eucharist is there." "The tabernacle is a focus, a visible aid to worship."

They have often considered how others around them respond: "Religious habits are symbols of someone dedicated to God." "I look around me to see how (others) observe this holy place." "The flippant attitude of society has entered the Church as well."

There is a hope and a blessing for these people that comes from their experience of the building and the reverence that is due to it: "I want to feel a sense of peace in the

building." "This sacred place should give you a feeling of heaven on earth." "I go to feel renewed." "I want my children to feel as I do, that this is a place to talk to God."

Another word that may reflect reverence is "respect". These respondents have made decisions about what external elements are signs of respect, and they are comparing themselves to others in this regard. At times, change and renewal are seen as threats to reverence. Some Catholics may watch for a response from leadership when a perceived threat comes against this sense of reverence.

SYMBOLS: THE OUTWARD SIGNS

Daniel Sullivan, formerly professor of philosophy at Fordham University, suggested that the worship of the Church is embedded with sensible signs symbolic of hidden realities.¹⁶ Have certain symbols lost their hidden realities? When Gilbert Cope wrote his book on symbolism in the Bible and in the Church, he noted that the fact that books have to be written to 'explain' symbolism is in itself evidence of the decline of their effectiveness.¹⁷ He made this comment with his realization that the symbols of antiquity have lost much of their meaning for modern and literate people. Many Catholics today have been confronted with an attempt to alter the symbols, flowing from their history, that have meaning for them. A new pattern of religious symbols could be emerging. The human psyche needs symbols for normal functioning. If the Church does not

provide an acceptable pattern, then a different pattern will be provided by non-Christian ideologies.¹⁸ Such an example of an attempt to address this process may be what was proposed by Pope John Paul II when he used a new ritual for the Stations of the Cross. The vast majority of Catholic churches hang the traditional fourteen Stations on their walls. 23 out of 70 respondents mention them as a "Catholic" element of their church buildings. The Pope is approving of the elimination of apocryphal elements, such as Veronica wiping the face of Jesus. The new Stations propose a series of events that concentrate on scriptural elements.¹⁹ However, there is no single pattern of symbolism that will receive a common response. The Church has the duty of examining this pattern, and expressing it in terms suitable for the age.²⁰ How will Catholics respond if they see their traditional Stations removed, and replaced with a 'scripturally correct' version? If this attempt is to succeed, the Church will again be listening to hear what the traditional Stations mean to Catholics before the long-standing tradition is replaced with a new emphasis.

These seventy respondents spoke of their symbols: "I want to see the tabernacle." "Statues are teaching tools, reminders that bring a sense of sacredness." "People associate faith with externals." "That smell is Catholic."

They also respond to the effects of their symbols: "Knowing that these signs are here rekindles my faith." "I do not believe that these things distract you." "These things help you meditate." "These things distinguish a plain

building from a sacred building." "Symbols must be symbols that touch people's lives."

It is significant that the respondents have a sense that there is more to faith than clinging to symbols: "It's not the thing, but what the thing does." "We spend a lot of time dealing with things and not with people." "It is more what is done here, than what I see here." "Our faith is very visual. This can be a problem."

The responses of these Catholics indicate that their symbols are imbued with their own rituals of devotion. They have taken ownership of the symbols that are important to them. This must be a very important consideration, if and when such symbols are adjusted or removed.

RITUAL: SYMBOLS IN ACTION

Unlike some symbols, which can be made private by individuals, ritual is often a public or communal act. For purpose of definition, "public" may refer to a ritual with a large number of people in attendance, while "private" would refer to a ritual in the presence of a small number of people. The Ritual of the Church is written to be, for the most part, acted out with others. Unlike the Catholic rituals such as baptism, that were often done with only a few people present, Catholic rituals today are written with the encouragement that they should be celebrated publicly. This may affect the sensibilities of those Catholics who understand these events to be private moments. This reaction is often felt by those Catholics who come to the Church

rarely, and when they do come, do so for rites of passage.²¹

This attitude may also be evident in those who prefer a more traditional, private experience of the sacrament of penance, as opposed to those who choose the option of face-to-face confession, or communal penance services.

Many Catholics have seen the rituals change, have generally learned to understand or accept this at some level, yet still express their opinions and preferences. They often compare the newer rites to their memories of the older rites. They talk to their children about them, as this new generation is catechized using the new rites.²²

The fact that the new ritual of the Church may be celebrated, in some places, with less than rigid conformity to the texts, has given some Catholics the opportunity to pick and choose the parish that ritually meets their needs. Occasionally, a respondent will yearn for the days when: "I felt that I could go anywhere in the world, and the liturgy was virtually the same." This is the classic statement of their perception of Catholic ritual identity.

Aidan Kavanaugh, founder of the graduate program in liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, said that ritual is the enactment by which the communication of values takes place on the deepest and most critical level for the future survival of society itself.²³ This may indeed be wishful thinking, if at times the rituals do not work. Catholic ritual identity is often seen by the respondents to be set and enduring. They may feel that renovating ritual is like renovating churches: no matter how well it is done, it is

always a renovation, and is not truly creative.²⁴ This thought may be seen in the comment of one of the respondents who felt that no matter what is done in renovation at his church, the renovation fell short of its goal. This form of renewal did not have a good effect for him.

The fact that there could be agony in such a transitional period was foreseen by Bernard Berenson when he wrote:

Ritual is what keeps societies together, and woe to the day when our traditional rituals give way to others, for that can only happen with the destruction of our societies, and their being replaced by others. But in the course of time they will develop beauty.²⁵

These respondents reflected upon the importance of their rituals: "Ritual is as important as theological issues." "Rituals help you understand the Spirit within, and help you keep the faith" "What remains in the end is what has gone on in the building."

They also reflect upon the loss of some ritual experience: "The Mass is too casual today. It has lost its sense of mystery." "We had it all those years, and suddenly they took it away." "Will there ever be unanimity in practice?"

Some respondents have a method to help them cope with change in their rituals: "Do what you need to feel comfortable, and the Lord will help you to adjust." "Ritual is changeable for me. It can change to keep pace with the world without compromising principles." "I go to Church for Mass, not for beauty."

However, not all respondents stress ritual: "I go to church (to receive) the Eucharist, which is central for me."

"The interior of the church building should be simple, as simplicity can bring you closer to God."

The responses of these Catholics have confirmed that ritual is concerned with the process of binding people's feelings into the existing organization, or aiding them to become critical or independent of it.²⁶ They have reflected upon the change in their ritual. They recognize the elements of ritual that are important for them, and continue to ask the Church to listen to their concerns about how their religious rituals serve a variety of essential functions in their Catholic lives.

COMMUNITY: GATHERING FOR THE CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE

The voices of these Catholics often tell of their understanding of their Catholic identity in belonging to a community of people. They speak of how many with a common belief strengthen the individuals in that group. The Church is often seen as possessing the virtues of home and family. Many of these Catholics feel called to serve in voluntary associations that assist the community and channel their enthusiasm and ideas. Such religious organizations begin as a result of theological, social, and political factors. William Brackney, current Principal of McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, writes that eventually these organizations reach a point of permanent existence which may lead to mainstream acceptance after a process of renewal and modification.²⁷ This may be a development of small Christian communities within the

individual parish.

Christ began his ministry by calling his disciples to follow him. His message gathered a community which was rooted in the personal commitment of each for all.²⁸ That message has received a response in the gathering of Christians ever since. The presence of Christ has been made known to the community in this fashion through the years.²⁹

Some of these Catholics have also responded to the importance of community: "The building is Catholic because a community of people worship there." "The building is a home for me, beyond the decorations." "It's more than religion, it's my family, my heritage, a social thing."

Sometimes this community has failed to meet their needs, but some of these Catholics have remained steadfast: "Sometimes I feel that I don't belong." "I wonder if others feel like I do."

Although they may misunderstand the attitudes of others, they felt a lack of commitment in others: "Two-thirds of the congregation are happy to attend, yet they are not involved in the parish community in other ways." Yet, they come to the community so that their needs may be met: "Church is a refuge from all that plagues you on the outside."

These responses are examples of the variety of opinions on the focus issues. It is difficult to establish a typology that faithfully reflects the experiences or backgrounds of the respondents. An attempt that has been made to develop a picture of Catholics in the modern Church in the United

States may be of assistance.

THE MANNION TYPOLOGY

On August 12, 1996, the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago held a news conference where he released the guiding statement for a new project. He announced an initiative to overcome what he called the "distrust, acrimony, and deadlock" that he saw as threatening the future of United States Catholicism.³⁰ He was speaking of the perceived, debilitating polarization of Catholics, one that he hoped this effort would address by promoting better understanding and reconciliation. No sooner had "Called To Be Catholic" been released, than debate began among some of his brother bishops. They wondered whether the statement made some gratuitous assumptions. It was accused of containing the flaw of appealing to dialogue as a path to common ground. Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston responded that the Church already had a common ground, found in Scripture and in tradition.³¹ Unity was not to be achieved by accomodating those Catholics who dissented from Church teaching. These reactions to an attempt to address the polarity of thought, coming from the voices of some United States bishops, are cases in point that opinions vary, even at the highest levels.

Earlier in this thesis (page 22), there was a reference made to the seeming polarization about attitudes toward liturgical reform. This liturgical controversy is not unrelated to the polarity that Cardinal Bernardin has sensed

in the Church, and it may need to be addressed as directly. Monsignor Mannion's typology points out the characteristics that may be present in Catholic individuals as they relate to the liturgical life of their Church. It is suspected that these characteristics go much deeper, touching the sense of identity within Catholicism. It was not difficult to recognize characteristics of the typology in all the seventy interview comments.

Attributing these categorizations to participants may seem vague or superficial. In conversation with the researcher, Mannion stated that his hypothesis is confirmed by his observation of many Catholics. He noted that they tend to belong to one type, although there is often some overlap. He likened this to a "rainbow" with its color variations. There can seem to be movement from one type to another depending upon the concern. Mannion also stated that the average Catholic tends to "react" to what is experienced. It is his opinion that reactions to change are not given enough thought. This typology, on the other hand, is reflective of a well conceived process. The seventy respondents exhibited many of the typology characteristics. While it is not possible to place definitively individuals into one specific category in this research, I will attempt to indicate here how the majority of the comments that were received may apply to the typology. This is only a sample of opinions. Value may be found in how it compares with Catholic tradition and in how useful this information can be to others.

TYPE ONE (29)

These characteristics were found in the largest number of these respondents. They indicated by their answers that they wished to advance the reforms of Vatican II and its subsequent documents. They generally agreed that Vatican II had been successful in promoting a meaningful liturgy for this age. Some of the respondents held this view because it was their perception that the bishops had approved the renewal, and therefore the Church approves the renewal. A statement that was made such as: "I have no problem, as long as it is approved by the Church", would be a classic example of a type one response.

Further clarification may be necessary. Is this person really saying that he would compromise his opinions, and ignore his preferences, in favor of whatever the Church promulgated? He indicated he would be forced to bear the decision. Perhaps this experience leads to a call from some Catholics for protection: "I would like the clergy to protect us from agendas." This could either be interpreted as a reaction against those who are considered unorthodox in their opinions, or a hope that Church officials will block the perceived abuses found in the renewal process. Some Catholics are definitely on the defensive trying to protect their vision of Catholic identity. They feel that it is under internal attack. However, it seems that the vast majority of Type Ones are accepting of the renewal, and wish that it may run its course, wherever the Spirit may lead it. "Everything changes. You cannot live in the past."

TYPE TWO (0)

There are many respondents who remember the Tridentine Mass with nostalgia. Perhaps they yearn for the days of the Latin liturgies. They may even make an occasional trip to wherever an authorized Tridentine liturgy is celebrated in their diocese. However, they do not advocate that the Church should reject the liturgical reforms. Such is the case with Type Two. They reject the reforms completely, and often go as far as to say that reforms have been the ruination of the Church. They often express a further revulsion at any attempt at ecumenism. Such Catholics will often affiliate with the Society of St. Pius X, currently in schism. When the founder of this society, retired Archbishop Marcel LeFebvre, ordained four bishops in 1988, without the permission of the Pope, he began this schism from Roman Catholicism.³² His followers have since rejected the accusation that they are not in unity with Rome. They continue to call themselves "Roman Catholics", and occasionally confuse Catholics who may attend their services. Some Catholics might see an outdoor church sign, and think that they are about to attend a Mass at a church which is in union with Rome. Some bishops have begun to warn their people about the difference.³³ This concern also applies to those who have organized themselves into "Sede Vacante", a splinter group of the Society of St. Pius X, as well as some former or suspended priests, who have attempted to begin their own congregations without the permission of the local bishop. Since all of these individuals are no

longer officially affiliated with the Catholic Church, there were no respondents in this category.

TYPE THREE (16)

Catholics who may be part of this type are not usually willing to go as far as Type Twos, but they are often in sympathy with them. They believe that much of what has happened since Vatican II has been a mistake. They would like to see the Church return to the beginning of the renewal and begin again. They believe this action may result in a more successful renewal. Comments such as: "We had it all those years, and then they took it away", or "The Mass is too casual today. It has lost its sense of mystery", are examples of this approach that was found among these respondents. Type Threes have a great respect for what they understand to be tradition and history: "Before you touch it, know the history."

They may grieve over the loss of their former experience: "People had more respect before." They seem to indicate that if the Church went back, and then proceeded in another fashion, all would be well again. This may be an appeal to their memories. A few respondents admit that it was too late to go back, yet: "When you are confused, you hold on to what you have."

They also express frustration over the "never-ending" process of change: "Will there ever be unanimity of practice?" Perhaps a strong attribute found in this type of respondent is loyalty. "I accept the changes, but liked the

old way. I love the Church regardless of change." Type Threes find in such an organization as "Adoremus", often called "The Society for the Renewal of the Catholic Liturgy", a strong proponent of their feelings concerning liturgical renewal.

TYPE FOUR (20)

Many Catholics would like to see the liturgy reflect the culture to which it is present. This "enculturation" may be at many levels. The decision to use the vernacular in Catholic liturgy was an attempt to address the concern of making the liturgy more meaningful to each culture. The rites of the Church often address the needs of individual communities providing options within the ritual celebrations. When the concern for an individual culture exceeds the concern to adhere to the universal texts, there may be a reaction from some Catholics. Often, there is a criticism that such an emphasis promotes "agendas". However, there are many respondents who appreciate the experience of liturgy and liturgical space that reflect their needs and concerns. Conflict may arise when an interpretation of culture is placed ahead of the needs and concerns of other members of the congregation. "I would like to see the clergy protect us from agendas." Another person defined those "agendas". "It's not conservative versus liberal, it's orthodox versus unorthodox."

The attempt to be inclusive was also a point of contention: "What is politically correct is challenging

everything. Those in the minority have the right to change, but I have no right to keep my traditions." Type Fours propose a new approach that often is open to opposition from those Catholics who see more of their sense of sacred being ignored, or put in a secondary position.

Type four voices relate: "When things are cast in stone, they become impediments in themselves." "Our things should be our things, not the things imposed from outside." Their comments may reflect an openness to various expressions of culture, and a sense of ownership concerning the symbols and rituals that they celebrate in their church.

TYPE FIVE (5)

The fifth type is composed of those Catholics who promote the recovery of elements of what they consider to be Catholic heritage, ethos and culture. The "Society for Catholic Liturgy" is an organization of professional liturgists, musicians, architects, pastors, researchers, and teachers, who appreciate the renewed rites when they are celebrated with what they consider to be beauty and dignity. They accept the liturgical renewal as a positive development in Catholic practice. They are committed to promoting scholarly study and the authentic renewal of the Church's liturgy. This is the youngest of the recently-formed organizations. It was organized in November 1995. It is a collaborative effort of academics and liturgists, to address what they see as the current liturgical renewal concerns. They may have noted with some of the respondents that: "The

majesty of the Church is becoming a matter of controversy." They might agree that "We should keep our traditions as they are our roots." They might also say: "When you enter the building, the interior space should dispose you to what is about to happen," or "The Church should provide a stable foundation, providing a feeling like you are coming home." This body believes that liturgy must be studied and understood in its broader theological, spiritual, historical, aesthetic, social-scientific, and pastoral dimensions.³⁴

It is clear that not many Catholics fit neatly into categories such as these. In many cases, an individual may agree with the approach of various groups. These groupings are indicators of the wide spectrum of opinions. They reflect not only those who were interviewed, but also the experience of those in ministry, as they examine their people for the attitudes and approaches of those to whom they are called to minister. Cardinal Bernardin's concern may also be addressed in the liturgical forum, for it is here that many Catholics define their sense of identity.

HOW DO CATHOLICS LEARN?

The background and experience of these seventy Catholics often reflects their religious education before Vatican II. This education was often supervised by religious Sisters, and confirmed by the public practices of that time. Young Catholics learned their catechism, and usually received a

common answer to questions of faith and morals. The experiences after the years of Vatican II were radically different. Religious Sisters no longer staffed Catholic schools to any extent. The traditional Baltimore Catechism was set aside in favor of temporary programs established by dioceses and bishops' conferences.³⁵ It was the experience of these Catholics that different priests now have given different answers to the same questions on faith and morals. They commented on a society-wide challenge to authority. How are they to learn about changes in the Church today? The last question in the interview process always directly asked each respondent this question. The answers that were received reflect five major methods.

First among these methods was Catholic newspapers. Many dioceses have their own newspapers, and there are several national weekly publications. Catholic newspapers are often found at the doors of Catholic churches, and are also finding their way into Catholic homes. Editorial and diocesan policy often determine the Church-political bent of the newspaper, and followers of particular ideologies often subscribe for that reason. The wide spectrum of responses to liturgical renewal has sparked debate, especially among those who have had liturgical concerns in recent years. In purchasing the various editions, a reader would learn that there are varying opinions about issues within the Catholic Church. For those respondents who have chosen their favorite Catholic newspaper, they are learning about liturgical change through the concerns brought forward in these

publications. Such newspapers include their diocesan newspaper, the National Catholic Reporter, Twin Circle, and Our Sunday Visitor. Current debates surround such issues as liturgical language, liturgical symbols and architecture, and the way Catholic priests have been interpreting and celebrating the ritual. Societies have emerged to address these concerns, and have advertised for membership in these newspapers.

Liturgical renewal has also created debate at the parish level. These Catholics also learn from speaking to their fellow parishioners. Often, they communicate as a reaction to some concern that has arisen in the parish. There may be a desire to receive more education on these matters by talking to each other. Their discussions often confirm that both parties have been uninformed on the aspect of change in question. The need for support is expressed. "I like to feel that others share my concerns." The issue may create a emotion that: "Sometimes I feel that I don't belong." Conversing with fellow parishioners has many times been a support mechanism, and a respondent's way of handling a lack of communication or education. Eventually, they will look to their leadership to resolve the discrepancy.

Some Catholics would rather trust the written word of scholarly authors, as it is found in books. The large number of responses in this category may also reflect the recent publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.³⁶ These respondents hoped that a catechism, like those catechisms of old, would contain all the answers to their

many questions. They found that commentaries were needed, and many were published.³⁷ Further, as so many of these respondents are college/university-educated, they were familiar with academic libraries, and the wealth of information on the Church that has been written in the last thirty years. During an interview, it was not unusual to hear a respondent quote the Jesuit theologians Avery Dulles of Catholic University, Washington, Karl Rahner, the late professor of dogmatic theology at Munich, or some other Catholic scholar.

Family and friends are also a source of learning for the respondents. There has been some discussion in the home, as well as communication with non-Catholic relatives and friends. The fact that parishioners have begun to speak about these issues outside the faith community may indicate that they feel more information, or even sympathy, is to be gained in contacting someone who is not intimately involved in the local concern.

The responses show that learning about issues of the liturgical renewal continues in the lives of these Catholics. They seem eager for more information that will answer their doubts and concerns.

ANALYSIS OF COMPARATIVE DATA

Five divisional comparisons were made in the last chapter. Some analysis of that data may prove beneficial in understanding the voices of the respondents.

It may be noted that these women favored communications

as a focus category, while men tended to favor tradition. This data relates that women found communication a major issue in most cases, and would be looking for communicative models more intently than men. Men's focuses were rather diverse. This may present a mixed message when men and women are working together to understand liturgical change. However, when the subject of the sacred is proposed, these men and women responded equally that the tabernacle was their first choice among symbols. They also respond equally and favorably to Catholic newspapers as their major educator on these matters.

It is interesting that college/university-educated respondents placed "ritual" in a primary position as a focus category. The primacy of ritual may indicate their experience, through higher learning, of the importance of the worship event. Those Catholics without college experience tended to focus on "communication". They may have done so with the thirst for more knowledge, or with the hope that more communication will explain the renewal in a way that they could understand. No matter what level of education had been attained by these Catholics, they seemed to recognize that the Catholic press was the source for education on matters of change. These newspapers presented to Catholics the current state of affairs, and were trusted by them because their placement by pastors at the doors of their churches seems to give official Church approbation.

Data on ethnicity provided the results that ethnics interviewed here looked to "tradition" as their greatest

focus. Often, an ethnic community will express its traditions in a celebratory manner.³⁸ Non-ethnics that were interviewed pointed to "communication", which the data placed as first in the focus category overall.

These ethnics all had religious symbols present in the public areas of their homes. The vast majority (85%) of all respondents did as well, although not to the same frequency as the ethnics. It seems that the ethnic tradition may exhibit more external signs and symbols because of particular devotions in the ethnic family that often come from European festivals. Many of these devotions have been retained, and have been passed down from generation to generation.

Social class comparisons indicate that the lower social class placed "communication" higher as a focus than other social classes. The reason for this may be the desire for more education, or the struggle to improve their status in the social structure. They all responded that the tabernacle made their church Catholic for them. The primacy of this sacred symbol as the presence of Christ may indicate their focus on the signs around them which are an important part of their struggle to understand the sacred. 29% of the middle and upper classes did not initiate a reference to the tabernacle at all. They chose other symbols and concepts that are Catholic for them.

This research confirms the results found in the book Inside Culture by David Halle. The author notes that religious symbols are more often on display in the public

areas of working class homes. Upper class Catholics tend to believe that public display of religious artifacts lowers the status of the household. Religion is seen as private, and such objects may offend non-Catholic visitors.³⁹

Symbols were very important for these Catholics. Often, they indicated a means of communication of their beliefs. Those respondents with many symbols in the public areas of their homes were making such a statement to visitors and friends. When a comparison of the data gathered about various symbols was examined, it was found that they were concerned with "communication" more in both focus and major issues categories.

The data also reflected concerns on the parish level. Parish One gave a higher response than other parishes that the tabernacle was the symbol that made their church Catholic. The reason for this may be the age of the parish, the presence of the tabernacle near the sanctuary, and parish devotional habits which include a monthly Eucharistic exposition. Parish One also placed communication as more of an issue than the other parishes. This could be the result of a lack of communication over the years on matters of change, or other administrative issues that may not be resolved in the minds of the parishioners.

Parish Two spoke more of "community". This may be the result of the formation of that parish in the last ten years as one that gathered a new community that continues to grow. The emphasis in parish literature often referred to the building of a community. The development of the parish

school was another indicator.

Parish Three was once an ethnic parish. Much of that experience still lingered in their customs. Parishioners talked to each other more as a family, and this may explain the higher communication skills in discussing issues of change, and the less emphasis that was placed on learning from newspapers and other media. It would also interpret the importance of "tradition", which seemed to reflect a more ethnic approach to life experience. This "ethnic approach" may be noted in annual gatherings, family events, and the re-telling of family histories.

Parish Four's concern with "focus" seems to make sense as they experienced a dramatic change in their church building. Since that time, those who had this experience may have been engaged in establishing ownership of their building and healing the hurt of the past. Respondents here tended to express a desire, in a more intense and defensive way, to concentrate on those symbols that are important to them. They looked to their church building to exhibit the symbols that express the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

A more quantitative sampling of Catholics in these parishes may be done to provide a more comparative analysis. These data do provide certain trends which may be typical of Catholics elsewhere. It is therefore recommended that these results be noted and compared to the evidence that may be offered elsewhere. These data may be a representation of further information that can be attained.

SUMMARY

An analysis of the data received from these seventy respondents has indicated much about what these people feel concerning their sense of sacred.

When they placed communication high on their list of priorities, they told of their concern that their feelings be addressed in propositions for liturgical renewal. They repeatedly referred to unacceptable explanations of changes, when and if they were offered. They spoke of those explanations in terms of not relating to their experience. They mentioned that they were not ready for the changes when they occurred. This attitude not only reflected communication issues, but also issues of trust. These concerns are critical in decision-making. Many of the respondents wished to be included in those decisions, and were often aware of the new models, such as collaborative process, which strives to include their voices. They referred to the leadership as the responsible source that initiates these processes. As communication is a very difficult procedure, a fresh focus on the methodology of listening to Catholics may be proposed.

There is a diverse meaning of "Catholic" to the respondents. They greatly relied on symbols, especially the tabernacle, to express their Catholic identity. Any tampering with these symbols could cause an acute reaction. Knowing the history of the community, and its functioning, was a critical concept to be taken into account. Symbols are connected with history and tradition. Where they are

considered "sacred", there may be a more intense ownership and protectionism that emerges among Catholics. The first question of the interviews recognized this as it referred to "your church building". A controversy about the tabernacle may flow from this understanding of what is sacred in their lives.

These Catholics often expressed their understanding of the sacred in terms of reverence. These forms were both public and private, and involved the observation of the behavior of others. This behavior was often exhibited at ritual, the public expression of faith. Ritual has had to be protected or defended many times from the attacks that these Catholics saw as coming from within. Their confusion and frustration were evident. Nevertheless, these respondents had remained steadfast, and returned regularly for a community experience of rituals and symbols, where they communicated reverence for their faith tradition. Their activity noted all the elements of focus that they had expressed in their responses.

These Catholics have also looked for support elsewhere, to those people who may best express what they feel at a deeper level. The Mannion typology may assist in understanding what best represents how they have found solutions that address their liturgical concerns. At a deeper level, their opinions tell of their emphasis upon what is sacred for them, and how much they wished to know that their feelings had been heard and understood.

NOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

¹Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols (New York: Random House, 1973), 32.

²Mircea Eliade, A History of Religious Ideas (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1979), 1.

³Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1333.

⁴Catholic Twin Circle (Hamden: Circle Media, July 28, 1996), 19.

⁵The letter was answered by a Catholic priest who is a convert, a former professor of systematic theology, a former religious education director, and presently a pastor in a southern diocese in the United States.

⁶David Phillipart, Why We Have A Tabernacle (One page explanation) (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 1994).

⁷The General Instruction of the Roman Missal #56h, states that receiving hosts consecrated at that Mass would be a "clearer sign of sharing in the sacrifice that is actually being celebrated."

⁸Eucharisticum Mysterium, #9.

⁹Beverly McDonald, "Liturgical Devotions Take On A New Life," Catholic Register (Toronto), 26 August 1996, 7.

¹⁰On The Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist, #3.

¹¹Brian Heard, ed. Revelation (Eldoret: Gaba, 1979), 40.

¹²Brian Heard, ed. Communication in Pastoral Work (Eldoret: Gaba, 1980), 5.

¹³Catechesi Tradendae, #49.

¹⁴Delwin Brown, Boundaries of Our Habitations (Albany: State of New York University Press, 1994), 77.

¹⁵Ibid, 112-113.

¹⁶Ernest Johnson, ed. "Symbolism In Catholic Worship," Religious Symbolism (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1955), 39.

¹⁷Gilbert Cope, Symbolism In the Bible and In the Church (London: SCM Press, 1959), 259.

¹⁸Ibid, 260.

¹⁹The Pope's choice of Stations may be found and explained in Joseph M. Champlin, The Stations of the Cross With Pope John Paul II (Ligouri: Ligouri Publications, 1994).

²⁰Cope, 276.

²¹Those rites are Baptism, Confirmation, First Eucharist, Marriage, Anointing, and Funerals.

²²Parents may encourage their children to celebrate rites, such as First Eucharist, with the same external symbols that they had experienced. A child's first experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation may also be affected by the parents, if they encourage their child to chose the option of receiving the sacrament behind the traditional screen, rather than sitting before the priest.

²³Aidan Kavanagh, "The Role of Ritual In Personal Development," The Roots of Ritual (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 151.

²⁴Edward Fischer, "Ritual As Communication," The Roots of Ritual (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 162.

²⁵Bernard Berenson, Sunset and Twilight (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and Ward, 1963), 190.

²⁶Robert Bocock, Ritual In Industrialized Society (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), pref.

²⁷William Brackney, Voluntarism: The Dynamic Principle of the Free Church (Wolfville: Acadia University, 1992), 64.

²⁸Theo Westow, Introducing Contemporary Catholicism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 117.

²⁹"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them." (Matthew 18:20)

³⁰Catholic News Service, "U.S. Cardinal's Unity Initiative Sparks Debate," Catholic Register (Toronto), 26 August 1996, 1.

³¹Ibid, 2.

³²A similar schism occurred after the first Vatican Council in the last century. The descendents of that group of former Roman Catholics are today known as members of the "Old Catholic Church."

³³Cathy Majtenyi, "Churches Not In Communion With Rome Operate Here," Catholic Register (Toronto), 12 August 1996, 3.

³⁴The Society for Catholic Liturgy publishes its articles of understanding, and asks perspective members to join the organization after reading those articles. If such a

candidate is able to agree that these sentiments are also his or her own, and that person is able to contribute to the aims of the society, they may be accepted for membership.

³⁵Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, The Catechism of Christian Doctrine (Patterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1949).

³⁶The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Ligouri: Ligouri Publications, 1994).

³⁷Such an example may be: Brennan Hill and William Madges, The Catechism: Highlights and Commentary (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994).

³⁸Refer to Orsi's The Madonna of 115th Street.

³⁹David Halle. Inside Culture: Art and Class In the American Home. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 174.

CHAPTER SIX
REFLECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

This last chapter will include reflections upon the process of using some of the techniques of the discipline of cultural anthropology, recommendations based on the data received from the respondents, and conclusions that have been taken from the research that may benefit ministry.

REFLECTIONS

This research has proposed benefits that may be taken from some of the techniques of cultural anthropology to aid ministers in the implementation of liturgical renewal. Personal experience with this approach has yielded a wealth of understanding on how one group of Catholics feel about their Catholic identity. There is reason to believe that this data may apply to the experience of other Catholics in the United States and Canada. When such voices are heard on these issues, it is proposed that reflection upon these opinions may have some effect upon the methodology of subsequent liturgical renewal. This effect may be noted specifically in how renewal is carried out in the church building. The effects of changing the symbols of the Church may also be more clearly understood.

It has become evident recently that a plethora of opinions and reactions to liturgical renewal have appeared in the Catholic media. This fact is reflective of concern coming from many Catholics, and needs to be seriously addressed.

Today, a greater number of the Catholic laity are well-educated professionals who are expecting that an approach to renewal will reflect a more collaborative method of decision-making. Often, they are becoming familiar with such a methodology as they experience it in the secular world. A model for renewal which does not include listening to their concerns will often meet with rejection. The model proposed here does begin with listening. This does not mean to imply that the proposals and directions of those who promote liturgical reform are to be abandoned, but rather that those proposals need to be tested in the light of the experience of Catholics and the teaching of the Church. It is in this way that the liturgical renewal may become accepted by Catholics as opposed to becoming a challenge to their identity. It is hoped that Catholics could begin to feel that the results of the renewal are flowing from what they have come to experience of what it means to be Catholic. Their history and their culture would thus be respected and upheld as valuable.

The initial experience of the interviewer in this process was one of confirmation. The respondents felt that it was critical for someone in authority to listen to their concerns. Reaction varied from surprise to shock that anyone was willing to listen to their opinions. This may be a discouraging commentary on some processes of renewal that have occurred in the last thirty years, as well as on the nature of pastoral ministry. The enthusiasm for promoting the reform, even those suggestions coming from the highest

of sources, may not have addressed the serious concerns of these Catholics. Such concerns are at the heart of what they feel it means to be Catholic. It seems immaterial to them whether they may be considered right or wrong in those feelings by those who understand current theology or practice. Questions still remain unresolved in their minds by some of the changes that they have found unacceptable. A process of listening to these concerns has definitely been of assistance in healing some of the abrasiveness they say that they have felt throughout the renewal period.

It was not sensed that a rejection of renewal was proposed, as much as a rejection of certain forms of implementing the renewal. This may be a positive sign for those who wish to advance the reform. The theology proposed may not be so much challenged as the methodology. It is interesting that respondents relate their concerns back to the Second Vatican Council. Despite the frustration that many of the respondents feel about their experience of the renewal, their comments often indicate a cloudy perception of how Vatican II decisions did not reflect consultation at the local level. Since this reflection recalls the "beginning" of the renewal, it might also be a serious point of contention. What is significant is that trust in authority has been affected, beginning with the Council Fathers, and descending from that time to local pastors and liturgists today. These Catholics are often vigilant observers of local leadership, and they report that often their leaders do not consult them before proposing changes

that affect their identity as Catholics. The listening process proposed here may begin to reverse that perception.

Throughout the interview process the honesty and enthusiasm of the respondents were obvious. Concern over the topic of the renewal and its effects was not foreign to them. The rich responses were an indication of how important their Catholic identity was to their lives. Also of note here is the amount of education and communication that has taken place among them on these issues. These Catholics have strong opinions, and they are sharing these opinions with other Catholics. Often, they indicate a frustration that leadership does not seem to be concerned enough to address the issues to their satisfaction. They have therefore continued the conversation among themselves. There may be suspicions and a resistance established against further change until their first issues are properly addressed. This emphasis is also confirmed by articles that have recently appeared in the Catholic media, and in the appeals that have been sent to the Catholic hierarchy. Both actions direct the concerns to a "higher" level than the local parish. It may be hoped that such issues would be better addressed in the parish of the participants. It is there that the experience has been most keenly felt.

Such a process has not been without its shortcomings. While listening to the voices of Catholics is proposed as the first step of the methodology, the action and the analysis that proceeds from such a process has a chance of becoming somewhat subjective. To whom does one listen?

Monsignor M. Francis Mannion's typology pointed out some of the varied voices that are heard today. These voices are a forceful commentary of the current state of the perception of the renewal within the Catholic Church. As the interviewer listened to all the comments and concerns, it was difficult not to form opinions or take sides on the multi-faceted issues that emotionally would emerge. One was led to wonder whether it was possible not to be affected by those voices. It was here that critical self-reflection became an important element in the story. Critical self-reflection has demanded that the interviewer re-think categories and re-orient perspectives that involve the effects of the liturgical renewal on Catholics. This presupposes that a minister would be open to such a procedure. It also requires the understanding and examination of personal history that has brought the interviewer to a current understanding about renewal and change. Once this process has occurred in the life of the minister, the results of renewal will be affected by the minister's enriched understanding.

No matter how empathetic an interviewer may be, it is difficult to move beyond the years of hurt and mistrust that are reflected in the responses of the interviewed Catholics. Hurt may often result in a reaction of blame which may be transferred upon others. Since Church authorities are seen as ultimately responsible for the implementation of the renewal, a priest might be open to receive more negative reaction from the respondents than a lay person. However, in

this interview experience, the interviewer was often asked questions about the renewal that had remained unresolved in the minds of these Catholics. Perhaps they felt that a priest could give authoritative answers. Yet, it was still difficult to break down the barriers of mistrust caused by the perceived lack of action of Church authorities against unaccepted changes. Such changes may not have been seen as sensitive to a respondent's conception of Catholic identity.

The University of Notre Dame's Center for Pastoral Liturgy celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1995 with a conference highlighting "Traditions and Transitions: Culture, Church, and Worship." Organizers commented upon feedback they had received from liturgists as to what had been gained and what had been lost throughout the renewal process since Vatican II. This feedback came from four hundred Catholics from across the United States and Canada who had a deep interest in liturgy, and were willing to reflect and have dialogue with each other concerning the Renewal. These reflections were gathered by the Center for Pastoral Liturgy, and subsequently reported to the registrants of the 1996 Pastoral Liturgy Conference at Notre Dame. Twice as much was said about what had been gained as about what had been lost. It may be significant that the first item on the list of losses was "Catholic identity." If it is indeed the perception of these liturgists that a great sense of Catholic identity has been lost, can the Church survive without a clear sense of identity? The respondents interviewed here often return to their pasts, to their

experience of the Church and its symbols, to find an acceptable means of expressing their Catholic identity.

The question may arise as to whether these traditional symbols may be changed. The respondents have seemed to accept many of their symbols as having an eternal value that rise from a community history. They often report that any new symbols to be proposed must respect the older symbols.

A further limitation in this process could have come from the number of participants that were chosen. The results here are taken from only four parishes. In order for a complete study to be done, there would have to be more participant observation. A longer period of observation might yield data that could affirm the testimony of the respondents as compared to their general behavior.

This process has also had its strengths. The encouragement of participant observation has led to a better understanding of the feelings and "culture" of these Catholic individuals. Participant observation has reached deeper than mere surface interviews. The interviewer has immersed himself into the lives of the interviewees so as to report and understand their feelings and "culture" at a much deeper level. This process has included visits to home environments and questions that have evoked histories and family backgrounds. There have been many moments of enlightenment where the interviewer, for the first time, has realized new insights coming from the respondents. These realizations cannot help but affect the process of the implementation of renewal. Further, the experience of the interviewee has been enhanced

by the presence of the interviewer. Since this process may be seen as a journey, rather than a discussion of points of contention, a relationship may develop between the parties. Relationships can lead to trust, healing, and understanding. These three elements may be the key to successful implementation and further growth towards a renewed process of liturgical reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has encouraged many responses from the Catholics who have been interviewed. In the light of the reflection upon this experience of comments and concerns, recommendations are offered that may enhance successful implementation of liturgical renewal and liturgical ministry in general. Pastors and liturgists may wish to reflect upon the following:

a) What is the Catholic identity of this group of people? On what do they focus when they enter their church building? Respondents looked for the symbols that expressed "Catholicism" for them. These symbols may vary from church to church. However, a strong Eucharistic presence and Eucharistic sensibility seems to be noticed. The Church has taught that the Eucharist is central in the lives of Catholics. That presence has often been interpreted by these Catholics to have particular focus upon the tabernacle. This concept is not unanimously accepted as primary, yet is nonetheless a critical element of Catholic identity.

Ideas for change and renewal seem to be appreciated by

these individuals when they have been applied with consideration for their local parishes, rather than being applied as universal concepts. For example, a baptismal pool may not be appropriate for every parish, as noble a furnishing that this symbol may be. The application of this proposal may be offensive to the sensibilities of a community. This sensibility could change. Such a symbol could very well be appropriate at a later time.

Often, it is not necessarily the idea that is attacked. This research has affirmed that often the opposition surrounds the method of introduction and implementation. A participant observation process could yield a much richer ministry than repeated confrontation. This methodology may help pastors and liturgists understand the identity of their congregations, and help them to be better one with them. This research has further shown that these Catholics want their leadership to manifest such an attitude of service while encouraging them with the gospel message.

b) Does the change exhibit a respect for the history and experience of this group of people? A very important element in the lives of these people has been an appreciation for their history. This reflection is also part of participant observation. The observer, in this context, spends time in a community and begins to know a group of people in many contexts. A minister may therefore wish to become familiar with that history, and show respect and understanding of it. That history could be celebrated in the lives of Catholics in various ways. Such respect would also bring about

feelings of trust from the congregation.

Catholics often comment that they have been in their parish all of their lives. They notice that their priests come and go, that they come from outside the local community, and that they will not remain for a lifetime. Despite this fact, the minister is called to encourage spiritual growth in the community. The methodology that is used in this endeavor becomes critical to successful ministry.

An element of community strength is the wealth of individual experience. Parishioners with ethnic backgrounds may have different experiences than those who do not celebrate a particular ethnicity. Such Catholics can bring further elements of their sensibility of the sacred into the parish. Celebrating these cultures will further enrich the understanding of community and affect the worship experience.

c) What is the history of the relationship with leadership in the parish? What model of leadership has been used in the parish in the last thirty years? Trust is a critical aspect of the liturgical renewal. If the community has had a negative relationship with its leadership, or recalls a traumatic experience of renewal for which they blame their leadership, there may be a hesitancy to express trust in new proposals. Pastors and liturgists must also be aware that there may have been times in the past when these Catholics have noticed a lack of leadership. The congregation may wonder, in the light of that experience, if they should

trust now. A first step towards reconciliation could involve pastors and liturgists who listen to these stories and concerns without any proposals for more change. Understanding the leadership style of previous authority figures is important.

Collaborative ministry is recommended. This model would mean listening to voices of concern, and reaching a decision that all parties called to make the decision can accept as workable. However, this may not always be possible. The official teachings of the Church must always be upheld. Further, it is impossible to contact all Catholics that may be affected, and the trust needed to accept decisions made by authorities may take time to develop. It is proposed that this method of collaboration will prove itself successful over the course of time.

d) How does change affect the concept of the church as the "house of God" apart from its use as a "house of worship"? This is a key distinction in the minds of many of the respondents. The building is their sacred building, home to sacred things, and not just an edifice for sacred events and ceremonies. They say that they see the existence of the building as a holy structure, apart from the few hours a week that it is used for religious ceremonies. They refer to the arguments proposing liturgical change as addressing only the use of the building as a ceremonial space. They reflect upon visiting their "sacred place" where "God lives". This conception is a very important aspect of understanding their feelings about their church. Recommendations about

renovations may take those understandings into consideration.

e) The participants' reference to "focus" in their church building is not clearly definable, but is also related to their sense of sacred. "Focus" was earlier described as a familiar visual center of attention that evoked feelings of comfort. The respondents seemed to refer to this need for the familiar and comfortable as they sensed the absence of these elements in the outside world. They occasionally reacted with dismay as they recalled the times that their "sense of peace" was affected. Their understanding of focus may, in some cases, be in conflict with liturgical renovations. It is recommended that ministers be sensitive to this concept of focus. Each church may vary as to a particular focus. Many renovations may have occurred, and the focus may have changed. This focus may have shifted several times over the last thirty years.

f) Has a process of listening to Catholics been blocked by the goals, vocabulary, and influences of liturgical reform? This research recommends listening so that the experiences of Catholics may be understood before any liturgical renewal is proposed. Pastors and liturgists have proposed the renewal with great enthusiasm, and often have been frustrated in the process of implementation. Have ministers proposed ideas that have addressed the experiences and considerations of their congregations? To ask this question is not to minimize proposals for reform, but rather to propose a process that may successfully implement

suggestions that minister to the congregations who will experience such changes.

g) Have ministers been led to a re-thinking of pre-established categories and perspectives throughout the process of renewal? The minister is also called to grow in understanding. This may be evident in the development of flexibility, and in the use of the collaborative model of decision-making. It is recommended that the minister examine pre-established categories, how there has been growth, and analyze what perspectives have changed. The leadership skills of the minister may only be trusted if that minister is open to growth, and if that growth is a witness to others. Critical self-reflection must be a part of the ministerial experience.

h) Communication was a high priority concern in the experience of the respondents. It may be recommended that this primary concern must be seriously addressed in the reform. The simple, yet often neglected, art of listening may be the most important component of communication. Listening indicates that the minister wants to know what the Catholic feels, and lets Catholics know that their opinions are important in decision-making. Communication is important throughout the renewal process.

People learn in different ways and at different paces. There cannot be too much communication. Those who were interviewed often accused the Church of poor communication procedures. Instruction on the theology that is behind proposals for renewal is not beyond the understanding of

Catholics. This research has confirmed that these Catholics are often seeking more information about these matters.

These eight recommendations are proposed as the beginning of a process that may lead to a successful implementation of liturgical reform. Ministers are asked to examine themselves first, as they encounter the benefits that may be gained from some of the methods of cultural anthropology.

CONCLUSIONS

This form of anthropological methodology has been successful in that it has presented the voices of those Catholics who were interviewed, relating what is sacred for them, how that sense of sacred applies to their church building, and what factors establish Catholic identity in their minds. These revelations are offered so that ministry may be carried out with this knowledge, so that it may be sensitive to these feelings, responsive to these needs, and beneficial to the growth of the minister.

Listening has been presented as the key to successful communication on matters of liturgical reform. Participant observation, which also includes a much deeper understanding of participants through sharing their common experience, has been proposed as the methodology employed to evoke successful responses to a people's sense of sacred, as well as a method that helps the minister to understand better the "cultural life" of Catholics.

Participant observation has also deeply affected the interviewer. Listening to Catholics in this manner has also

made it possible to share in their history, their experiences and hopes for the Church. When a significant variety of voices were heard, it was possible to attain a richer understanding of the Catholic sense of sacred.

The visits to home environments has also been an insightful experience. The interviewer was able to examine what people said, and how they lived out those sentiments from day to day. These revelations may adjust directions for renewal that could not have begun without this input.

Participant observation also made it possible to develop a closer relationship with a community and its history. Ministry also means embracing the history of a congregation, in the spirit of true service. This method may therefore bring a unity in service which has hereto been unachieved.

This process has also directed the interviewer to critical self-reflection. Preconceptions and notions about how to implement the renewal have been re-examined in the light of the testimony of the participants. It is believed that the minister should reflect and pray concerning the direction of his or her leadership, so that it may always be led by the Spirit. It is a common temptation to be led by personal opinion, and be re-inforced by personal attitudes. The method proposed here may serve as a remedy for this possibility.

It is proposed here that responsible pastoral ministry will begin with the attitudes of the minister, called to serve needs, to lend a sensitive ear to concerns, and to

bring about personal salvation by responding to the call to ministry which has been initiated by Christ. This process of transformation is evident in the minister's response to the call of personal renewal and growth, which is a primary witness to the call that has been received.

The minister is an active figure of the Christ, who listened, who was immersed in the culture he was called to serve both as God-human and as part of the Jewish culture, who reflected upon his Father's will, and who clearly communicated that will in word and in deed. It is Christ who calls each minister to critical self-reflection, re-thinking received categories, and re-thinking perspectives, shaping and directing those who are on the path of the will of God.

Led by Christ's teachings, may we become more sensitive listeners, and more compassionate lovers, as the Spirit directs the Church into the third millenium.

APPENDICES

Roman Catholic Identities And The Church Building:
A Proposal For A Research Project By *Liturgy Network*
with Dr. Fredric Roberts

INTRODUCTION: HEARING THE OTHER VOICES

A consensus may now be emerging both among leading liturgical professionals and a number of their mainstream critics that the dissatisfaction some Roman Catholics have felt about certain aspects of the liturgical renewal may stem, in part, from the liturgical community sometimes appearing to be insufficiently attentive to or respectful of critical voices of "people in the pews" (not to mention a variety of professionals representing other elements of the Church). This view clearly was articulated at the June 1995 seminar on "Liturgy and Anthropology: A New Look at an Old Relationship," which Dr. Fredric Roberts led.

In some cases those critical voices may be seriously in error from theological, liturgical, or pastoral perspectives; in some cases, these voices may express a deep wisdom or knowledge emerging from a life of faith and prayer or from training in another discipline. In all cases, it is increasingly clear professional liturgists will be far better prepared to foster the progress of liturgical renewal if they learn how to hear and understand what those voices actually are saying. While liturgists may know what they have meant to communicate about liturgical renewal, at a minimum, listening carefully to these other voices may help liturgists understand how those messages actually have been understood.

Note: Clearly, there are many, many voices of support for the liturgical renewal in the Catholic Church. It is just as important that liturgists learn to listen carefully to what the sympathetic and approving voices are saying, since occasionally they may be expressing very different intentions and understandings than those liturgists hoped to convey.

As noted above, many liturgists already have begun to recognize the importance of paying more careful attention to other voices. This can be seen where offices of worship organize "listening sessions" throughout their dioceses or archdioceses. Clearly, liturgists and liturgical design consultants also often try to foster open communication when they are brought in to work with parishes on a variety of issues. However, the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions generated by liturgical issues are so deeply embedded in complex and ever-changing sociocultural contexts that liturgists might gain additional insight into how to listen to and understand other voices by learning from disciplines more experienced in analyzing and interpreting these types of issues, particularly cultural anthropology. That is a major goal of this project.

TRAINING LITURGISTS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The goal is not, however, to turn liturgists into professional anthropologists, but to provide liturgists with hands-on training in some specific anthropological skills and perspectives that have direct relevance to liturgical concerns. My specific approach is based on experience in training both anthropologists and non anthropologists in sociocultural research methods on the advanced undergraduate and graduate level. In particular, I have found that assigned readings and extensive preparatory lectures on research techniques seldom have any significant impact on how people actually carry out their early attempts at interviewing, observing, and writing up. The only way to learn how to do sociocultural research is to actually go out and do it. Learning primarily occurs in the context of detailed conversations between the experienced anthropological researcher and the novice that focus on the resulting concrete piece of research. Key methodological and theoretical issues are far more effectively addressed when they can be clearly seen embodied in an individual's own work rather than treated in the abstract. With this approach, the instructor also can help the researcher develop a research style that builds upon his or her own specific skills and needs. It is also very valuable when all involved in these research/training projects share research experiences and results with each other.

THE PROJECT: ROMAN CATHOLIC IDENTITIES AND THE CHURCH BUILDING

Initially this project was to focus on the voices being raised about placement of the tabernacle, particularly as it related to current controversies about *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*. Conversations with Liturgy Network members at the FDLC Region VII meetings in early November, however, suggested that controversies over the tabernacle and EACW simply expressed a much more fundamental and deeply rooted issue: conflicting views about the nature of Roman Catholic identity (i.e., what does it mean to be a Catholic). Indeed, it is increasingly clear that one reason specific liturgical issues generally have been lightning rods for controversy is that they are very public embodiments of conflicting visions of Catholic identities.

The major goal then is to get at the underlying, fundamental, and continuing conflicts surrounding Catholic identity, while also shedding some light on particular current liturgical controversies. To do this it was decided to focus on what Roman Catholics have to say about how their church buildings (their plans, furnishings, decorations, and patterns of use) confirm or deny their own definition of the Roman Catholic self. *To put it another way, we propose to explore Roman Catholics' feelings and understandings of what makes a church building Catholic or not.*

In exploring this subject, we hope eventually to have liturgists learn how to use a wide variety of sociocultural research methods. To foster the widest possible participation, the project will include a variety of subtopics and research techniques (e.g., we will try to include individuals with different types of interests, skills, and levels of commitment to the project). (As a preliminary step some Network members who had taken part in the Region VII meeting at Mundelein carried out two interviews. They reported on the results to members at CPL's anniversary celebration December 2.)

The interviewees chosen should differ in at least one significant way from the interviewer (e.g., by gender, social class, generation, ethnic group, education). Rather than following a detailed, uniform list of questions provided by the project, the interviewers should begin from the very broad and general question—What makes a church building Catholic to you?—and then follow-up in the directions in which the initial query seems to lead the interviewee. It is important to remember that at this stage we are not trying to collect strictly comparable data that can be analyzed quantitatively. Instead, the aim is to gather rich qualitative materials that will help us discover valid and valuable questions that can be used in later more quantitative stages of this project.

In any case, given the nature and the subject, it certainly would seem appropriate even at this stage to consider exploring the interviewees' Catholic identity (through questions about comparisons and contrasts) not only in terms of the church building in which they now worship but through queries about memories of childhood churches, of experiences with church renovations, as well as the interviewees' memories of the church-related beliefs and behaviors of parents and/or grandparents, and of others from different ethnic and religious groups.

NOTES ON INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Although this is an interview, it is also a key *opportunity for participant observation*, a complex sociocultural interaction from which you can learn much by observing not only WHAT the individual says but also HOW it was said (e.g., the form of discourse, body language). You can note such things as: When did the individual hesitate? What excited the individual? What was the individual silent about? What questions led to dead ends? If the interview is conducted in the interviewee's own home , what can you "read" about him or her from that environment?

Also recognize that *you need to be observing yourself as you do the interview*. What did you think about as the individual responded to your questions? How did you react to what the individual said? What were you tempted to say but didn't? Even an interview between two individuals is actually a many sided conversation, with each person aware of how nonpresent others might think or react. Who are

some of those significant but nonpresent others to you? How were you affected by the interviewee's gender, ethnic identity, age, social class, previous relationship to you?

In taking notes, there is only one major rule: do what works. Sometimes taking too many notes during an interview can get in the way, e.g., destroying the rhythm of the conversation. The alternative of using a tape recorder can also make people feel nervous or leave you with the extraordinary arduous task of listening to the interview again and transcribing it (completely or partially). Even if you take detailed notes—but especially if you only jot down a few brief notes during the interview—the sooner you sit down to supplement that material with all your other relevant observations of the interview, the more accurate you will be. The longer you wait to supplement your notes taken during the interview, the more you forget and the more your recall tends to fit your preconceptions.

Note: *It is important to keep track of the questions you asked—not just the answers—so you can later be aware of what the interviewees were responding to. Also, by keeping track of questions and how well or poorly they worked, we can make progress in developing a valid research instrument that can be used on a larger sample and analyzed statistically.*

Writing up an ethnographic interview can be a complex task. *For the moment, concentrate on this deceptively simple goal: an honest story of the interview, honestly told.* If this brief instruction makes you feel too uncomfortable, I can send further guidelines.

Some Suggestions, Based Upon Interview Reports Presented to the Members December 2:

Earlier, I merely observed that "writing up an ethnographic interview can be a complex task. For the moment, concentrate on this deceptively simple goal: an honest story of the interview, honestly told." While those who carried out the first round of interviews and write-ups did a fine job (and seemed to enjoy the experience), I expect they also discovered what I meant by "complex" and "deceptively simple." Based on their "pioneer" experiences, including both their write ups and their oral presentations on December 2, here are some additional suggestions :

In comparing the write-ups with the informal oral reports, it was striking that interviewers had noticed some highly significant details and obtained valuable insights that didn't get included in their texts. Often they were the types of things I suggest interviewers observe: See the first two paragraphs of the section above, "NOTES ON INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES." Make sure you get those valuable observations down on paper, and try to do it as soon as possible after the interview. It is amazing how quickly they can be forgotten or subtly edited by our very selective memories.

One interesting variable was *where the interviews took place*, e.g., at the interviewer's office or at the home of the interviewee. When they were in the interviewee's home, it offered an excellent opportunity to examine how Catholic identity might be expressed and embodied in more personal or private spaces. Even when you hold an interview in your own office or home, it is a chance to consider what it may communicate to others about your Catholic identity.

A *particular challenge* is to incorporate into the report what you thought and felt during an interview but did not openly express at that time. One approach is to insert such responses at the appropriate points in your description of the interview, making sure, however, that they are separated by brackets from the rest of the text. There are many other approaches that you also can take. For example, providing an overall summary of your unexpressed thoughts and feelings at the end of your report. Whatever forms they take, these types of self-observations may help you critically reflect upon your relationship with the communities in which you minister.

One important feature to include in your report is your previous relationship with the interviewee and a discussion of why you chose the particular person. I might add that some of the first interviewers who chose friends, co-workers, or relatives for their subjects discovered surprising things about the beliefs and values of people they thought they knew quite well.

When it does not violate promises of confidentiality, also try to be as specific as possible about the age, gender, education, ethnic background, and profession of the interviewee. Later on we may want to explore how important those factors are in explaining / interpreting the data we collect.

Finally, after you have written up your report, you may want to let it sit for a day or so and then read it over as though the report were a text produced by someone else. By distancing yourself in that way, you may discover some new things about the interviewee and about yourself as a writer, researcher, and liturgist.

A Final Note on Informed Consent

In the United States, researchers who work with human subjects are expected to follow high ethical standards in their work. Obtaining a subject's written informed consent for an interview is standard procedure.

Printed on the back of the cover letter is the INFORMED CONSENT FORM that must be signed by the subject and you prior to every interview.

You will notice that the interviewees are given two options with regard to confidentiality, if they agree to participate. Please make sure that in your write up of the interviews you follow the interviewees' preferences with regard to the options.

Send the originals of the informed consent forms when you mail me copies of your interview write ups; however, keep copies for your own files of both that form and your report.

Again, we invite you to take part:

Wherever you are, join in. Read the attached notes from Dr. Roberts, review the consent form, then tap some people on the shoulder and begin simply by asking, "What makes a church building Catholic for you?" We invite all members to participate, and we will keep all members informed about the progress of the project.

Send your write ups and completed consent forms to Dr. Roberts. You may do so via:

Mail:

E-mail:

FAX:

APPENDIX B

Dear

"A People's Sense of Sacred: What Makes A Church Building Catholic?" is the title of my doctoral thesis in the field of liturgy at McMaster University. I am currently interviewing Catholics at your parish and at other parishes in the area on this question. The purpose of this study is to listen to what Catholics have to say about liturgical changes and liturgical implementation in their churches. It is my hope that this feedback will be studied and reflected upon whenever liturgical changes are proposed in the future.

You are being asked to let me interview you on this subject, and respond to questions that flow from your answers about your experience of liturgy and liturgical implementation. The interview will last from 1/2 to 1 1/2 hours. The exact length will depend upon your interest and availability.

Your participation is totally voluntary. Without penalty of any sort, you may choose not to participate at all, refuse to answer any question, or discontinue the interview at any time.

YOUR ENTIRE INTERVIEW WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. This means that in all publications and reports I will make every reasonable effort to assure that it will not be possible to associate either you or your parish with specific responses. I will use pseudonyms for you and your parish in recording and in reporting relevant data. The key to these pseudonyms will only be available to me and will be stored in a secure place. Although every reasonable and practical measure will be taken to protect your confidentiality, it is possible that this confidentiality could be breached unexpectedly.

This thesis is being written with the hope that voices such as yours may be heard. I assure you that your statements will be taken seriously. If you have any questions or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact me:

Rev. William J. Turner

Thank you for your assistance.



By signing I indicate my voluntary agreement to participate in this research under the conditions enumerated in this letter.

_____ Date: _____

I request a summary of the results of the research.

_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Dear Father:

"A People's Sense of Sacred: What Makes A Church Building Catholic?" is the title of my doctoral thesis in the field of liturgy at McMaster University. I am currently interviewing Catholics at your parish and at other parishes in the area on this question. The purpose of this study is to listen to what Catholics have to say about liturgical changes and liturgical implementation in their churches. It is my hope that this feedback will be studied and reflected upon whenever liturgical changes are proposed in the future.

You are being asked to let me observe Sunday liturgies, have access to parish archives relevant to liturgical history, and to be able to interview a number of your parishioners on this subject, and to pose further questions that flow from their answers about their experience of liturgy and liturgical implementation. The interview will last from 1/2 to 1 1/2 hours. The exact length will depend upon their interest and availability.

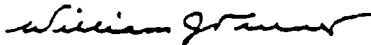
Participation is totally voluntary. Without penalty of any sort, people may choose not to participate at all, refuse to answer any question, or discontinue the interview at any time.

INTERVIEWS WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. This means that in all publications and reports I will make every reasonable effort to assure that it will not be possible to associate either a parishioner or your parish with specific responses. I will use pseudonyms for parishioners and your parish in recording and in reporting relevant data. The key to these pseudonyms will only be available to me and will be stored in a secure place. Although every reasonable and practical measure will be taken to protect confidentiality, it is possible that this confidentiality could be breached unexpectedly.

This thesis is being written with the hope that voices such as those of your parishioners may be heard. I assure you that their statements will be taken seriously. If you have any questions or concerns resulting from participation in this study, please contact me:

Rev. William J. Turner

Thank you for your assistance.



By signing I indicate my voluntary agreement to permit this research under the conditions enumerated in this letter.

_____ Date: _____

I request a summary of the research. _____ Date: _____

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