Towards a Framework of Creating Coping Strategies for Newly Ordained Roman Catholic Priests Engaged with Major Transitions in Their Lives

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

'To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.' The axiom of John Henry Newman is true for everyone in living out their lives. There are certain times when transitions in a person's life-cycle have a greater impact. One of these stages is when a person is ordained a priest. On this occasion a number of significant occurs in his life. This thesis will explore how newly ordained priests cope with these transitions to assist with creating a new framework for coping strategies for priests engaged with this major transition.

When he is ordained, the new priest leaves the seminary which has been his home for the previous six or seven years. The seminary is the primary place of preparation for priesthood. Part of the function of a seminary formation is to assist priest to enter ministry. This thesis will explore how seminary formation assists priests with coping with transition.

This thesis will explore various theories of transitions drawing on the disciplines of anthropology, theology, psychology and ministry.

Through the sacrament of ordination, a person becomes a priest. There are many symbols within the ordination rite which highlight that this person is assuming a new ministerial role within the Roman Catholic Church. This thesis will evaluate how this rite of passage assists a newly ordained priest cope with his new public role.

When a new priest begins his ministry, he often encounters situations that he never had to deal with prior to his ordination. Having a structured model to guide him, as he embarks in his pastoral work can be beneficial. There are five models reviewed in this thesis. These are the sink or swim model; the military model; the domesticating model; the internship model and the apprenticeship model.

Through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews seven newly ordained priests offer their views, experiences and observations on how they have coped with the transition from the seminary to ministry, a major transition in their lives.

The findings from the interviews are related to the theoretical frameworks on coping strategies, practical theology and ministry. The findings suggest that Roman Catholic clergy avail of an amalgam of coping strategies as they adjust to the new realities, relationships and roles that they receive as they embark on their ministerial career.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This research focuses on the transition from secular to religious life, from being a seminarian to being a Roman Catholic ordained priest. This transition marks an important rite of passage in the lives of seminarians, deacons and priests. The research will assess how the transition affected their lives, whether they were prepared for the changes and how they coped with the change. As an outcome of the research I developed a framework of coping strategies designed to assist future seminarians, deacons and priests.

This research has originated from a desire to understand how Roman Catholic priests cope with the transition from seminary to ministry. This is interesting and important for several reasons. First, work transitions have been described as "the most significant yet least understood forms of social change." (Nicholson & West, 1988, p. i), with implications for the career development of individuals and how organizations manage the process. This lacuna of understanding is evident in the limited theoretical and empirical attention paid to transition as part of the process of engaging in the new reality that a newly ordained priest has made when he leaves the seminary and begins ministry. It has been noted that preparation is "difficult to study directly since the onset of many work-role transitions is unpredictable." (Nicholson & West, 1989, p. 184). Another reason is that the determinants or antecedents of transition are inexorably bound up in the duality of individual agency and structural forces which is inclined to be neglected by researchers (Ng, Sorensen, Eby & Feldman, 2007) as it is difficult to study (Arnold & Cohen, 2013).

This study adopted a discourse analytic methodology which highlights how clergy discursively construct and negotiate their position in relation to themselves, the institution which they belong to and how they relate to other people as they cope with a major transition in their lives and as they pursue a particular vocational trajectory. The issues encompass objective and subjective concerns such as a lack of internal clerical support from the church when they were embarking on a transitional phase of their lives. There were inherent tensions when attributing agency whereby the clergy interviewed for this study gave strong expression to their independence and autonomy in terms of influencing their orientating world view in terms of transition but only up

to the point which they, as subjects, are determined by the organization in which they work (Billig et al., 1988; Willig, 1999).

In this project, I listened and learned from the stories that the respondents shared with me, with a view to analyzing the content and seeing to what extent it agrees or differs from the material in the literature review. The responses in the interviews and group session challenged some of the interpretations of transition in the lives of priests. On many occasions they confirmed what theorists on transition have written about this subject. Arising from the review of the relevant literature led to the formation of a framework of coping strategies in the lives of priests.

As the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church is confined to males only, the interviewees are all male. The research focused on diocesan priests rather than priests in religious orders. This is designed to sharpen the focus on the study. The study acknowledges that all priests share in the one priesthood but the manner in which diocesan priests and religious priests live their ministry is radically different. A study of religious priests in transition is worthy of its own particular study. This study is confined to diocesan priests.

By the conclusion of this research, the reason why particular research methods were used will have been articulated and processed.

1.2 Context of the Study

A famous fictional account from the start of the twentieth century of young newly ordained priest adjusting from life in the seminary to beginning his ministerial career is recorded in Canon Sheehan's novel Luke Delmege, (1905). The protagonist, Fr Luke, is a successful scholar who has attained first place in his university examinations. To have achieved this honour brought some vanity to the young Luke. He led his class academically in the seminary; he received praise from his bishop, who felt that himself and his diocese were honoured by the praise reflected from his young subject and this was but a foretaste of a great career in the church. The novel proceeds to chart the exploits of the young priest as he leaves the seminary and engages with people on a pastoral level. He is shocked that people do not recognize his academic brilliance. It takes some time for the priest to adjust to his new environment. Canon Sheenan captured how a certain skill-set had helped Fr Luke become a very gifted seminarian but did not enable him to make the transition into what was expected of his as a pastoral minister. This thesis will reflect on how

priests assessed how their seminary formation enabled them, or not as may be the case, in making the adjustment to pastoral ministry.

A key component of a priest's world view when he reflects on his transition into ministry, and how he sees his place in the church, will be from the seminary formation that he received. According to Ryan

> The Church, like any organization, goes through periods of introversion and extraversion. It was in a period of historical introversion that the concept of the seminary was created. There has always been an inclination for the formation of clergy to occur within the context of a community institution. From a sociological point of view, seminaries have regularly been compared to minimum security prisons, but with a difference. Seminarians were taught to regard the Rule of Life as the will of God. (Ryan, 1973, p. 251).

According to Ryan, and explored in this thesis, what is the role of seminary formation in assisting or hindering how a priest makes the adjustment from seminary to ministry? This thesis will engage how the seminary, according to Ryan, (1973), is a community institution that has a level of control over how a student lives his life. This thesis will reflect on how the seminary formation system provided a space for a seminarian to explore how transition affected his life and his new reality within the church.

1.3 Significance of the Study

After reflecting on the review of the relevant literature, this project aims to assess if the existing theories of transition, for instance within ritual studies and anthropology (e.g. van Gennep, 1960, Turner, 1969) are applicable to priests who experience transition their lives. Despite an amount of literature on rites of passage, these studies generally overlook the impact a transition from secular to religious life has on an individual. This research with its empirical study involving seminarians, deacons and priests addressed this gap by discussing the preparation for the transition, the impact as well as the material dimension.

During the course of formation to the priesthood, seminarians are versed in the academic disciplines of theology and philosophy but they also draw on courses in the humanities, psychology, sociology, anthropology and the social sciences. This study will draw on their experiences to identify if these disciplines have influenced how priests experience the significant

transitions in their lives, cope with these transitions and adapt to the new reality in their lives after the transition.

In the theology of the Catholic Church there is paucity of the experiences of priests in the area of transition. This project hopes to address this lacuna by allowing priests articulate their personal experiences of how they engaged with significant transitions and draw conclusions from their responses.

The project assessed how the seminary assisted the process of transition in the lives of the respondents. This is relevant as amongst the most significant transitions that a priest will receive in his life are his entry into seminary from the secular word at the start of his studies and leaving the seminary to begin his ministry at the time of his ordination to the priesthood.

This project aims to reflect on how priests experience a transition in the primary relationships once they are ordained. Once he is ordained the new priest occupies a very public role within the Church. This project will assess how a newly ordained priest experiences a transition in his primary relationships.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

This research project responds to a gap in the existing knowledge base of transition awareness for clergy in the Roman Catholic Church.

From the responses given by the participants it can assist with the formation of a new theory of coping strategies for Catholic clergy engaged with the transition from seminary to ministry.

1.5 Locating Myself: The Question of Researcher Bias

As Selltiz et al. note, any researcher investigating an institution to which they have some connection should adequately consider questions of their bias, as researchers are, "human beings not machines." (Quoted in Bell, 1987, p.73). I was aware that as a recently ordained priest I could bring some insight into the research project but I also had to ensure that I did not allow my personal experience become a bias in the interpretation of the data.

In addressing such issues, Schwandt (2001, p. 224) suggests that reflexivity rather than reflection is needed, and that there is a need to engage with the issue of bias rather than simply

acknowledge it. Reflexivity addresses 'one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences and so forth' and considers how the researcher is located in the 'setting, context [and] social phenomenon' being researched. Such an approach takes seriously the cultural encoding of the researcher that leads to there being no absolute objectivity from which to research.

Brown and Cooke (2010, pp.6-7) note that, whilst there is an expectation of a contribution to academic knowledge, the professional doctorate like the Doctor of Ministry, "has been purposefully adapted to suit doctoral level study in a professional field rather than academia per se" and consequently enjoys a "close relationship … with the development of practice within the profession." Undertaking a professional doctorate has provided structured ways for me to reflect on my experiences and the contexts in which I have practiced and continue to practice as an ordained person, bringing them into dialogue with models and theories of professional practice, and with insights drawn from other disciplines and previous academic studies. This process of intentional interdisciplinary engagement has both developed my professional practice, and already, through many conversations with colleagues and superiors in the Church, supported me in "producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge." (Brown and Cooke, 2010, p.7).

I have also chosen to research an aspect of ordained ministry, something in which I continue to engage, so I inevitably bring my experiences and the preferences, prejudices and biases they have formed into the task of research. Both previous research and work I have carried out for this study seem to point towards a need for some degree of reframing how transition into ministry is approached within the Roman Catholic Church. I acknowledge that my position has been formed partly by critical enquiry and partly by reflection on my experience of transition.

1.6 The Role of the Seminary in Preparation for Priesthood.

Following changes within the seminary structure, most commentators agreed that a more patient, thorough and arduous reorganization of the seminary system was required. In 1990, an International Synod on Priestly Formation took place in Rome. The result of this Synod was the publication of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992) by Pope John Paul II. This document clearly set out the essential norms that were to be applied for each seminary while giving a greater degree of flexibility to seminary structures and seminarians. The importance of providing a good formation is highlighted. Key to understanding the document is the statement: "The formation of future

priests…is considered by the Church as one of the most demanding and important tasks for the future of the evangelization of humanity." (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, No. 2, p. 4). The superiors of the Catholic Church acknowledge the importance of formation in the lives of the seminarians to prepare him for ministry.

Pastores Dabo Vobis signifies four major areas of formation to prepare the seminarian for his future ministry. These areas are the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

1.7 Human Formation.

"The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation." ((Pastores Dabo Vobis, No. 43, p. 67). Seminaries are meant to provide the conditions for the candidate to develop his character; a realization of self-potential and the possibility to attain affective maturity. Through the work of vocational growth counsellors and with opportunities for reflection, the candidate can develop a greater ability to relate to others. There is also a greater emphasis on those in charge of seminary formation. As Drennan points out, they are required to have:

> … a human and a spiritual maturity; pastoral experience; professional competence; stability in their own vocation; a capacity to work with others; serious preparation in those human sciences which relate to their office and a knowledge of how to work in groups. (Drennan, 1994, p. 93).

1.8 Spiritual Formation.

Spiritual formation within the seminary is rooted in terms of the communion of future priests with Jesus in terms of friendship and the goal is the search for Jesus in all that the priest does. An intimate prayer life with the Lord is the desired outcome of spiritual formation. Meditation on the Word of God, active participation in the sacraments and an outreach of service to those in greatest need is the current emphasis in spiritual formation. 'Growth in spirituality is not the same as learning mere vocabulary in a foreign language or acquiring advanced techniques in computer science. The goal is that a priest incorporates into his personal life the themes he ponders.' No longer was the regular attendance at Vespers the goal of the spiritual life but rather

a deep and personal relationship with the Lord. This was facilitated by spiritual directors, group meetings, Lectio Divina and the candidates own personal devotion.

1.9 Intellectual Formation.

The seminary is now seen as an educational, ecclesial community. Instead of the purely speculative and abstract study of the articles of faith which used to be the hallmark of academic study in seminaries, intellectual formation is to be pastorally effective, integrated with a spirituality of personal experience and in a position to communicate the mystery of God to people. The days of Latin lectures and learning answers by rote are over. Theological studies are to be rooted within the complex situations that face people on a daily basis.

1.10   Pastoral Formation.

Pastores Dabo Vobis states that the entire function of seminary formation is to prepare the candidate for entry into communion with the charity of Christ, the Good Shepherd.   Built into current formation programmes is a strong curriculum of pastoral work. Pastoral reflection groups were established to facilitate learning from the experience of being with people on a pastoral level. Previously, pastoral work was seen as something done on completion of the seminary course but now it is an integral aspect of preparation for ministry.

1.11   Chapter Plan for this Research Project.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical foundations associated with the first research aim through examining the concepts aligned with the exploration of theoretical concepts of coping strategies, transition, and how the ritual of ordination to the priesthood provides a framework for providing a ritualized, liturgical and theological concept for marking the adjustment to ministry. Chapter 2 discusses the relevant literature on coping strategies, transition, rites of passage and models of entry.

Chapter 3 details the research methods approach adopted by the study. It begins by setting out the research aims and the research objectives, offering a brief re-cap on the rationale behind their formulation. This is followed by a detailed account of the rationale behind the chosen research design and the strategies and instruments employed to carry out the project. A step-by-step

account of the procedures undertaken and the rationale that guided these decisions is also provided.

Chapter 4 outlines a summary of what was offered by the research participant. In this form of research there are a number of ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration. According to Skinner, Ferrell, and Dubinsky (1988), "deontological philosophies focus on the factors or means used to arrive at an ethical decision. These philosophies emphasise moral obligations or commitments that should be binding or necessary for proper conduct." (Skinner, Ferrell, and Dubinsky, 1988, p. 213). In following a deontological approach, I am fully aware that participation in this research is completely voluntary for the participants with a clear understanding that they are under no obligation to so and that there will be no negative consequence if they do not wish to participate in my research.

Chapter 5 begins the journey of unveiling the results of analysis and affords the reader intimate glimpses into to the world of the clergy and how they coped with the transition into ministry through the participants' own words. This chapter sets out the salient themes that emerged from the one-to-one interviews. As with the previous chapter, the findings are set out in order to offer evidence that the research objectives have been satisfied. I have experience of using qualitative methods for my MA and for my MMin modules along with a unit of CPE (Clinical and Pastoral Education). During my undergraduate courses I also engaged in the process of theological reflection and pastoral supervision to understand and respect the needs of the person who I was meeting. One of my supervisors encouraged his students to 'listen to the music behind the words'. By this, he meant for us to reflect on the way a person said something or the intensity which they said a statement. I hope to bring the experience to the manner I conduct the interviews.

Chapter 6 draws the thesis to a conclusion. It does this by summarising the main findings and discussions, their importance within expanding the body of knowledge and their practical relevance within the church and beyond. The chapter provides suggestions for how the findings can be formulated into recommendations for the organization and for individual clergy. It also includes the personal reflections of the researcher and offers insights into the challenges and personal costs of undertaking a solitary project of this magnitude with such an emotive sensitive

subject matter. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study and opens up conversations regarding future research projects that have emerged as a result of the study.

1.12   Conclusion.

The purpose of Chapter 1 was to provide a road-map for this research study. It touched on some salient points of the study, namely that: the seminary is the primary place of preparation for the ministry; the culmination of the candidate's time in seminary is located in the sacrament of ordination and this sacrament provides the means for this transition to occur. Upon leaving the structured environment of the seminary, the candidate must deal with new primary relationships. How he copes and interacts with these new relationships will have a profound impact on his ministry.

Chapter Two will focus on the relevant literature on coping strategies, transition, the rite of ordination to the priesthood and models of entry for ministry.

Chapter 2: Review of the Relevant Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss factors which have been identified as risks or moderators of the experience of transition in people's lives from a psychological, anthropological, sociological and theological framework, with a particular focus for relevance to newly ordained priests. This section of the research project explores the current state of the literature in relation to the impact of transition on people's lives and how people approach the area of transition. Its purpose is to provide a sound theoretical foundation of the body of knowledge regarding transition. It also draws upon the wider domains of stress, psychological health and burnout in an attempt to identify if some of these experiences of transition could potentially be the result of secondary impact. Its purpose is to direct attention to the lack of literature pertaining specifically to the impact of coping strategies as clergy engage with transition as they begin their pastoral ministry. This chapter also examines a number of models of entry for the new priest as he begins his ministry. Models refer to repetitious acts of induction for the nascent priest as he enters into his role. The use of the models may be implicit in his initiation but they are a helpful tool for reflection on the transition that occurs in the life of new priest.

2.1.2 Clergy Self-Care

Considerable literature exists on pastoral help, counselling and the role of priests as providers of pastoral care, mental health services or assistance. However, there is little empirical data on clergy as receivers of social support and professional help. The role of a Roman Catholic priest is a varied one. Along with the celebration of liturgies, other elements of their role include demands such as public speaking, personal counselling, teamwork facilitation and budget administration. This can make for a stressful environment in which to function. It is the contradictions that many priests have to deal with, which are often pivotal in the aetiology of stress, for example, the implementation of Canon Law in an increasingly secular world, or the promotion of ecclesiastical morals in a secular environment, (Doyle, 2005). Having accepted a lifetime vocation within a universal church as distinct from a job within a large organisation, far from being ignored, priests are subjected to greater media interest and headline speculation. The multiplicity and diversity of roles that priests now have to fulfil, whether at a national, diocesan

or parochial level, is also a key factor, as are the daily parish/diocesan administration duties that priests are committed to and the increasingly 'convenience stores mentality.'

Part of the reluctance of priests to seek help could be that within the Roman Catholic Church, the ordained priesthood is reserved to men only. It has been suggested that men are less likely to seek professional help than women and men often delay seeking help (Galdas, Cheater & Marshall, 2005; Vogel et al., 2011; Hammer, Vogel & Heimerdinger-Edwards, 2013). This tendency is explained in terms of Western masculine norms and culture, according to which men should be independent, tough, self-reliant, competitive, achievement-oriented, and emotionally restrained. Roman Catholic priests can assume these unconscious tendencies during their formation progamme and bring these cultural assumptions of not expressing their difficulties after they are ordained priests.

Within professional bodies, there are groups in which receiving therapy is not only legitimizing but expected as a form of self-care, part of professional training or seen as professional development. Psychologists or psychotherapists are encouraged by their professional organizations to use personal therapy to resolve their own problems and learn from being in the client role (Daw & Joseph, 2007). This shows that help-seeking attitudes and behaviours vary within different professions. The Roman Catholic clergy is another group with a distinctive culture that informs social values and norms and may affect seeking help. Ferguson et al (2014) stated that the clergy are unlike many other professions and have self-care practices built into the nature of their jobs. Examples of this to include having a day off from work, are involved in support groups and have programmes that offer sabbaticals after years of work.

2.1.3 Clergy Health

Historically, clergy have been among the healthiest of major professions; according to one study, only teachers have had lower mortality rates (Flannelly et al. 2002; King and Bailar 1969; Proeschold-Bell & McDevitt 2012). However, recent research shows that clergy have relatively high rates of obesity (Proeschold-Bell and Le Grand 2010, 2012). Studies in America report that Roman Catholic diocesan clergy have significantly higher rates of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression than the general population (Virginia, 1998; Knox, Virginia, & Lombardo, 2002; Knox, Virginia, & Smith, 2007). Francis, Louden, and Rutledge (2004)

compared this study with Anglican parochial clergy and found that Roman Catholic clergy had higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They reported feeling burnt out, frustrated and emotionally drained. Knox et al. (2005) also indicated a link between low levels of vocational satisfaction, doubting one's call to ministry and depression. A study of priests in Britain carried out by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006) indicated that most priests are introverts. Hoge (2002) mentioned numerous challenges experienced by newly-ordained priests (those in service and those who had resigned) who participated in his sociological survey and suggested that there should be more support programs. Participants frequently reported the problem of loneliness and lack of support. As highlighted by Craig, Duncan, and Francis (2006), there is little evidence on how priests cope with psychological distress and engage in seeking help, or from whom they seek help. Knox et al. (2005) observed that priests with higher engagement in sacramental activities have greater vocational satisfaction.

According to Virginia (1998), a lack of social support and a sense of isolation are related to burnout and depression. However, literature has provided insufficient information about sources of social support and professional help for priests and how they utilize them. Two studies mentioned consulting spiritual directors for support. Knox et al. (2005) said that few secular priests reported using that strategy, and Virginia (1998) indicated they did so less frequently than religious priests, and that secular priests reported a significantly lower degree of support from their superiors and peers than religious order priests. Virginia (1998) interpreted this in terms of lesser access, because secular priests often live alone and may not be able to meet or speak to their bishop for months or even years. On the other hand, secular priests are more restrained in discussing their concerns about work or vocation with other people.

Proeschold-Bell et al. (2011) provide a useful theoretical framework for understanding clergy health. After conducting qualitative focus groups with 87 clergy from the United Methodist Church about their health and work, they constructed a multidimensional set of conditions that influence clergy health. These conditions range from the intrapersonal (e.g., age, gender, and socio-economic status); the interpersonal (e.g., relationships with colleagues or congregants); the congregational level (e.g., congregation size); and the community level (e.g., community economic conditions). Through their research they found that stress can flow from these

conditions. However, these conditions may also help facilitate self-care practices, such as support-group involvement.

2.1.4 Clergy Stress

The conditions of a priest's professional life can be stressful in a number of ways (Wells et al. 2012). Studies have shown that clergy often work more than 50 hours per week, have unpredictable schedules and are away from home on average four evenings per week (Carroll 2006). Just as conflict or negative interaction in congregations is known to shape congregant mental health (Ellison et al. 2009), such negative interactions can be sources of stress for clergy (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011). The clergy profession is often a public role, and many religious leaders experience stress from the conflicting demands of their congregants or from being put on a pedestal as a paragon of faith (Lee and Iverson-Gilbert 2003; Morris and Blanton 1994; Wells et al. 2012). Many congregations have too few clergy to keep up with demands (Schoenherr and Yamane 2002; Schoenherr and Young 1993), and ministers can feel continually overwhelmed. Some clergy are in denominational structures that frequently reassign them to different congregations, thus hampering the ability of clergy to maintain long-term social relationships. A recent move to a new congregation can be an indicator of stress.

Some clergy also experience stress because they pastor more than one congregation or they are bi-vocational (i.e., have another job in addition to their pastoral job). Such situations produce increased work demands, and crowd out time and energy for self-care.

Due to a priest's stressful work life, relative deprivation, and relatively low levels of material resources, a healthy lifestyle involving nutritious foods, time for exercise, and times to recover from the physiological stress responses leading to weight gain may be elusive for many clergy.

Wiseman & Capehart (2010) believe that when people experience stress and have insufficient resources, they respond by "banking" or overeating rich foods.

A number of psychosocial factors, some content and some context related, have been consistently linked with poor well-being and ill health among clergy including: Having too much to do; long working hours; organisational change; lack of participation in decision making; isolated or solitary work; inadequate supervision and lack of support; unfair or unclear

performance evaluation; unclear conflicting roles; continuously dealing with other people's problems and lack of recognition and feedback (Griffiths, 1998). Many of these psychosocial factors known to be damaging to health and well-being, whether it is the tension between Canon Law and daily living, discrepancies between individual priests in their application of Canon Law or perceived differences between the ideal-self and the actual-self, which is more interior. With the decline in the number of priests' or the sheer amount of change to which the Church has to respond, the merging picture is simple and consistent. The priest operates in a psychosocial work environment likely to lead to stress.

2.2.1 What are Coping Strategies?

Theories are created to explain and predict phenomena (Torraco, 1997). The theoretical framework of a study can therefore provide a structure to explain the phenomenon being studied (Camp, 2001). In qualitative research theoretical frameworks provide the researcher with a lens through which she or he can examine problems and interpret the data (Reeves, Albert, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). In order to identify coping strategies to assist priests to engage with the major transitions in their lives it is necessary to understand what is meant by coping strategies and how these strategies impact the lives of priests.

Coping is defined by Hayes et al. as

> the cognitive and behavioral efforts exerted to manage external and/or internal demands which were perceived as taxing to an individual. The function of coping is to manage or alter demands that occur externally in the environment or internally within oneself. (Hays et al., 2006, p.185).

Lazarus and Folkman broadly agree with this understanding as they saw coping as `the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them,' (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980, p. 223). Pargament (1997) viewed coping as a multi-layered, contextual phenomenon that involves all dimensions of human functioning: cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological. It occurs on familial, organizational, institutional, community, societal and cultural levels, and it may also involve religious behaviours. Aldwin believed that part of the intrinsic interest in coping stems from its mythopoetic roots, that is, the idea of the hero who braves tremendous odds to accomplish some crucial task (Aldwin, 2007). Coping is a response to stress, either real or imagined. Theories that

focus on the specific relationship between external demands (stressors) and bodily processes (stress) can be convened in two different categories: approaches to `systemic stress' grounded in physiology and psychobiology (Selye, 1976) and approaches to `psychological stress' developed within the field of cognitive psychology (Lazarus 1966, 1991, Lazarus and Folkman 1984, McGrath 1982).

2.2.2 Defense Mechanisms

The study of coping strategies has its origins in psychoanalytic descriptions of defense mechanisms, which are directed primarily toward internal conflicts. Anna Freud (1966) viewed defense mechanisms as the means in which the ego wards off anxiety and exercises control over impulsive behaviours, affects and instincts. The unconscious tension between the id and the superego gives rise to anxiety. An example from ministry, as offered by Rulla, (1986), is where a newly ordained priest may wish to ask for his remuneration to be paid every month but is unable to speak to his initial pastor due to his fear of upsetting his initial pastor, (Rulla, 1986, p. 317).

According to the psychoanalytic view, this psychological conflict is an intrinsic and pervasive part of human experience. The conflict between the id and superego, negotiated by the ego, is one of the fundamental psychological battles all people face. The way in which a person characteristically resolves the instant gratification versus longer-term reward dilemma in many ways comes to reflect on their "character". The authors of the Dialogistical and Statistical Manuel IV viewed defense mechanisms automatic psychological processes that protect the individual against anxiety and from the awareness of internal or external dangers or stressors, (DSM-IV, 1994). Individuals are often unaware of these processes as they operate. Defense mechanisms mediate the individual's reaction to emotional conflicts and to internal and external stressors. They also help to explain and give insight into behaviours and feelings that otherwise would remain incomprehensible. The individual defense mechanisms are divided conceptually and empirically into related groups that are referred to as defense levels. Defense mechanisms are manifested primarily as symptoms and are characterized by automatic, rigid reactions.

Freud (1966) identified several major defense mechanisms including denial, projection, reaction formation, suppression, hysteria, obsessive-compulsive behaviours and sublimation. The continued use of defense mechanisms can give rise to a person's coping strategy.

According to Valliant (1977), defense mechanisms can be grouped into three groups: developmental, primitive and mature. Valliant stated that "such mechanisms are analogous to the means by which an oyster, confronted with conflict, creates a pearl." (Vailliant, 1977, p. 7). As Kline (2004) highlights, the use of defensive mechanisms is to some extent arbitrary, and they assist with the stressors of life and the protection of the ego.

For Horowitz et al (1990) defensive mechanisms are observed as defensive outcomes of regulations efforts that might, in other circumstances also have outcomes that would be labelled either as adaptive regulation or dysregulation. In this account, there are three kinds of regulatory process, whose aim is to control the conscious experience of emotions and ideas, although the former also affect the expression and communication of the latter. These are the regulation of mental set, the regulation of person schemas and role models, and the regulation of conscious representation and sequencing. The authors believed is as a result of these processes that defenses against stressors occur. Kline (2004) disagrees with this model as the classifications do not appear to be all mutually exclusive.

2.2.3 Coping as a Response to Stress

General causes of stress include: Deprivation, (not having what you want); Uncertainty, (don't know what things mean or what to do about them); Difficulty, (unable to take effective action); Threat, (perceived probability of harm); and Harm, (physical or psychological damage). A person's response to these perceived stressors give rise to a person's dispositional coping strategy. Stress is seen as transaction between the stressor, the operative defensive mechanisms and a person's perception to the stressor.

The popularity of the stress concept in science comes mostly from the work of the endocrinologist Hans Selye. In a number of animal studies, he observed that a variety of stimulus events (e.g., cold, heat, toxic agents) applied intensely and long enough are capable of producing common effects, meaning not specific to either stimulus event. Besides these nonspecific changes in the body, each stimulus produces, its specific effect, heat, for example, produces vasodilatation, and cold vasoconstriction. According to Selye, these nonspecifically caused changes constitute the stereotypical, i.e., specific, response pattern of systemic stress. Selye

(1976) defines this stress as, "a state manifested by a syndrome which consists of all the nonspecifically induced changes in a biologic system." (Selye, 1976, p. 64).

Selye named this stereotypical response pattern, the `General Adaptation Syndrome' (GAS).His work influenced a whole generation of stress researchers. However, a number of weaknesses in his theory soon became evident. Selye's conception of stress as a reaction to a multitude of different events.Thus, by becoming a synonym for diverse terms such as conflict anxiety, threat, or emotional arousal, the concept of stress was in danger of losing its scientific value (cf. Engel 1985). Besides this general reservation, specific critical issues have been raised. One of the criticisms of the theory focused at the theory's core assumption of a nonspecific causation of the 'General Adaptation Syndrome' (GAS).Mason (1971, 1975b) highlighted that the stressors observed as effective by Selye carried a common emotional meaning and that they were novel, strange, and unfamiliar to the animal. Thus, the animal's state could be described in terms of helplessness, insecurity, and absence of control. Consequently, the hormonal GAS responses followed the (specific) emotional impact of such influences rather than the influences. In agreement with this supposition, Mason (1975b) demonstrated that in experiments where uncertainty had been removed no GAS was observed. This criticism lead to a second and more profound argument.Unlike the physiological stress investigated by Selye, the stress experienced by humans is almost always the result of a cognitive mediation (cf. Arnold 1960, Janis 1958, Lazarus 1966, 1974).Selye, however, does not specify those mechanisms that may describe the cognitive transformation of `objective' noxious events into the subjective experience of being distressed. In addition, Selye does not take into account coping mechanisms as important mediators of the stress–outcome relationship. Both issues are essential to psychological stress theories that are elaborated by Lazarus (1966).

A derivative of the systemic approach is the research on critical life events. An example of this is the persuasive hypothesis of Holmes and Rahe (1967), based on Selye's work, that changes in habits, rather than the threat or meaning of critical events, is involved in the genesis of disease. The authors presumed that critical life events, regardless of their specific (e.g., positive or negative) quality, stimulate change that produces challenge to the organism. Most of this research, however, has not been theoretically driven and exhibited little empirical support for this hypothesis (Thoits, 1983).

2.2.4 Coping Strategies as Independent Parameters**.**

Coping strategies may be classified according to two independent parameters: trait-oriented versus state-oriented, and micro-analytic versus macro-analytic approaches. Lazarus represents a specific type of coping theory model,(Lazarus, 1966, Krohne 1996). Trait-oriented and state-oriented research strategies have different objectives: The trait-oriented (or dispositional) strategy looks towards early identification of individuals whose coping resources and tendencies are inadequate for the demands of a specific stressful encounter. An early identification of these persons will offer the opportunity for establishing a selection (or placement) procedure or a successful primary prevention program. Research that is state-oriented, i.e., which centers around actual coping, has a more general objective. A considerable amount of research investigates the relationships between coping strategies employed by some individual and outcome variables such as self-reported or objectively registered coping efficiency, emotional reactions accompanying and following certain coping efforts, or variables of an adaptive outcome (e.g., health status or test performance). Often the theorists on coping strategies intend to lay the foundation for a general modificatory program to improve coping efficacy. Micro-analytic approaches focus on a large number of specific coping strategies, whereas macro-analytic analysis operates at a higher level of abstraction, thus concentrating on more fundamental constructs. Sigmund Freud's (1926) classic defense mechanisms conception as a response to stress is an example of a state-oriented and macro-analytic approach. Although Freud distinguished a multitude of defense mechanisms, he related these mechanisms to two basic forms: repression and intellectualization. Anna Freud built on this theory as previously noted.

2.2.5 Coping Models

Coping models emphasize the strategies that people use when faced with stressful events in their lives, and these processes are influenced by people's orienting systems. These coping strategies can provide a meaningful theoretical context to comprehend the role of religion, personal beliefs and outlook on the world in coping with stress in general (Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000; Park, 2005a, 2005b) and with transition in particular (Bridges, 2004).

Coping styles are considered to be characteristic ways of handling problems, in contrast to management skills which refer to situation specific skills used to forestall or avoid problems.

Management skills may have developed out of learning to cope with a problem but when the coping style becomes routine, it is no longer considered a coping style but, according to Aldwin (2007) becomes a coping resource, or what Antonovsky (1979) called a generalized resistance resource.

The mechanisms of coping strategies, such as problem solving and the seeking of social support, are the frequently reported as being helpful to people in dealing with stressful events. Problem solving includes delegating work, rationalizing the situation and speaking with someone who can achieve something concrete about an issue (Hays et al., 2006). Through the use of effectual models of coping, a successful adaptation to stressful events is mediated by how people appraise stressful events and the strategies they use to deal with them (Folkman, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pargament et al., 1992; Park & Folkman, 1997).

Elements of these mechanisms of coping strategies, such as peer support, can reinforce "feelings of competence and successful achievement of one's work with people" which can lead ultimately to lower rates of burnout (Barnard et al., 2006 p. 343). Coping strategies are influenced by a number of factors including a person's orienting system, also referred to as "meaning-making systems" (Park & Folkman, 1997) and "assumptive worlds" (Jannof-Bulman & Schwartzberg, 1991).

A person's orienting system comprises of their anthropological view of reality. A person's world view also plays a significant part in informing a person's orienting systems, and especially how people cope with the major transitions in their lives. Religion also enlightens people's understanding of their self in relation to the world, provides a way to make sense of stressful situations, and informs the strategies they use to cope (Pargament, 1997; Schaefer & Moss, 2001). Religious people are more likely to use religious methods to cope with stressful events, especially when those events are out of their control (Pargament, 1997; Park, 2005b).

Psychological models of coping have provided a way to understand religious coping (Pargament, 1997). These models have various assumptions that facilitate the study of religion in the coping process. Some of these assumptions are: (a) people seek significance; (b) people bring their orienting systems to the coping process; (c) people translate the orienting system into specific methods of coping; and (d) coping is embedded in culture (Pargament, 1997).

Two major conceptual models for the coping process are the Transactional Stress and Coping Model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the Meaning-Making Coping Model (Park & Folkman, 1997).

2.2.6 The Transactional Stress and Coping Model

The Transactional Stress and Coping Model focuses on the role of primary and secondary appraisals in coping with stressful events and how these events affect the lives of persons involved in them. Stressors are seen as demands made by the internal or external environment that upset a person's normal balance and outlook on life. This has the impact of affecting a person's physical and psychological well-being and it requires action to restore the perceived balance in their lives (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977). Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, stress was considered to be a transactional phenomenon dependent on the meaning of the stimulus to the perceiver (Lazarus, 1966; Antonovsky, 1979).

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is a framework for evaluating the processes of coping with stressful events. Stressful experiences are construed as person-environment transactions. These transactions depend on the impact of the external stressor. This is mediated initially by the person's appraisal of the stressor and secondly on the social and cultural resources at his or her disposal (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977; Antonovsky & Kats, 1967; Cohen 1984).

When faced with a stressor, a person evaluates the potential threat (primary appraisal). Primaryappraisal is seen as a person's judgment about the significance of an event as stressful, positive, controllable, challenging or irrelevant. Facing a stressor, the secondappraisal follows, which is an assessment of people's coping resources and options (Cohen, 1984). According to Compas and Orosan (1993), during primary appraisal, the individual determines if he/she has a stake in the event and asks, "Am I okay or am I in trouble?" The individual looks at the relationship between self and the environment and determines if the event is threatening, non-threatening, or positive. This is a central question that a newly ordained priest may ask himself when he begins his public ministry.

Secondary appraisals address what one can do about the stressor they are facing. Actual coping effortsaimed at regulation of the problem give rise to outcomes of the coping process. During

secondary appraisal, the individual evaluates if anything can be done to overcome the event, prevent harm, or improve the outcome (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The extent to which an event is viewed as harmful depends on the meaning or significance. A single stressful event may not place great demands on coping ability; however, multiple problems can leave one feeling helpless, and the perceived inability to cope.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) noted that the use of the terms "primary" and "secondary" bears no relationship with the importance or the order in which these appraisals occur. Pargament (1997) adds a "tertiary" appraisal to this model, which suggests that when faced with a stressful event in their life, a person chooses the path of least resistance to cope with the stressful event. According to Pargament (1997) people tend to choose a strategy that brings the greatest gain and the least loss of significance by using the least resources and accumulating the least burdens.

According to this model, the nature of the event does not solely explain the impact it has on an individual. The impact lies in the event's significance for the individual (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The level of stress created by an event is related to how much it affects, troubles, or tests an individual's sense of personal significance. Thus, "we are most vulnerable to events that affect the things we care about for which we perceive the fewest resources and the greatest burdens" (Pargament, 1997, p. 98).

The Transactional Stress and Coping Model identifies two approaches to the coping process: problem-focused and emotion-focused (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Park, 2005b). Problem-focused coping strategies endeavor to modify the problem, to take control of the situation, seek information or search for potential solutions. Emotion-focused coping strategies attempt to regulate distress, reduce emotional tension and fears such as sadness, embarrassment and fear. Marks (1999) discussed the need for a good fit between the coping strategy used and the type of stressor that the individual faces (e.g., controllable vs. uncontrollable). For example, a problem-focused approach seems to be most useful when the stressful events can be changed and it appears to be of limited use when the person has little or no control over the event, such as a significant trauma or the death of someone close to the person (Park, 2005b). In situations where the person has little control or the stressor cannot be changed, strategies that seek to regulate distress (i.e., emotion-focused) appear to be a more appropriate response to the stressor.

Suls and Fletcher (1985) also differentiate between avoidant and approach coping. Avoidant coping is associated with distraction, denial, repression, or suppression (by focusing attention away from the source of stress or away from one's psychological or somatic reactions to stressors). Using this model, a person may turn to unhealthy reactions to dealing with stressful situations by addictive practices, anti-social behaviour or substance abuse. Approach coping refers to strategies focusing on the source of stress and reactions to it.

Kline (2004) is dismissive of this conceptualization as being too broad, in his opinion, to be of little value, even though it includes psychoanalytic notions of defenses. He believes that if a person is faced with conflict, whatever a person does is conceptualized as the individual's way of coping. In other words, if a conflict occurs, with this definition, a person copes. He in agreement with Smedslund (1984) in believing that this conceptualization of coping is a non-contingent proposition.

2.2.7 Meaning-Making Coping Model

Park and Folkman (1997) developed the Meaning-Making Coping Model which seeks to describe the way people cope with events that are unchangeable and where the individual's problem-solving opportunities are restricted or absent.

They claim that in such cases, the only way to regulate distress is through cognitive adaptation, a process they called "meaning-making," which is sometimes referred to as cognitive reframing as it involves trying to make sense of a problem. It is considered to be a positive strategy and can be characterized as "looking for the silver lining" and trying to find benefits in a problem. This model distinguishes between two levels of meaning: (a) global meaning, which includes global beliefs and global goals, and (b) appraised meanings of specific events. In this model, global beliefs represent the desired ends or outcomes that serve as motivators in life (Emmons, 2005).

Global beliefs are the basic internal cognitive structures that individuals construct about the nature of the world. These structures guide people throughout life by influencing their fundamental ways of construing reality and by structuring their global goals. (Silberman, 2005, as cited in Park, 2005b, p. 709). Taylor (1983) identified three dimensions of adaptation: meaning, mastery and self-enhancement. Global meaning making may be most evident during times of transition, trauma or severe loss.

According to the Meaning-Making Coping Model, the discrepancy between the individual's assessment of an event and his or her global meaning system determines the level of distress that he or she experiences. This discrepancy is experienced as a highly uncomfortable state, where the person feels a loss of control, predictability, and ability to understand the world (Park & Folkman, 1997; Park, 2005b). In order to decrease distress, individuals "must adjust their views of the event or revise their goals and beliefs about the world to accommodate the new information." (Park, 2005b, p. 710). An example of this relating to ministry would be if a newly ordained priest had excessively high expectations of how he will cope when begins his ministry. If the expectations he has are very different from his experience, then it could lead to him feeling distressed.

When confronted with a stressful event, people tend to cope in ways that conserve their orienting system, which is their source of significance (Pargament, 1996). However, when there is a great discrepancy between their appraisal of an event and their orienting system, meaning-making becomes difficult and significance is threatened. When this happens, people may reflect on their world view and remain distressed or they may transform their orienting system to accommodate their new meanings about the event, themselves, or the world (Park & Folkman, 1997). Once this transformation is attained, conservation again becomes the focus of coping (Pargament, 1996). "In this sense, conservation and transformation are complementary, interdependent processes that help guide and sustain the person throughout the life span" (Pargament, 1996, p. 217).

2.2.8 Coping Strategies and Cognitive Schema

McIntosh (1997) defined cognitive schema as "a cognitive structure or mental representation containing organized knowledge about a particular domain, including specification of the relations among its attributes. . . . Schemas frame the way information is perceptually organized, stored, retrieved, and processed." (McIntosh, 1997, pp. 172, 175)

Just like meaning-making systems, schemas tend to be stable. Thus, when confronting "a constant barrage of stimuli." (McIntosh, 1997, p. 172), as is the case in transition, trauma or tragedy, the new data will tend to be assimilated into the existent schema rather than changing the schema to adapt to the new data. This is also similar to Pargament's (1996) argument that individuals tend to conserve what they hold as significant, as it requires fewer resources than

transforming it. Schemas provide a way to fill in holes when the available information is incomplete, and by doing so, they serve as heuristics that allow individuals to shorten and simplify the problem-solving process (McIntosh, 1997). They also provide a way to evaluate situations and make predictions about their outcome.

When people are confronted with issues that are relevant to their religious domain (e.g., birth, marriage, death, illness, tragedy), their religious schema can simplify and shorten their coping process through the provision of religious problem-solving heuristics (Pargament, 1997) and the integration of these experiences into the existent schemata (Jannof-Bulman, 1992), usually through conservation, but also by transformation.

The literature on meaning and cognitive schemas provides a way to understand how people cope with transition especially when these transitions are stressful. Proudfoot and Shaver (1997) stated that religions are total systems able to provide comprehensive interpretations of human experience; consequently, they can be particularly meaningful to people in times of transition.

2.2.9 Religious Coping and Religious Orientation

Many people turn to prayer when coping with stressful events in their lives. Pargament, Koening and Perez (2000) hypothesized that religious coping has five key functions: meaning, control, comfort/spirituality, intimacy/spirituality and life transformation. Essentially religion hopes to engage with the search of meaning in a person's life, and this can be particularly true in the case of transitions and traumatic events.

Allport's work on religious orientation provided a foundation for the development of Pargament's theory (Pargament et al., 1992). However, Pargament's Religious Coping Model differs from Allport's (1966a) assumptions about "good" and "bad" religion or "mature" and "immature" religion. Allport conceptualized intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation as paradoxical. From this perspective, someone for whom religion is a central source of meaning and motivation (i.e., intrinsic religious orientation or religion as an end in itself) would seem not to be interested in the utilitarian aspects of religion, such as safety, social connection, and comfort (i.e., extrinsic religion or religion as a means to obtain something).

Studies have shown that people can actually score highly on scales measuring both intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, and there is consensus that these are independent constructs (Donahue, 1985). Pargament (1992) attempted to explain these paradoxical results. Implicit in Pargament's model of religious coping is the assumption that people seek significance in religion and that religious systems provide the means to attain that significance. Pargament also argued that in this search, both sacred and human aspects of living are intertwined. The model does not deny the body of literature that links the utilitarian approach to religion (i.e., extrinsic religious orientation) with negative psychological, physiological, and social outcomes (Park, 2007). However, it suggests that the problem is not whether religion is used, but how it is used and for what ends. Thus, Pargament refines the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation by depolarizing them, considering them as independent instead of paradoxical.

Some behaviors that would be considered examples of extrinsic religious orientation, such as the search for, "comfort in times of sorrow and trouble." (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989, p. 353), can facilitate adaptation and are not, by themselves, an indication of immature religion. Thus, it makes sense for a person who often has, "a strong sense of God's presence," which is an example of intrinsic religious orientation, to actively seek this experience in times of stress in order to find comfort and relational intimacy.

2.3.1 Theories of Transition

The definition of transition grew out of crisis theory; Moos and Tsu (1976) described a crisis as short periods of time when problems arise and a person has to work out ways of resolving or handling a problem. Parkes (1971) use the term, "psychological transition" to describe any change that necessitates, "the abandonment of one set of assumptions and the development of a fresh set to enable the individual to cope with the new altered life space." (Parkes, 1971, p. 103). Similarly, Waechler (1974) argued that transitions contribute to psychosocial development because they involve change or adaptation across the life span.

Life transitions are phases when individuals experience considerable changes in their physical, social, and/or economic environments (Volger, Crivello, & Woodhead, 2008).The changes often require that individuals "make major adjustments, develop new skills, and learn to cope with new experiences." (Lenz, 2001, p.300). The person may also experience distress that is psychological

and emotional in nature, and reduced daily well-being if the changes are perceived and experienced negatively (Elder & Giele, 2009; Schlossberg, 1981).Elder and Giele (2009) highlight that transitions are a part of the life trajectory and individuals experience several transitions during their life course.

In addition to the changes in their external environments, people also undergo identity and self-responsibility changes. An example of this would be when a seminarian enters the seminary. During this transition, the seminarians are required to become more independent in certain areas of their lives, as they assume responsibility for their health, finances, and personal decision making (Darling, McWey, Howard, & Holmstead, 2007; Lenz, 2001). They must also hold the tension of greater independence with a loss of independence in other parts of their lives such as following the daily time-table of the seminary and the loss of freedom.

A greater awareness of the impact of transition effects on the lives of students, not just seminarians, has become apparent over the last number of years. Data collected from university/college counseling centers over the past 15 years indicate that not only are more students today seeking psychological services, but that current students present with more severe psychological problems than in previous years (Gallagher, Gill, & Sysko, 2000; Hunt & Eisenburg, 2010). A 1998 analysis of six years of student intake data at a large university in the United States concluded that, "the level of severity of the concerns were much greater than the traditional presenting problems of adjustment and individuation that were seen for college students in counseling center research from the 1950s and 1960s through the early 1980s." (Pledge, Lapan, Heppner, Roehlke, 1998, p. 387). Arthur and Heibert (1996) studied the coping strategies of students during their initial year of college. In response to familiar demands, the students used coping strategies they had used frequently in the past. At times, the strategies were not effective, but the students continued to use what was familiar and were unable to develop new coping strategies.

In addition to experiencing mental health issues, university students are known to engage in poor health behaviours; they also experience high levels of stress (Brown, Buboltz, & Soper, 2006; Driskell, Kim, & Goebel, 2005; Giddan, 1988; Gyurcsik, Bray, & Brittain, 2004). The impact of unhealthy eating in the life of a seminarian is important to notice as the high levels of obesity in some clergy as previously noted.

The concept of thriving after transition has been studied extensively with adult populations in psychology and health care research. Less research has been carried out in the area for the impact of transition on the lives of clergy.

Bridges (2004) described transition as a three-stage psychological process of letting go of old ways and identities, understanding what comes after letting go, and making a new beginning. Bridges contends that the phases are not separate and that the individual may find himself in one or more phases at any time. Bridges (2004) described transition as, "the natural process of disorientation and reorientation that marks the turning points of growth." (Bridges, 2004, p. 5). Brammer and Aberego (1981) described transition as any change involving personal awareness and the assumption of new behaviour. The process begins long before it happens and may continue well beyond the actual event. In similar fashion, Mercer, Nichols and Doyle (1989) defined transition as, "turning points, a point of reference from which a person's life course takes new direction requiring adaptation or change." (Mercer, Nichols and Doyle, 1989, p 2).

2.3.2 Sugerman's Theory of Transition

Given the nature of this study and the complexity of the transitions involved, the theory of Sugerman is particularly relevant. Sugerman (1986) described a seven-stage transition cycle that takes place when an event or nonevent results in a change of one's behaviour and relationships. Movement through the transition cycle is neither smooth nor continuous and the individual responds differently to a transition, the stages are a recognisible sequence of responses. The first phase, immobilization, is characterized by a sense of shock and being overwhelmed. The intensity and duration increases by the suddenness and negative interpretation of the transition. An example of this would be a seminarian preparing for ordination and feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of what is taking place in his life. Reaction, the second phase, is depicted as a sense of elation or despair, denial or minimisation is dependent upon the individual's appraisal of the event. The reaction provides relief from the event and is followed by self-doubt, which may be manifested in feelings of anxiety, anger or depression. A seminarian might have many feelings associated with the preparation of his ordination including joy at the conclusion of his formation but also fear about entering a new phase in his life.

Self-doubt is followed by letting go; the reality of the change is accepted. Brammer and Abergo (1981) indicated that letting go may be traumatic. Letting go requires courage to let go of the past and plunge into the unknown. Sugerman (1986) described letting go as a coping mechanism, the point at which one can begin to convert the transition into growth points. As he leaves the seminary, the seminarian has to grieve many losses in his life such as many of the friends that he made there and the familiar routine and structure that the seminary provided for him. Letting go allows the individual to consider new options which is the fifth phase. This is an experimental period, alternative options are considered as the individual process of putting the past behind and searches for new meaning. No longer a student, the seminarian now had to negotiate a new identity for himself that is a radical departure from the way he related to people previously. The sixth phase, reflective thinking, is an attempt to make sense of what has happened. Given the nature of his formation, the seminarian has prepared for his ordination since he entered the seminary. Hopefully, as he prepares for ordination he will be able to reflect on his experience of seminary formation and incorporate it into his life. During the final phase, integration, the individual feels at home with the transition and takes on new behaviours that result in lifestyle changes. Once he is ordained, the new priest will hopefully integrate his experience into his ministry.

Bridges (2004) argued that "what the individual brings to any transitional situation is the style that he or she has developed for dealing with endings." (Bridges, 2004, p. 15). He described managing transitions as helping individuals through three phases: endings, the neutral zone and new beginnings. A transition begins with an ending, the letting go of old ways and identities. After letting go, an individual enters the neutral zone, a psychological realignment. It is an in-between stage when the old is gone, but the new is not operational due to the process of psychological realignment. During the final stage, the individual completes the transition and makes a new beginning. Bridges (2004) described this three-stage process as a psychological process of letting go of old ways and making a new beginning. An individual experiences change within the context in which the individual resides; hence, Schlossberg's transition theory provides a framework to examine the coping skills of the individual in transition.

2.3.3 Using Schlossberg's Transition Theory to Identify Coping Strategies

Entering ministry after six or seven years of seminary formation is a stress-producing event. The stress might result in a life event, the fear of failure or of the unknown, or negotiating an unfamiliar environment. Aslanian (2001) and Aslanian and Brickell (1980) indicated that the majority of adults find adaptation into higher education or graduation from higher education to be a stressful occasion. Bridges (2004) and Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) identified three phases in an educational transition which parallels can be made for clergy: moving into the seminary, moving through it, and moving out of it (preparation for ordination). Each phase of the transition demands changes, and each student experiences the change in response to both old and new realities.

Those attending seminary face the threat of loss of economic resources, work requirements, and time limits, as well as the demands of attending college. Each individual must learn to manage multiple roles simultaneously in addition to the ever-changing changes in society which influence the church.

How one responds to transition and stress is determined by the individual's coping skills that ultimately determine whether a student persists or does not finish his educational goals or develops new coping skills.

Schlossberg (1984) developed a transition model to assist in the understanding of adults in transition. The model provided a framework for researchers to analayse the transition process and is particularly suited for seminarians and clergy in transition. The transition model is often referred to in the literature as a theory and is categorised as an adult development theory (Evan, Forney, and Guido-diBrito, 1998, p. 108). Goodman, Schlossberg and Anderson, (2006) Schlossberg (1984) and Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman (1995) presented a model for counselling adults in transition that provides a framework for addressing the academic personal needs of adult students. The model is a framework for understanding the perceived demands and coping strategies used by individuals in transition. Schlossberg et al (1995) argued, "the transitions differ, but the structure for understanding individuals in transition is stable." (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 26).

Schlossberg (1984), defined a transition "as any event that results in a change in relationships, routines, assumptions or roles with the setting of self, work, family, health and/or economics." (Schlossberg, 1984, p. 43). There are three types of transitions: anticipated, unanticipated and non-events. Anticipated transitions are major events that are expected examples. These events are seen as normative and an individual can anticipate and plan for the event. An example of this would be a seminarian preparing for ordination to the priesthood at the conclusion of his seminary formation. Unanticipated transitions are unexpected life events that disrupt the normal routine and typically involves a crisis and the inability to plan for the event, such as a sudden death or an accident. Non-event transitions are expected transitions that do not occur, such as not receiving a promotion. not getting married or not getting a job, or in the case of a seminarian, if he were asked to leave the seminary prior to his ordination. Goodman et al, (2006) indicated that the realisation that the event will not occur may alter the way one sees himself or the way in which one responds.

The foundation of the transition model is that personal appraisal of the change determines the meaning of the transition. It depends on the previous coping strategies enacted by the person in preceding life events. To understand the meaning of the transition one must consider the type of transition, the context of the transition and the impact of the transition. According to Goodman et al. (2006), Schlossberg (1984) and Schlossberg et al (1995) there are four major factors that influence how an individual copes with transitions: situation, self, support and coping strategies. These are known as the 4 S system. The 4S system provides a framework to identify the resources individuals have for coping.

2.3.4. Schlossberg's 4 S System

Situation refers to the type of transition (anticipated or unanticipated), the context in which the event occurs and the impact of the transition on the individual's life. Every transition is diverse in nature and perceived differently by each individual; as a result, individuals appraise the same events in different ways. The appraisal of an event or nonevent is determined by a number of factors including the timing, control, role change, duration, previous experiences, or concurrent stress that precipitates the transition. Previous experience with a similar transition determines how effectively a person copes with the current transition. A stressful life event is any event that exceeds an individual's capacity to respond effectively (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Self refers to the personal and demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, health and socio-economic status) which impact perception of the event. Each individual also brings psychological resources such as self-concept and self-efficacy, which determines a person's worldview. Self encompasses an individual's assets and liabilities. Reaction to any event differs according to the factors related to self. Self involves two categories: personal characteristics and psychological resources. Personal characteristics include socio-economic status, gender age, stage of life and ethnicity that in turn influence worldview. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) defined psychological resources as, "the personality characteristics that people draw upon to help them withstand threats." (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978, p. 5). Psychological resources include locus of control, ego development, values, and self-efficacy. Personal characteristics affect how a person views life and the situation that is happening to them. Two persons may experience the same transition, but approach it differently depending on their level of maturity and frame of reference. According to Parker (1994), psychosocial coping resources, including a sense of control, help to buffer the effects of stress and contribute to economic self-sufficiency. Bandura (1997) maintained that an individual's perceived self-efficacy influences how the individual thinks about him/herself and motivates behavior. If a person believes that they have no power to influence an event, the individual does not try to engage with the event. Conversely, effort is put forth to influence the event if the individual believes that he/she can influence the outcome.

Support helps to mobilse the resources necessary to share or eliminate stress. The types of supports needed to handle a stressful event may include family, friends, institutions and community resources. Strategies refer to the coping strategies each individual uses to prevent, alleviate or respond to stress, Goodman et al (2006) argued that how an individual responds to a transitional event depends on the interaction and balance of situation, self, supports and strategies. Kahn and Antonucci (1980) developed the concept of support in where each individual moves through life surrounded by a group of significant others giving and receiving support. Caplan (1976) indicated that support systems help the individual to mobilize psychological resources and become more resilient. Support systems may also share financial resources, share tasks and information, and may provide a resource for handling stressful situations. Thoits (1986) described social support as a buffer that assists the individual by providing resources that reduce the stress and the impact of an event. Kahn and Antonucci (1980) described three functions of support: affect, affirmation, and aid. Affect provides support

through respect or care. Support that is affirming expresses connection or understanding of the individual. Aid provides tangible assistance that is necessary to resolve the crisis or transition.

Support may not always be positive. Wijnberg and Reding (1999) found that negative social networks included threats of abuse from a former spouse or partner, as well as family members that were very critical. Wijnberg and Reding highlight that in relationships where the same person is both supportive and critical, it represents a special complexity. The relationship is characterized by ambivalence and pain, yet the recipient of the criticism is co-dependent upon the relationship in response to a need. In a study by Wijnberg and Weiger (1998), the participants acknowledged receiving practical support more frequently than emotional support. Practical support was in the form of childcare, transportation, or housing assistance. However, the participants expressed a stronger need for emotional support to assist in the coping process.

As the individual evaluates the transition that is presented before them, the response is determined by the available social supports.

Coping strategies include the individual's response to the transition. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) define coping as "any response that serves to prevent, avoid, or control emotional distress." Schlossberg's transition model validated Pearlin and Schooler's belief that coping responses fall into three categories: 1. Responses that control the meaning of the problem by cognitively neutralizing the meaning to avoid the stress. 2. Responses that attempt to modify the situation by helping the individual to accommodate the stress without feeling overwhelmed by the event. 3. Responses that help to manage the stress after the feelings of stress have occurred. The ability to cope is a dynamic process that continuously changes throughout the process of appraisal. The type of strategy used depends on whether or not the situation can be changed. Individuals are generally facedwith a variety of transitions and stressful events, consequently, a particular coping strategy is not effective in all situations.

Each transition is different and is perceived differently by each individual; as a result, individuals appraise the same events in different ways. The appraisal of an event or nonevent is determined by the timing, control, role change, duration, previous experiences or concurrent stress that precipitates the transition. Previous experiences with a similar transition determine how effectively a person copes with the current transition.

As one moves from a period of relative stability to a transition, the response differs dependent upon the individual's appraisal of the change. Schlossberg (1981) made the point that, "a transition is not so much a matter of change as of the individual's perception of change. A transition is only a transition if it so defined by the person's experiencing it." (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 7). "The more the event alters an adult's roles, routines, assumptions and relationships, the more he or she will be affected by the transition." (Sargent and Schlossberg, 1988, p. 58).

In summary, according to Schlossberg (1981) transition is a life-long process and each person completes the process differently and the outcome is original for each individual. How person successfully accomplished this task of integration is contingent upon four factors: situation, self, support and the effective use of coping strategies. This balance of resources and liabilities determine why individuals react differently to the same type of transition and why the same person has a different reaction to the transition process.

Within the transition from the seminary to ministry a significant manifestation of the transition that is being experienced by the candidate is the ritual of ordination.

2.3.5 The Ritual of Ordination as Means of Transition: What is Ritual?

Rituals provide an outward societal expression and a socially shared response to a transition that is occurring in the life of an individual and indicate a moment of significant transition in the life a person who is being transformed. Holloman saw ritual as a culturized system of simplified, standardized behaviour which effectively manipulates human emotion toward some purpose (Hollomn, 1974). For Musgrove and Middletown, this purpose had to have a turning point with clear symbolic value, standing for something other than or beyond itself and was clearly emotionally charged (Musgrove and Middletown, 1981). Gluckman framed ritual as promoting social harmony and efficiency by clearing up role ambiguities and uncertainties- making clear who was who (Gluckman, 1962). In this context, ordination is a central rite of passage for priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. Marshall believed that the practice of ritual produces two primary outcomes- belief and belonging, in which ritual has the capacity to resolve paradox and inconsistency (Marshall, 2002). This is particularly true in times of death, defeat and aberration (Durkheim, 1912; Malinowski, 1974; Baumesiter, 1991). Actions may also be considered to have symbolic functions (Bordia, et al., 2006; Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980);

behaviours, sets of behaviours, and occasions for behavior can act as symbols when they occur in the social contexts (Bordieu, 1977; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). The rite of ordination, given its complex composition and the effect it has on the life of the candidate could also be considered one of these pivotal moments.

Lewis claimed that if ritual is primarily a means of communicating messages, participants at rituals are often uncertain, conflicted and ignorant of the meanings behind the message (Lewis, 1980). This could be true of the rite of ordination, given that parts of the ceremony have been in use for centuries and many elements of the ceremony are not part of a wider secularized culture. However, here in lies a central aspect of ritual as providing definition, validation and reassurance of a situation in times of incomplete or ambigious information (Thomas, 1928; Festinger 1954; Berger and Luckman, 1966; Cialdini, 1993). What Geertz said of culture can also be applied to ritual in that it is "not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (Geertz, 1973).

Alexander emphasized the dual aspect of ritual as performance and transformation (Alexander, 1997). Like Musgrove and Middletown (1981) for Alexander, ritual, as a performance, planned or improvised, effects a transition from everyday life to an alternative context within which the everyday is transformed (Alexander, 1997). This agrees with Van Gennep's theory of, "the displacement of the sacred". By this, he is referring to the possibility of states or statuses which are not of the everyday world. They exist but are set apart, taking their shape from their difference from the here-and-now (van Gennep, 1960).

Ritual gives expression to how even the routine events of everyday are transformed into something new. Alexander develops this further by believing that transitional religious rituals open up life to ultimate reality or some transcendent being or force in order to tap its transformative power (Alexander, 1997). An example of how ritual and religious ritual differ could be a university graduation ceremony and the religious ceremony to mark the graduation. In the graduation ceremony a new title is granted to the graduate, such as bachelor of arts, master of arts etc; the graduates wear the distinctive dress of the university that separates them from other people present at the ceremony; they sit in reserved seats; their names are called out; the graduation parchment is handed over to them and they might receive a round of applause as a mark of their achievement. A central difference in the religious ceremony to mark their

graduation would be invocation of God's name in thanksgiving and blessing for the graduation. The religious ceremony does not confer graduation but it can signify a ritual of transition such as saying farewell to the people on the campus that was part of the student's time as a student.

The sphere of phenomenology is closely linked to that of ritual. Jackson saw phenomenology as, "a project designed to understand being-in-the-world." (Jackson, 1996, p. 3). This effort to understand how inter-subjective experience is constituted is a possible response to the question Merleau-Ponty (1962) poses on how does one understand the other, and on the nature of understanding ritual as an expression of transition. Characteristically, phenomenology attempts to answer this question by not privileging one domain of experience or epistemology, as none of them can encompass the totality of the lived experience. Instead, for Ricoeur, it is, "an investigation into the structures of experience which proceed connected expression in language." (Ricoeur, 1979, p. 127). This is what Merleau-Ponty would call the pre-objective (1962). The sensory experience of the ritual as understood by Levi-Strauss is constituted as a means-end relationship to get to the desired goal, the assertion of the cosmological unity of the social reality. It is a similar pattern of assumptions about bodily meaning that was held by Van Gennep (1960). For Van Gennep, central to his idea of ritual as a rite of passage is a sacred-profane dualism, which is also kept in Turner's scheme, though he also includes the role of marginal or liminal stages in transition. This distinction is similar to that made by Mauss (1993, p. 12) when understanding the gift. Mauss asserts that the person for whom the ritual is performed enters the domain of the sacred and then rejoins the profane world, which is separate from the sacred, though conditioned by it. For Turner's early work, and for Van Gennep, ritual is the heightened activity in which the sacred-profane worlds are mediated (Van Gennep, 1960). These approaches identify ritual as the situation or drama eminently expressed, and as an organisation of practice constructed and defined by participants. It is a practice in which the participants confront the existential conditions of their existence and in doing so make the ritual real. Goody (1961) received much criticism when he claimed that rituals were essentially analytical tools but were often confused with "true" descriptors of cultural data. According to this view, the slippage from using ritual to organizing anthropological data into using it to describe real-world properties of cultures is fallacious. Likewise, Bell (1997) questioned the fundamental difference between ritual action, which is meant to be, "meta-conventional" in the sense of originating cultural agendas and regular quotidian activity. He preferred to use the word, "ritualization" to refer to

ritualizing activity rather than to identify ritual as an ontological category separate from the rest of culture.

2.3.6 Ordination as a Rite of Passage

Trice and Beyer saw a rite as amalgamating a number of discrete cultural forms into an integrated, unified public performance (Trice and Beyer 1984, 1985, 1993). They described rites and ceremonials as discrete enactments that have a beginning and an end and give expression to a culture's values and beliefs. The terms rite and ritual are closely related (the Latin noun *ritus*, of which the adjective form is *ritualis*), the latter being the general notion of which the former constitutes the specific instance (Grimes, 1990). Often the composition of the rite can involve many elements such as speech, song, touch, sound and smell. Trice and Beyer (1984, 1993) use the term ceremonial to describe the contexts in which rites occur. Thus, for example, a "rite of passage" (Van Gennep, 1960) is an instance of ritual that takes place within a ceremonial context (Moore and Myerhoff, 1977). Studying rituals therefore entails examining various rites and their expression in ceremonies.

For Van Gennep, rituals and ceremonies serve the function of guiding an individual through liminal transitory categories as one passes through the stages of separation, transition and reincorporation that he claims are present in all stages of rites of passage. Van Gennep (1960) defined the rites of passage as, "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" and he saw them in terms of a tripartite diachronic structure: separation (detachment of the individual from a social position or state), liminality (status marginality or inbetweenness), and aggregation (reincorporation into the social body in a new status or state) (van Gennep, 1960, p. 11). Depending on the occasion, one of the three parts would tend to be accentuated and the other would be two restrained. What van Gennep's schema details is the process of transition, with the notion of passage encompassing an ambiguous zone which is betwixt and between fixed social positions. The symbolic deaths and resurrections which often take place during the liminal phase are analysed as a way of severing connection with a previous social position in readiness for 'rebirth' into the next and therefore of rendering passage through life orderly and predictable (Hockey, 2002).

Turner (1969), followed Van Gennep, focused on the idea of ritual as a way of negotiating between constancy and transition. In Turner's view, society has a need for structural differentiation (e.g., hierarchy) in which different members hold separate roles. However, there is also a need for individuals to acknowledge a fundamental bond among members, without which no society would be possible. Turner termed this bond *communitas*. Through ritual, individuals can momentarily forego social differences and reaffirm their sense of *communitas*, or basic, shared social membership. Turner developed the theme of liminality with *communitas* being the "quick" of human interrelatedess and a sentiment of human kindness (Turner, 1969). He focused on the dynamic relationship between the liminal condition affecting subjects of "rite of passage" and the relatively permanent state of the overall structure of everyday life. Strarkloff (1997) saw this relationship as a fundamental analogy to the creative theological tension between institution and community (*Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*) and as an ethnological tension between structure and *communitas* (Starkloff, 1997). Smelser extended the model of liminality to a wide variety of social practices that can be thought of as a journey to demonstrate how these allow individuals and groups to regenerate themselves (Smelser, 2009). Within this framework, the rite of ordination can be seen as both a rite of passage for the candidate who is going to be initiated into the priesthood and also as a rite of regeneration when the bishop ordains the candidate into a "new order" within the church.

Pickering wrote of rites of passage as having a "peculiar persistence" (Pickering, 1974). Even though the practice of religion at rituals may have declined, there are still a large number of people who seek religious aspects to their rites of passage. Pickering believed the reason for this was due to the personal "crossing" or crisis that people experienced and they are essentially rites of change in which actors assume a new role in society (Pickering, 1974). From this viewpoint, ordination to the priesthood is a central rite of passage within the Roman Catholic Church.

2.3.7 Ordination as a Rite of Initiation

Ordination is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church and it is through the process of ordination that a person becomes a priest. It is seen as a rite of initiation for the sacramental priesthood and a key component of the ceremony is that it highlights that the candidate, after ordination, can do something that previous to the ceremony he could not have done (Wegner and Wheatley, 1999).

There are many signs within this public event that highlight the transition that the candidate is undergoing as he is ordained a priest. This would concur with Marshall's belief that those at the top of the hierarchal structure exhibit a higher degree of ritual behaviour including a severe initiation rite (Marshall, 2002). Marshall made another claim that rituals often take place at night with involving darkness and various forms of disguise (Marshall, 2009). While this may be true of some rites of initiation it not true of the rite of initiation to the priesthood as it is often held during the day and is open to the public.

The ordination ceremony is one of the most ancient ceremonies in the Church and like many areas of Church life it has undergone many changes. There have been many developments in the ordination rites since the first evidence of their existence in the Apostolic Tradition which is attributed to Hippolytus of Rome in c.215 AD. The ritual of ordination is like other initiation rituals in that it is synonymous with structured, even stereotyped activity (D'Aquili and Laughlin 1975; Lewis 1980), and the requirements of following that structure tend to channel attention narrowly (Lex 1976; Collins 1988). As the rite of ordination is a universal rite within the Roman Catholic Church it can be seen meta-cultural, that is, beyond the culture of one ethnic or regional cluster.

2.3.8 Minor Orders as the Separation Phase

Prior to ceremony for ordination to the priesthood, the candidate will have received a number of public rites of initiation during the course of his seven-year formation progamme. These stages were referred to as 'minor orders'. Peter Lombard, a great Scholastic theologian, wrote in book four of his Sentences that he considered there to be a seven-fold aspect to Holy Orders (Lombard, 2007 ed.). This interpretation, along with that of many other Scholastic theologians, influenced the rite of ordination for centuries.

Each of the minor order highlights a transition that the candidate is making prior to his ordination. In a public way this identifies with van Gennep's understanding of the separation stage of transition (van Gennep, 1960). The first office was that of door-keepers or porters. Just as the Lord had cleared the money-lenders from the Temple (Mattew 21:12) so the Christian door-keeper was to preside at the entrance to the Church. The symbolic scriptural text for this office is the words of Jesus, 'I am the Gate,' (John 10:9.) The office of porter can be reflected in

the modern ministry of usher and of welcoming people into the Church building. The next office was the office of lector or reader. The task of the lector was to sing or read the psalms and reading at the liturgies. The scriptural text for this office was taken from the Gospel of Luke when Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah when he began his public ministry (Luke 4:17-20). This office is fulfilled in the modern ministry of being a minister of the Word. The candidate then progressed to the office of exorcist. There are many examples in the scriptures of Jesus expelling evil spirits from people. The role of exorcist was to remind people of their sins and the abundant mercy that is given by God. The acolytes or the *ceroferarii* lit and carried the candles to the altar. This was to symbolize that Christ is the light of the world, (John 8:12). The sub-deacon assisted the deacon at the altar. This office took its inspiration from the way the Lord washed the feet of the disciples. The diaconate was seen to represent when Christ distributed his own body and blood at the Last Supper and when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane he called his disciples to prayer. This office has remained within the Roman Catholic structure of Holy Orders.

The seventh order is that of priesthood and it is the fulfillment of all the other orders. It could be said that the candidate is ordained many times, the present ritual being so complex. The adaptations reflect how the nuanced understanding of the ordained ministry has shifted in focus throughout the centuries.

2.3.9 The Modern Rite of Ordination as a Rite of Passage

The rite of ordination to the priesthood is comprised of many parts. There is the promise of obedience; the litany of the saints and prostration; the laying on of hands and the epicletic prayer to the Holy Spirit; the investiture with the stole and chasuble; the anointing of hands with the oil of chrism; the presentation of the patten and chalice, and the kiss of peace. The ordination is an emotionally moving ceremony and each gesture of the ordination rite carries a symbol of transition and change.

During a ritual, the use of physical activity and rhythmic movement is seen as a means of directing attention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, Baumesiter, 1991). This would be in agreement with Powell, who believed that the reason for the prostration by the candidate before the altar was seen as a statement that he was dying to the world and becoming configured to Christ. The liminal aspects of transition are evident here (van Gennep, 1909). There is a farewell to the

secular world and a taking on of a new identity, that of configuration. The physical movement of prostration, a sign of total abandonment, also highlights his dependency on God. It serves to stress how the candidate has chosen a life of service. It also is a symbol that he has placed his trust in God's saving work in the world. During many rituals of transition, described in Van Gennep's and subsequent works, metaphoric death is followed by metaphoric rebirth enacted symbolically (Hockey, 2002). The physical act of prostration can be seen as metaphoric especially as it comes just prior to the actual moment of ordination, the laying on of hands and epicletic prayer which highlights how the entire ritual signifies transition.

2.3.10 Conclusion on Transition

Once seen as superstitious, magical or pathological, rituals are now recognized as powerful and empowering, dynamically central to human affairs, capable of creating and renewing communities, remaking our senses of being in the world, creating and constructing human identities and providing an explanation to uncertain and ambiguous realities (Pickering, 1974). Marshall believed that the origins of ritual began with synergistic events which lead to repetition, elaboration and formalization of their enactment (Marshall, 2002). This would be in agreement with Holloman's understanding of a rite of passage as an expression of a ritual subtype, which was primarily aimed at the transformation of the individual's psychological orientation, in moving the person from one view of the world to another (Holloman, 1974). As a rite of passage, the rite of ordination can be seen as both objectively elaborate and subjectively meaningful for the individual who is receiving ordination. Following Turner, it can be seen as passage ritual to restructure relationships (Turner, 1969). Pickering asserted that not only do rites of passage restructure relationships, they also define social reality, (Pickering, 1974). From the assessment of the rite of ordination, it is clear that the rite, as a rite of passage, helps to define the reality of ministry within the Roman Catholic Church and the means of transition for a person to become a Roman Catholic priest.

2.4.1 Theories of Entry

Upon his ordination and having received his appointment, the new priest begins his priestly ministry. The range of areas that he will be called upon to exercise his ministry in is enormous. He will be asked the say Mass; to baptize; to absolve sins; to celebrate marriages, to conduct

funerals; to give classes on matters of the faith to people of all ages and abilities; to visit the sick; to attend to those in hospital; to support the bereaved; tend to the needy; maintain parish property; fill out forms and care for himself. All this could be asked of him in a single day. It takes both time and effort to settle into pastoral ministry. Having a number of theories of entry into the pastoral ministry is helpful to understand what the new priest may be feeling as he begins his ministry. O'Rourke commented on the use of models: To speak of "models of entry connotes a systematization that is far from the experience of most priests." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 4). The very suggestion that a priest was introduced to his work according to a particular model of entry may well elicit responses running from incredulity to black humour. The new priest is in fact introduced to his new situation with ground rules and assumptions at work. His starting out is patterned, and patterned in ways that are common and repeated. Even if the pattern is no more than repetition of the same neglect; errors; and mistakes over and over again, there is repetition and predictable repetition. O'Rourke believed that this predictable and patterned repetition allows us to speak of theories of entry, (O' Rourke, 1978).

In his theory of entry, O'Rourke presents five models of entry for a new priest starting his ministry. These are the sink or swim model; the military model; the domesticating model; the internship model and the apprenticeship model. Each model carries with it its own merits and drawbacks. The models presuppose that the new priest is well adjusted; eager to engage with those whom he encounters; has an ability to reflect on his experiences and is generally able for most pastoral situations.

2.4.2 The Sink or Swim Model

In the sink-or-swim model the newly ordained priest is left on his own. This model is also known as the laissez-faire model of splendid isolation. This model is favoured by a number of companies in introducing their staff to what is expected of them. A reduced training component is required and it is a model used in businesses where there is a high turnover of staff. Personal investment is sparse and the managers of the business are aware that the employees may not remain long with them. This model is used where a lot of initiative is required by the employee, for example, door to door salesmen. The employee must also be able to adapt the sales pitch of the company to suit the client. The personality of the employee is paramount in these situations, so formal inductions given by the company authorities would not be of much use. Payment is

usually on the basis of dividend on sales. Emphasis is given to appeasing those in authority, colleagues and clients. As Sindell and Sindell advised those starting in this line of work, "it is incumbent upon you to make a good impression on your co-workers, not the other way around. After all, you're coming onto their turf." (M. & T. Sindell, 2006, p. 31).

While the sink-or-swim model is suited to some forms of business it is, according to O'Rourke it is, "absolutely destructive within the Church. Few groups, if any, place as high a value on or make as great an investment in the training of their personnel as does the Church." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 41). For the previous six or seven years the new priest lived in the encompassing environment of the seminary. He received support in a structured way in each area of his formation. At his ordination he made a life-long commitment to the priesthood. In the sink-or-swim model his previous training, accomplishments or achievements are not taken into consideration. In this model the new priest is given a minimal amount of information about his parish. He may not have met his pastor or colleagues prior to his appointment or may not even know the location of his parish. After the new priest is given a letter of appointment from the bishop he must fend for himself. He is unaware of the specific needs of the parish or how best to use his gifts. Philpot spoke of his introduction and initiation into pastoral ministry and how eager he was to begin when the response from parish priest and the other curate left him feeling disappointed. Their response was "Oh, good- you've come. That leaves us free to go out." (Philpot, 1998, p. 7).

In these excerpts, the newly ordained priest is given no formal induction on what is expected of him. Philpot felt that his role was to free up the parish priest and to simply refrain from offending others. He felt that the pastor was too overburdened with his own workload to consider the various transitions in the life of the newly ordained priest, (Philpot, 1998). As long as the new priest does not rock the boat or cause a stir in the parish, the parish priest and diocesan authorities are content.

In the seminary, the student had clearly defined objective goals to work on in the areas of his pastoral, academic, spiritual and human formation. This is not the case in the parish. The new priest must be able to clarify what his new goals are and the standards that he sets for himself. He needs necessary support from others such as, the bishop; his initial pastor and fellow colleagues; his spiritual director and mentor. Without this support he can set his standards too high or lose

his focus. For some new priests, the challenge of setting new goals can be too great and consequently they sink. It is a reason why a number of newly ordained priests leave the formal ministry while others are never really integrated into the priesthood. Hoge gave the example of a young man who left the priesthood shortly after his ordination who experienced the sink aspect of O'Rourke's Sink or Swim model. This young man saw himself at a dead end as one of the youngest in the diocese. He felt he would be only a sacramental functionary in the future. He was well educated, but nobody had an interest in making use of that. He saw only a downward movement for himself, (Hoge, 2002, p. 77). This young priest felt that the life of priestly ministry, as he felt it would remain, was too great a burden and so he decided to leave. He felt that his gifts were not appreciated and that there would be no change in the system. He could not identify with the priesthood that he had spent so long in preparation. His expectations did not live up to the lived reality in which he found himself. Entry into the priesthood is more complex than entry into a professional role. As this young man was beginning his pastoral ministry he wanted to excel. He wished to give the best possible service that he could to those he encountered. As it was the first time he was going visiting sick people in a professional and pastoral role he was nervous. He went out of his way to ask his immediate superior for guidance and support. The casual reply that he received from his initial pastor received was both condescending and unclear. Without having the opportunity to reflect on his experience he felt himself to be a failure. He carried this feeling through to his wider pastoral ministry. It is a clear example of a new priest having to go through the sink-or-swim model.

Hoge has conducted a considerable amount of research into the early experiences of newly ordained priests. In his analysis he concluded that disillusionment and moments where priests felt lonely, isolated and unappreciated by other priests or the Church hierarchy was a chief reason for newly ordained priests deciding to leave the active ministry, (Hoge, 2002, pp. 63-64). The common thread that runs through many of the cases of new priests who leave the ministry is that they felt lonely or unappreciated. "This is a necessary requirement in the process of deciding to resign. When it is absent, resignation from the priesthood is unlikely…This is a basic finding of our research." (Hoge, 2002, pp. 63-64). Without having made the necessary connections in their new role many new priests decide to choose alternative careers. They leave without having fully entered the priesthood. Despite this, the sink-or-swim model is the most prevalent in the initiation of newly ordained priests into their initial appointment.

2.4.3 The Military Model

In O'Rourke's perception of the military model, he recognizes the need for the new priest to have a rigidly structured introduction into the ministry. Unlike the sink-or-swim model where no formal training is given, the military model requires that the new priest follows a strict pattern of procedures and regulations. "The military model is drawn from the common practice in the military of having a period of basic training or boot camp. The recruits are given a period of initiation and training which is explicit and direct." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 45). This model is reflective of the seminary system that was in place prior to Vatican II. In this model the pastor reflects the role of the dean of discipline from the seminary and the new priest remains as a student. As Kevin noted

> The dean would speak of the Rule as if it were an inevitable force or factor that had come into consequence independently of man, and was now beyond the reach of any human modification. He would say in more sorrow than anger, 'Mr Murphy, the Rule has been broken, neither you nor I can do anything about it, I shall have to take serious note of this. That's all. (Kevin, 1945, p. 131).

One of the goals O'Rourke (1978) noted of this model is that the newly ordained priest comes pre-attached to the priesthood. The new priest is meant to become further connected and enmeshed into the priesthood and the military model prescribes that he is never out of role. He is always to be seen as a priest rather than as an individual. As in the military, the new priest must wear the official uniform at all times. There is official recognition of this stance. The Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests (1994) stated:

> The priest should be identifiable primarily through his conduct, but also by his manner of dressing, which makes visible to all the faithful, indeed to all people…The clergy should wear suitable ecclesiastical dress, in accordance with the norms established by the Episcopal Conference and the legitimate local custom. (The Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 1994, Para. 66, p 70).

According to this model, the new priest is never off duty and must be available to everyone. A problem with this model is that the new priest can lose his own sense of self as he makes the transition into his new role. As Ranson stated, "Clergy can over-identify with the public dimension of their life. They become their social role. Relationships become role based: clergy then only ever relate to others through their role." (Ranson, 2002, p. 220). If one over-identifies

with a role, with an institution outside oneself, then identity is always extrinsic to the self. It cannot bear change or alteration or growth.

Ranson articulated that one of the major pit-falls of the military model is that the public and private roles of the person are enmeshed. There is lack of clarity of identity. In the military model, the person serves the institution and nothing else. When there is a high status given to the role, this can serve as a barrier against the exploration of the individuality of the new priests. The new priest can take refuge in what he is in his professional life rather than who he is as a person. Conway agreed with this understanding of how the military model could be detrimental to a new priest starting his ministry. "It is precisely because the trappings of priesthood have been so vivid and the reverence shown them so strong that it has been extremely difficult for priests to separate their personal identity from their role. We have affirmed the role and not the person." (Conway, 2002, pp. 670-571). The new priest not only becomes attached to the presbyterate organization but he cannot define himself outside of it. Within this model, a strong sense of obedience is expected. The pastor occupies a crucial position in this model. As O'Rourke highlighted that "many older priests looked on their first pastor much in the same way a new recruit looks on his drill instructor; with fear and apprehension." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 46). Dunn recalled the influence of his initial pastor in America:

> On another occasion one Sunday when the church was full, I had nothing to do... I thought it might be good for me if I said a few prayers in the church rather than try and kill time in the sacristy. During Mass the Monsignor noticed me to the side of the front. "What are you doing here?" he bellowed in stentorian tones. "Go to the sacristy," he said, 'we don't do that here." (Dunn, 1986, p. 13)

For Dunn, every moment of his day was controlled. He was expected to follow the orders of the pastor and to respond without question or query. It is no surprise that his initial pastor had served as chaplain to the 69th regiment in the US Army. Dunn was forbidden to write his own homilies and had to read out the one that was prepared by the pastor. Meal times were similarly regulated

and everyone present had to follow the commands of the pastor. His decisions were final. Control is of paramount importance in the military model and any form of personal creativity is prohibited. The value of this model is that it is effective in training obedient priests who could be counted on to do what they were told to do. However, a drawback of using this model is that it stifled the development of an ability to respond creatively to crisis situations. This model is like an external scaffold if a new priest has a number of personal insecurities. O'Rourke made the point that, "This model is no longer common in the Church, in large part because the attitude toward authority no longer permits a pastor to get away with acting like a drill sergeant or martinet." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 46). However, the research would conclude that this model is still in vogue as a model of initiation.

2.4.4 The Domesticating Model

In 1861 Isabella Beeton wrote The Book of Household Management. She recorded the duties that were necessary for the different members of the domestic household staff. She spelled out the duties of the footman being expected to rise early, in order to get through all his dirty work before the family is stirring. The footman has a purely functional relationship with the people that he encounters. His duties are to attend to the needs of his master and to respond to them without hesitation.

O' Rourke believed that in the domesticating model, "the new man is taught how not to rock the boat, how to keep a low profile, and how to postpone his own gratification." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 46). In this model the new priest is made feel aware that he is the most junior member of staff. He is given the tasks and duties that the other members of staff wish to avoid. The assignments are inconvenient, such as the early morning Masses or emergency night time calls at the hospital. He is also given duties that nobody else wants to do such as chaplaincies to parish groups that are uninteresting or work with parishioners of low status, such as the altar servers or youth work. The prevailing thought in this model is to keep the new priest humble so that he knows his place in the perceived clerical order and not threaten the system.

The new man is made to feel exactly that; the new; the inexperienced; the sheltered and the incompetent priest who has yet to learn the tools of the trade. In the military model the pastor had a tight control over everything that the new priest did. This level of control is absent in the

domesticating model but the level of frustration remains high as the new priest is unable to be creative or innovative in his ministry. Greeley recounted the kind of life that could be experienced by a new priest of the 1950s: Such a frustrating and unchallenging life is bound to lead to a deterioration of professional commitment and interest. When one is required to spend most of one's time doing routine, irrelevant or unchallenging work, one is singularly without motivation to maintain one's professional standards or interests, (Greeley, 1967, p. 161). Greeley highlighted the observation that the new priest is given a great amount of duties to perform. His duties, however, are so unchallenging that he does not find a personal sense of achievement when he has completed them. He is not integrated into what he does and he does not feel connected or attached to his work.

In this model, the new priest learns that if he is to succeed then he must fit into the wider system. It may have its roots in the seminary system which is then continued in the parish. As Murnion recounted:

> In the seminary there was enormous pressure to fit in… fit in, like members of a choir whose voices don't stick out. And I think that pressure is enormous to fit into the general pattern and not to stick your head above the water, (Ruddy, 2006, pp. 101-102).

When this model is used it is important that the new man does not threaten the other members of staff. In the domesticating model the new priest has to learn to postpone his own gratification. It is seen by some to be morally strengthening and helps the new priest to fit into the system that is in operation. The domesticating model provides greater freedom to the new priest than the military model. However, his ability to achieve job satisfaction is limited and he must learn to abide by the rules.

2.4.5 The Apprenticeship Model

Apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of skilled crafts practitioners. Most of their training is done on the job while working for an employer who helps the apprentices learn their trade. Often some informal, theoretical education is also involved. This system of apprenticeship first developed in the later Middle Ages and came to be supervised by craft guilds and town governments, (Le Goff, 1990). A master craftsman was entitled to employ young people as an inexpensive form of labour in exchange for providing formal training in crafts such as carpentry, stone masonry or metal work. Apprentices were young, usually about fourteen to

twenty-one years of age, unmarried and would live in the master craftsman's household. Most apprentices aspired to become master craftsmen themselves on completion of their contract, usually a term of seven years, but some would spend time as a journeyman and a significant number would never acquire their own workshop.

According to O'Rourke, in the apprenticeship model the new man, is in effect, "apprenticed to an older priest who teaches him how to go about his priestly work by involving him in his own work." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 49). This model realizes that the new priest is beginning his ministry and that so much of what is expected of him is new. It recognizes his need for introduction, his need for information about his setting, his need to know people, and for support in his work.' This model is similar to the diaconate placement. In various liturgical and sacramental settings the deacon stands beside the priest and shadows what the priest does. In the apprenticeship model this form of induction is used to initiate the new man into his role. If the pastor is willing to assist the new priest then it can be a fruitful enterprise. If the pastor is willing to share his knowledge with the new man and it can make connections for him. The pastor can know the people that the new priest would come into contact with when emergencies arose and the pastor can help the new man to establish a relationship with them. When emergencies took place the new priest can then know who to call and can build on the interaction that he already started with them. In this model there is also a realization that new man is unfamiliar with the celebration of the sacraments. The pastor can often make helpful suggestions prior to the new priest's initial funeral, wedding and baptism. This can have the effect of lessening the nervousness of the new man and increasing his self-confidence. By providing him with indications of how to deal with people the pastor can help the new man to realize the areas of counselling that the new man needed to focus on and to be able to refer the situation to others if the need arose to do so. This put into context can help the ability of the new man to realize his potential and to become aware that he did not have to solve all problems that were presented to him. By commenting on the sermons he preached, the pastor can provide helpful feedback, tease out issues for the new priest and help him to develop his own personal style.

When there is a pastor willing to provide honest and helpful feedback the apprenticeship model can be successful. The new priest is made to feel a member of the team in a supportive and caring environment. He is aware of what is expected of him and he knows who to contact. A

chief drawback is that, similar to the domesticating model, the new priest is made feel very much like the beginner. It can be demeaning to be made feel like someone only starting out in ministry rather than recognize the abilities of the new man to perform his duties as well as anyone else.

In this model, the new priest is reliant on the good will of the pastor. It is dependent on a pastor who is able to provide a holistic introduction to the new priest and not to simply see the new priest as an extension of himself. A reason why this model is not more frequently used is not because of the model itself but because of the quality of human relationships found in living in the same rectory. As O'Rourke noted, "living and working together in the same place requires a type of relationship that does not foster the apprenticeship mode." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 50.)

2.4.6 The Internship Model

The internship model is borrowed from the form of training that is given to a new doctor starting out on their hospital work. A medical intern is someone who has completed their studies and is now beginning a placement in a hospital. This model differs from the apprenticeship model in that the intern has already attained a considerable amount of knowledge of his area of research prior to his commencement of his placement. "The intern has finished his formal education, is granted his professional title, and is given fully responsible work to do." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 50). The intern is seen as a professional who is fully responsible for the work that he undertakes yet is he is still in a learning capacity. This presupposition that he is still a learner is built right into his transition from the academic setting to the work placement.

In this model the new priest is given a clear indication of his territorial terrain within the parish. Rather than being set adrift in facing scenarios that would have been overwhelming for him, he was given an area that was linked to his own family experience. This was to lessen his sense of upheaval in his transition. Within his area he was not left to simply work out for himself how he had to respond to the spiritual needs of the people. He was given a clear agenda of who to work with and what was the best approach. O'Rourke continued the case study:

> Fr R and the pastor also clarified the fact that he was there for just one year with beginning and ending dates clearly stated. They agreed to the work he was expected to do and established objective standards for what the pastor considered acceptable and unacceptable work. (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 50).

Both the praise and the criticisms of the pastor were made concrete and effective by the clarity of the suggestions. In the course of the year the pastor was able to articulate to Fr R why his good work was good. Unlike the apprenticeship model where the new priest shadows the other priest in this model the new priest works independently. The conscious and direct effort of the pastor to teach the new priest how to go about and evaluate his work is necessary. The pastor must clearly highlight the responsibilities of the new priest. "Where these are fulfilled well the new priest is given public recognition and where the work was done less well, he is informed quietly, avoiding public criticism and is advised constructively with a possible remedy." (O'Rourke, 1978, p. 50).

In this model the pastor remains a pastor and is not a teacher. His chief concern is the quality of the work that is undertaken by the new priest and not his learning. A chief reason why this model is not utilized more frequently as a help in the transition of the new priest is because of the living situation that is found in most parishes. Pastors and curates frequently share the same rectory and there can be an enmeshed relationship between them, living and working as they do, in the same space. Like the apprenticeship model, this arrangement does not foster a healthy environment for the internship model. Another reason why the internship model is not used more frequently is because it is dependent on the goodwill of the pastor. The pastor has already his own concerns in the parish and these could come into conflict with those of the new priest.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review, critique and evaluate the relevant literature relating to coping strategies, rites of passage, transition and models of entry.

The next chapter of this research project will consider and outline the research methodology used in this study. It also considers issues such as ethical care of the study's participants and the researcher in addition to providing a detailed account of the analysis undertaken on the data and the steps that led to the selection of specific analysis procedures. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the research was undertaken and the rationale behind its decisions and actions.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology chapter sets out in detail the process which satisfied the study's research aims and objectives. It discusses the epistemological and methodological stances considered and adopted by the current study along with a comprehensive evaluation of the rationale behind the decisions made. Also undertaken is a delineation of the implementation of the research methodology that was undertaken in this research project. Oppenheim (1992) encourages those who carry out research to clarify their research aims from the outset. Cohen and Manion (1994) identify the first stage in the research process as being identification and formulation of the "problem". However, there may not always be a "problem". It could be directed as the focus for research. In this chapter I will outline the various strands of research methodology and why particular methods were chosen for this research project. Rea & Parker (2005) argue that once the aim or focus of the research has been identified, the researcher should consider two fundamental tasks. The first of task is the formulation and refinement of the study's goals and objectives. The second task is consideration of the research approach and selection of the data collection process.

Yin advocates that the research design guides the researcher through the data collection and analysis process and can be thought of as the 'logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions' Yin (2009, p 26). Additionally, Biesta & Burbules (2003) propose social science research, despite having different paradigmatic orientations, fundamentally seeks to offer reasonable statements about human beings and the worlds in which they inhabit, live and interact.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research, as well as to introduce the research strategy and the empirical techniques that were applied in this study. The chapter defines the scope and limitations of the research design, and situates the research amongst existing research traditions. The purpose of discussing the theoretical and philosophical assumptions is, according to Garcia and Quek (1997), "to qualify the use of specific techniques in both the underlying assumptions guiding the research and in the theoretical framework." (Garcia and Quek, 1997, p. 5).

As Burrell and Morgan (1979) developed at length, all social research takes place from a background set of axiological, epistemological and ontological assumptions. These provide taken-for-granted understandings of the nature of the world and the people in it, preferred methods for discovering what is true or worth knowing, and basic moral and aesthetic judgments about appropriate conduct and quality of life. According to Deetz (1996), Burrell and Morgan's analysis of this form of research is somewhat misleading. Deetz (1996) believed that their conceptual distinctions among research perspectives favour dominant traditions of the past; and their claim of paradigmatic incommensurability discourages the investigation of similarities and collaborative possibilities and cross paradigm critique, i.e. rigid/inflexible.

Alvesson and Deetz (2000) use two dimensions for their analytic distinctions, 'consensus-dissensus seeing' and 'local/emergent-elite/a priori conceptions.' According to Alvesson and Deetz, (2000) research perspectives can be contrasted based on the extent to which they work within a dominant set of structuring of knowledge, social relations and identities called a 'consensus' discourse and the extent to which they work to disrupt these structurings called a 'dissensus' discourse (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 24). The second dimension focuses on the origin of concepts and problem statements as part of the constitutive process in research. "Differences among research perspectives can be shown by contrasting 'local/emergent' conceptions with the 'elite/a priori' ones." (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 24).

3.2 Ontology

Ontology is focused on the nature of being and the interaction and relatedness between social structures and individuals. Bryman distinguishes between two main ontological positions: "objectivism and constructionism." (Bryman, 2001, p 16). According to Bryman, objectivism, in general, asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman, 2001, p 17). That is, structures within the social world are objective entities that are not influenced by humans or other social forces. It is closely linked to positivism and natural science disciplines and seeks to explain situations and link causal variables. In contrast, constructionism believes that people have an active role in constructing social reality and social structures, and these social phenomena are in a constant state of flux as people and their society changes (Bryman, 2001, pp 17-18). This interpretative approach seeks to understand the meaning people ascribe to social entities to which they are involved in. While it is possible

therefore to discern two distinct belief systems, it is also argued that such a clear dichotomy rarely exists in practice and much research combines elements of both approaches (Silverman, 2001).

3.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with what can be regarded as acceptable knowledge. According to Cope, epistemology is a theory of knowledge with specific reference to the limits and validity of knowledge (Cope, 2002, p 43). It helps answer the questions "how do I know what is true?" (Cope, 2002, p 43) as well as formulating an approach to looking at how individuals understand the world around them.

As Burrell and Morgan (1979) developed at length, all social research takes place out of a background set of axiological, epistemological and ontological assumptions. This difficulty stems partly from different assumptions about research epistemology. For example, Burrell and Morgan suggest that a positivist epistemology is allied with nomothetic research methodology, in which research is based 'upon systematic protocol and technique' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p 6). On the other hand, more subjectivist approaches to social science align with ideographic methodology, which "stresses the importance of letting one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of investigation." (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p 6), and they are therefore more transient in process (cf Tsoukas, 1989; Butler, 1997). Denzin (1989), building on Allport (1942), proposes that nomothetic studies 'seek abstract generalizations about phenomenon [sic] and often offer nonhistorical explanations', whereas ideographic research 'assumes that each individual case is unique' and 'that every interactional text is . . . shaped by the individuals who create it' (Denzin, 1989, p 20; cf Luthans & Davis, 1982; Bryman, 1988; Oswick et al., 1996; Daniels & Johnson, 2002). Likewise, an etic analysis is grounded on a researcher's imposed conceptual frame of reference, whereas an emic analysis aims to understand the participants' frame of reference (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Denzin, 1994; Morris et al., 1999). An emic analysis is marked by researchers "moving closer to the territory they study . . . by minimizing the use of such artificial distancing mechanisms as analytic labels, abstract hypotheses, and preformulated research strategies." (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 520).

3.4 Positivist Approach

Positivism advocates the use and application of traditional scientific methods, used to study the natural world, to the study of the social world. Positivists believe that science can be conducted in a value-free, objective manner and a neutral process can discover a single 'truth'.

Positivists argue that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Levin, 1988), i.e. without interfering with the phenomena being studied. They maintain that phenomena should be isolated and that observations should be repeatable. This often involves manipulation of reality with variations in only a single independent variable so as to identify regularities in, and to form relationships between, some of the constituent elements of the social world. Predictions can be made on the basis of the previously observed and explained realities and their inter-relationships. According to Hirschheim, positivism has a long and rich historical tradition. It is so embedded in our society that knowledge claims not grounded in positivist thought are simply dismissed as a non-scientific and therefore invalid (Hirschheim, 1985, p 33). This view is indirectly supported by Alavi and Carlson (1992) who, in a review of 902 information systems research articles, found that all the empirical studies were positivist in approach. Positivism has also had a particularly successful connection with the physical and natural sciences. There has, however, been considerable debate on the issue of whether or not this positivist paradigm is entirely suitable for the social sciences (Hirschheim, 1985), many authors calling for a more pluralistic attitude towards research methodologies (Kuhn, 1970; Bjørn-Andersen, 1985; Remenyi and Williams, 1996).

3.5 Interpretivist Approach

The expressed goal of interpretive studies is to show how particular realities are socially produced and maintained through norms, rites, rituals and daily activities. According to Alvesson and Deetz (2002), in much of the writings of interpretivist approach, a clear preservationist, communication, or naturalist tone exists. It records a life-form with its complexity and creativity that may be lost to modern, instrumental life or overlooked in it. Most interpretivists have taken culture to be an evocative metaphor for organizational life, rather than a variable or thing that an organization has created (Smircich, 1983; Frost et al., 1985, 1991). For interpretive researchers the organization is a social site, a special type of community which shares important

characteristics with other types of communities. The discourse frequently draws on traditional and pre-modern themes (Gergen, 1992). Rather than viewing this as a focus on the part of the researcher, rather it is a concern with those aspects of life which have not yet been systematized, instrumentalized and brought under control of modernist logics and sciences. People are not considered objects like other objects, but are active sense-makers like the researcher (Alvesson and Deetz, 2002, p 33). Within the interpretivist approach, theory is given a different conception. Though theory may provide important sensitizing conceptions, it is not a device of classification nor tested in any simple and direct manner. The key conceptions and understandings must be worked out with the subjects being studied.

Interpretivists seek to understand human behaviour and the social world, whereas, as previously noted, a positivist would seek to explain the situation (Bryman, 2001, 13). An appreciation and an awareness of subjectivity and bias is therefore important to interpretivists. Furthermore, individuals within society are regarded as key actors who have the capacity to change social structures. Therefore, studying the structures alone, removed from human interpretations or meanings is not applicable or preferential. Instead, the interpretations of individuals and the meanings they ascribe to social structures are central to the research process. However, as with ontological assumptions, the barriers between each paradigm are not necessarily unbreachable, and there may well be a blurring between epistemologies (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp 4-5).

Constructivism is closely related to interpretivist. Interpretivism often addresses essential features of shared meaning and understanding whereas constructivism extends this concern with knowledge as produced and interpreted.

Interpretive approaches give the research greater scope to address issues of influence and impact, and to ask questions such as 'why' and 'how' particular trajectories are created (Deetz, 1996). Walsham (1993) asserts that the purpose of the interpretive approach is to produce an understanding of the context and the process whereby knowledge and understanding influences and is influenced by the context.

3.6 Theories Adopted in this Research Study

Based on a number of paradigms the philosophical assumptions underlying this study come chiefly from interpretivism (of hermeneutic in nature). Included in this study are elements of

other two perspectives. These are postpositivism (a modified objectivist stance), and critical postmodernism (as it supports different world view, instructivist and constructivist philosophies, and often uses conventional positivist and interpretivist methods). In the context of this study, individuals construct their own knowledge within the social-cultural context influenced by their prior knowledge and understanding, and therefore, I position myself as a researcher within the parameters of a constructivist epistemological discourse. As the emphasis is on the socially constructed nature of interpreted reality, the learning atmosphere has to be created in such a manner that there is intimate connection between the researcher and what is being studied. Such a research environment provides the researcher to observe, investigate, and understand the learning process, and further, gather and document the subtleties of learners' experiences through strategies such as participant observation, various written texts, face-to-face individual interviews as well as the social and cultural context in which the learning occurs.

As previously mentioned, the interpretive approaches give the research greater scope to address issues of influence and impact. This assertion justifies, I believe, my choice of hermeneutic as the philosophical rationale for this study. Thus, I adopted an intersubjective or interactional stance towards the reality and subject I was investigating.

3.7 Rationale for a Qualitative Study

Qualitative research methodology is distinguished from quantitative research by its concern with interpreting meaning in textual data and the spoken word, rather than in numerical data through use of statistical methods.

In attempting to comprehend in any depth the social aspects of the research project there is a need for flexibility in the research to incorporate subjectivist points of view. The necessity of subjectivity, in understanding social issues, is due to recognition that there might be several different alternative perspectives of reality, all of which may be valid and should be explored and elaborated. It can be argued that facilitating exploration of different perspectives is a common objective of subjectivist research, and in particular, that modelling them brings recognition and highlights differences.

It is important to be aware of this subjectivity and to reflect on it throughout the research and remain critical. Subjectivity of a certain worldview can also introduce bias in research. By bias it

is meant the tendency to focus on certain points of view more than others (not the criticism that the research is not objective). One potential problem here is that the values of the researcher, i.e. the previously held ideology, could influence the enquiry. These prejudices can not only influence the direction in which the research leads, but also open up the possibility of misjudgments, mistakes or a dispositional bias.

The main drawbacks of subjective approaches are in the first instance, the validity of conclusions that identify 'emergent themes' of the research is harder to establish, and in the second instance, generalisability of conclusions are more difficult to ascertain. Both of these protocols of research enquiry are more commonly associated with positivist tradition. In reflecting on the need for, on the one hand, objectivity, while also maintaining subjectivity in research, it can be argued that there is not necessarily a conflict created by differing viewpoints, provided that the underlying philosophy and theory that is internalised by the researcher, and that develops throughout the research process, is critically reflected upon and is found to be a workable model in order to reason with the problem in hand.

There has been a move towards combining methods, including qualitative and quantitative methods, originating from different paradigms. This suggests that the incommensurability problem can be overcome simply by being aware of the ontological and epistemological positioning of the research, and being sensitive to any likely problems that may arise. Though it remains an issue of contention for researchers.

3.8 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews enable the researcher to delve deeply into a situation in a way that questionnaires are often unable to do. Using a qualitative approach implies, to some extent, the use of a semi- or unstructured interview schedule, as opposed to a structured interview schedule which can often resemble a questionnaire. Semi- or unstructured interviews are more flexible and adaptable and can be compared to conversations in style. Semi-structured interviews can enable the researcher to explore issues as they arise, whilst providing an initial framework for areas for discussion. They also facilitate an immediate response to a question, allow both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers and resolve any ambiguities and can provide a friendly emphasis to data collection (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p 124). They encourage the respondents

to tell 'the story' in their own words. This is beneficial and preferential when seeking an understanding into processes and beliefs. They can also return an element of power to the participant in that the participant can, to some extent, determine the direction and content of the interview.

Interviews, particularly semi-structured interview have their limitations. They can be time consuming, costly, overly personal and open to bias (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p 125). It can also be difficult to sift the useful information from the whole and possibly lengthy interview. There may also be a discrepancy between what the participants say and what they actually feel. The respondents can feel pressurized to give what they perceive as the "correct" or "appropriate" response. Interviews, even if completely unstructured, are not natural settings, and if the participant is reserved, unforthcoming or reticent, the 'flow' of the interview may be less like a conversation than a question and answer session. Conversely, the opposite can also occur, with a very talkative participant, with the potential danger of a 'life-history' or narrative account ensuing, unless the interviewer is able to guide the interview to the necessary questions. An interview may also be seen as a one-way medium, with the researcher rarely giving back to the participant (Oakley, 1981, p 30).

Killian (2008) notes that in moving beyond what is observed in superficial behaviour, a researcher should analyze both the inner and outer perspectives of human behaviour and only through gaining an in-depth understanding of participants' lives can true insights to the questions we ask be gained. Rist (1977) states it is this depth of insight that offers researchers a true definition of a situation. According to Pole & Lampard (2002) obtaining an in-depth approach recognises understanding a social reality as a reflection of and to participants' interpretations and experiences within their social world. They argue this translates to an interpretative approach where research is set within a 'real world' perspective and not based within the laboratory or experimental settings. This rationale resonated with the current study in seeking to gather understanding of a real experience within a real life setting.

Qualitative research tends to be context-rich, so extra detail is useful such as body language, tone of voice, the pace at which the participants responds to certain issues etc. Also, interviewers are encouraged to be neutral, not to give opinions, and not to answer questions. This can have the

drawback of leading to a question-answer session, rather than a more in-depth discussion, and some evidence may not become evident.

Other common problems with interviewing are related to empathy. Where social or biological variables match between interviewer and participant, the degree of empathy may be greater and this may lead to a more revealing interview (Oakley, 1981 p 55; Valentine, 2002, p 119). For example, sometimes a Roman Catholic priest will feel freer to express himself to another priest while on other occasions some priests might refrain from being truly themselves for fear of being found out. This is particularly true for interviews where the issues are sensitive or personal. This issue of difference could theoretically lead to different researchers achieving different results. This therefore supports the argument that research is not value-free and cannot claim to be entirely objective. Slife & Melling (2011) suggest studies that involve a religious element can pose specific challenges for a researcher. They refer to topics such as church advocating some aspects are more easily quantified than others. Even if the researcher maintains, or attempts to maintain, a neutral position throughout the research, their participants may well be influenced by a variety of factors leading to subjective, context-dependent results.

Despite the potential problems and limitations, it was decided that semi-structured interviewing was the most appropriate method for data production. Smith et al. (2009, p 57) state that 'a qualitative interview is frequently seen as a conversation with a purpose'. In relation to the present study the 'purpose' of the conversation was firstly to allow clergy to tell their own stories of how they coping with the major transitions in their lives. Smith & Osborn (2008) advocate semi-structured interviews as the exemplary method as they present a collection of data, which is focused and yet flexible. Therefore, the decision was taken to employ a series of seven one-to-one interviews. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structure format (Frankfurt-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) wherein the interviewer devised a number of points of interest, but interviewees were allowed a great deal of freedom regarding what they believed were the important issues to be discussed.

Researching within my own church could have a number of advantages. Being an "insider", sharing a common language and understandings certainly played its part in eliciting informative responses in a time efficient manner. There was a priest-colleague conversational character to each of the interviews and openness about priestly matters. Some interviewees had prepared for

the interview by stating they has spent some time reflecting on issues concerning the study project. Other interviewees were content to come apparently unprepared and to simply share and speak of their own experiences.

The interviews were successful in exploring the research questions. It is noticeable that some interviewees were more conversational and felt happy to develop some subject areas while some respondents avoided giving fuller answers to other areas. In the majority of cases full answers were given and the respondents appeared willing to answer any questions that were asked of them. The interviews provided rich data for the discussion of how priests cope with the major transitions in their lives. The responses and answers incorporated discussions of their own personal understandings of how transitions affected their own life story. There were reflections on the history of their personal lived experience and, and illustrations of personal narratives. Therefore, this interview data was extremely valuable in writing up and discussing how clergy cope with the major transition in their lives.

3.9 Contacting the Respondents

During the past 19 years I have established a helpful network of contacts within the Roman Catholic Church since I entered a seminary and began my studies for the priesthood. These contacts include clergy working at a national, diocesan and parish level. They provided me with valuable insights into the views of priests who are engaged with the major transitions of their lives.

I made contact with the respondents in the first instance by contacting them through a telephone conversation. I informed the respondents of my name, the nature of my project, I issued them an open invitation to participate in the study and I said to them that I would follow up the conversation with a letter with further details of the research project.

In the letter I stated my name and I that I am studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Preforming Arts, University of Wales, Trinity St David. I outlined that I would like to invite them to participate in my research project. I defined how this project will conduct a systematic investigation by interview into how transition affects the lives of a number of priests, and aims to understand how transitions has affected them in their life and how they coped with their major transitions. I mentioned in the letter that I hoped to explore a number of areas including how they

found their adjustment to the seminary lifestyle; I would ask if they felt that they were adequately prepared for entry into ministry and whether they found any significant changes in their primary relationships when they were ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood.

In the letter I informed the respondents that all responses will be kept strictly confidential to the researchers involved and at no time will individual interview transcripts be released to the general public. I wrote this to give them an opportunity to express their views on their reflections on transition in a confidential and anonymous forum, and still be able to make a difference. I wrote that their participation in this study is completely voluntary and they can withdraw from the interview at any stage. I mentioned to them that the interviews could take about 120 minutes to complete, but there is no time constraint. I also expressed to them that there are also no right or wrong answers. Attached to the introductory letter was a consent form. I conveyed to the participants that I would be grateful if the participant could please sign it. I wrote how I understood that their time is at a premium but their opinions are very valuable. I included in the letter that I will be happy to provide them with a copy of the findings at their request. The results of this interview will hopefully enhance my understanding of creating a theoretical framework designed to identify coping strategies for priests in transition and will be stored in the safe in my office. The results of the research will be fed back to my supervisor.

I concluded the letter by thanking them in advance for their time and participation. If any questions did arise, I invited them to contact me at their convenience. My contact details were available on the letter.

3.10 Participants in the Study

Seven priests participated in the semi-structured interviews, coming from five nations, namely Poland (1), USA (1), England (1), Scotland, (1), Ireland (3). All seven priests are based in parishes as curates or, as referred to in the American system, an associate-pastor. Three priests hold additional posts in the diocese engaged in vocations promotion. Two priests are also involved in hospital chaplaincy in addition to their parish ministry. Five of the priests attended the same seminary for their entire formation programme while two priests attended two separate seminaries, the change occurred when the philosophy studies were completed and they transitioned to a new seminary for their theological studies. Interestingly, all seven priests did not

enter the seminary straight after completing their second level education but spent some years in university or in the work-force. This is a change from twenty years ago when previously a large proportion of seminary entrants entered the seminary immediately after completing second level education. Six of the priests studied at university prior to entering the seminary. Two of the priests hold doctorates. All seven have a degree in theology.

3.11 Interviews Location

The semi-structured interviews took place in locations of the respondent's choosing. I believe this aided the research by the semi-structured interviews taking place where participants felt most comfortable (Oakley 1981). In some of cases this was the respondent's home (parochial house), while in other cases they preferred to come to the priory where I am currently residing. The choice of coming to my home may have given the interviewee a greatly feeling of anonymity and feel freer to speak what was on his mind. The interview was designed to include time before, and after for conversation, generally this time helped me to get to know the interviewee and vice-versa, and according to May (1997) this can assist with the establishment of a degree of rapport which is can be important to the process (May 1997).

In allowing for both the temporal reality of space and due to the busy nature of many priests' lives, the erratic hours they operate, and variety of commitments and responsibilities, I was conscious that they may perceive that assisting in the interview could be seen as a burden to their already busy schedule. It was my intention to allow as great a degree of personal choice as I could in allowing them to choose their preferred location to hold the semi-structured and the preferred date and time to hold their semi-structured interview. In all cases the location, time and day for the interview was agreed with a consensus allowing for individual scheduling matters. I was also aware that undertaking a semi-structured interview can be a draining process and I tried to ensure that the interviewees had sufficient rest before undertaking their next appointment. In one case was the interviewee under time pressure due to a subsequent event that he felt compelled to attend after his interview. I believe, however that this did not have a negative impact on the nature of the interview with this particular respondent.

3.12 Data-Collection

The decision needed to be taken as to the best means in which the interviews should be documented and the options of note taking or audio recording were both considered. Recording was chosen as the most appropriate method as highlighted by Robson & Foster (1989).

Audio interview recording allows for a much more complete word-for-word account than could be achieved via note taking. Robson & Foster (1989) suggest that audio recording enables the capture of non-verbal paralanguage which is often lost if the interview is not recorded. Given the importance of non-verbal paralanguage in an emotive subject such as transition, for the researcher, the capsulation of these occurrences was almost as important as the spoken word.

It is widely accepted that audio recording leads to the production of an unbiased recording of data, which is a fundamental requirement of any research. Recording interviews means that both the researcher and participant are less distracted by the chore of note taking. Thus the researcher is able to give the participant their full attention.

Audio recording is now widely expected and accepted in research semi-structured interviews, although historically it was suggested that recording could make participants uneasy, self-conscious or repressed (Wilson, 1969).

Due to its very nature, audio recording allows the researcher the ability of being able to revisit the actual words and intonations of the interviewee. Given that human memory quickly loses many of the minute details noted this is of immense value when transcribing data.

The method of recording was with a dictaphone. The audio recorded interviews were then transcribed. All the participants were consulted prior to the interview commencing if they were comfortable with the interview being recorded. They were assured they had the freedom to decline the interview being taped. All the participants agreed to have the interview recorded. The participants were assured that the recording would only be made known to me and my supervisors.

3.13 Memo Writing

The process of coding and developing categories was supported by writing memos. Memos are a set of notes, that kept continuously, support the researcher by providing a record of the thoughts, ideas and expressions of the participants in the moment of the interview. Memos enable the researcher to reflect on the interviews and given codes to enter into a dialogue about the collected data. Initial thoughts are of relevance as they often connect the best ideas to formulate further points of discussion and deliberation. It is advantageous to write the memo immediately when reading and coding the interview. At later stages in the research process, initial thoughts and speculations are represented through memos and can be revisited, reflected upon and considered for the overall analysis. Memos can be used to probe the responses of the participants, philosophize about potential meanings of interviewee's statements and compare concepts identified in interview transcripts to one another and to the literature.

The writing of memos ('memoing') was particularly useful as this helped me to keep a note of thoughts without the stress and pressures of having to immediately determine how ideas were contextualized within the overall research findings and analysis. Memoing allowed the freedom to record ideas so that these could be arranged, categorised or discarded at a later point in time in the research project. The writing and reflecting on memos has been a crucial step in the development of the final categories based on initial and focused codes.

3.14 Credibility, Reliability and Validity

In the natural sciences, reliability and validity are essential to the integrity of research. According to Glazier (1992), in the social sciences this reliability and validity is no less necessary or important, but the traditional methods engaged for ensuring that the research is reliable and valid are not always the most appropriate for the social sciences (Glazier, 1992, p 211), especially given that most research conducted within a social science setting is different from research within the natural world.

Ramazanoglu & Holland state that

> Criteria of validity differ according to ontological and epistemological assumptions that shape particular knowledge claims and particular notions of science, research and curiosity. (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 135)

Reliability is concerned with consistency. There are three aspects to this: if it was done again, would the same results be found (i.e. stability over time); equivalence (can it be done elsewhere?); and internal consistency (i.e. are answers in one section confirmed by another?) (Bryman, 2001, p. 70; Fink & Kosecoff, 1998, p. 34). Such measures are employed in natural science research are difficult to apply to the human or social sciences, mainly because there is less stability and a great fluidity in the circumstances of their observation. According to Glazier in pure sciences, the acceptable percentage of variation in an experiment may be 1%, but in sociology it may be 50% (Glazier, 1992, p. 211).

> These differences do not necessarily reflect the rigor of the research in one area versus another; rather, it appears to be endemic to the nature of the phenomena being researched and the researcher's ability to control the variables impacting such phenomena. (Glazier, 1992, p. 211)

Other problems that occur with the applicability of these measures include reliability of circumstances. With interviews for example, if a participant, as a priest, wants to present a positive image of the church they may say something different from their true feelings on church related issues. Thus, the respondent's words cannot be assumed to be totally reliable (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p. 58). Further, reliability over time may be harder to achieve in the social sciences. For example, how ministry is expressed changes frequently, and a researcher cannot expect to find the exact same conditions if they returned in a week or a year (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p. 59). Related to reliability is the notion of whether the research is replicable, not just by the same researcher, but by other researchers in other times and places.

Validity is concerned with accuracy and the extent to which a method can provide a correct answer (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p. 57), that is, the integrity of the conclusions (Bryman, 2001, p. 30). Validity is connected to truth and builds upon the foundation of reliability. There are several elements to validity: face validity – does it fit into the expected pattern; criterion validity, that is, establishing the accuracy of the findings by using another method; internal validity, are we sure that any causal relationships found are related to the identified variables (Bryman, 2001, p. 30); external validity is can the results be applied outside of the specific research context; and construct (measurement) validity at analysis stage, does it have meaning in the conceptual framework (Gorman & Clayton, 1997, pp. 61-62), or, does it measure what it aims to measure i.e. does the IQ test measure intelligence (Bryman, 2001, p. 30).

Ramazanoglu & Holland argue that validity can be applied by the researcher within the context of reflexivity and they present a list of 10 criteria for consideration such as: considering the background of the feminist researcher making the knowledge claim; whether the knowledge claim is confined to local truth or is more general; and how the evidence/grounding is constituted and assessed (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 138).

3.15 Triangulation

According to Cox and Hassard (2005, p. 110), triangulation, coming from navigation, military strategy and surveying, is frequently understood as a method for fixing a position (Jick, 1984; Blaikie, 1991, 2000; Neuman, 1994; Ghauri and Gronberg, 2002). In the use of social research methodology, the term triangulation is used in a broad interpretational fashion. It involves the use of multiple methods and measures of an empirical phenomenon in order to 'overcome problems of bias and validity' (Blaikie, 2000; Scandura and Williams, 2000).

Triangulation arose from an ethical need to confirm the validity of the research processes and it can be achieved by the use of multiple sources of data (Yin, 2003).It is an approach that utilizes multiple methods, multiple data sources, and multiple informants (e.g., participant observation, focus groups, and member checking), in order to gather numerous perceptions on the same issue so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being researched. According to Patton, (2002) and Creswell (2003), triangulation is used to compare data to decide if it corroborates and validates the research findings. It is one of the most important ways to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings.

Triangulation, as a method of mutual validation of results, can assist in the discovery of biases when the investigation of a particular phenomenon is undertaken by one individual researcher. Triangulation may incorporate a multifaceted approach to the research such as the use of multiple data sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives with the desired result of increasing confidence in the conclusions of the research findings. The use of results from one set of data to corroborate those from another type of data is also known as triangulation (Brannen, 2004, p. 314).

Since every method has the dichotomy of possessing weaknesses and strengths, triangulation is also a method to increase reliability and credibility by reducing systematic methodical error,

through a strategy in which the researcher incorporates multiple methods or sources. If the alternative methods do not share the same basis of systematic error, examination of data from the different methods gives insight into how individual scores may be attuned to come closer to reflecting reliable scores, thereby maximizing the validity of the data, and increasing reliability and credibility.

Triangulation is also often cited as one of the central methods of validating qualitative research evidence. A considerable amount debate occurs as to whether triangulation offers qualitative researchers a satisfactory method of verifying their findings. Many perspectives have been articulated, resulting in the argument that the value of triangulation is the establishment of a more comprehensive comprehensions. Richie and Lewis (2003) state that "the 'security' that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one." (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 44).By incorporating multi-perspective sources and by its nature, Richardson (1995, p 5) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe triangulation as crystallization which is more than the concept of triangulation. In the crystallization process (Richardson, 1995) the researcher told the same story through data gathered from different data sources. This was also tracked by a progression that reflects on the data from numerous perspectives. This is achieved by highlighting different aspects, depending on different phases of the analysis. Borkan (1999) explains an extended form of crystallisation which is known as 'Immersion/ crystallisation' for the qualitative data analysis process. Immersion is a process whereby researchers immerse themselves in the data that they have collected by reading or examining some portion of the data in detail. Crystallization involves a process of temporarily suspending the process of examining or reading the data in order to reflect on the analysis experience and attempt to identify and articulate patterns or themes noticed during the immersion process. These dual processes continue until all the data have been scrutinized and patterns and claims emerge from the data that are meaningful and can be expressed and authenticated.

3.16 Ethical Considerations

I ensured that the university's code of practice and the Ethic Statement of the University in to the collection of data were followed at all times. Being aware that the empirical work of my thesis required ethical approval I have ensured that all the ethical requirements for the research were observed. I submitted my plan to the university ethics committee and it received approval.

During my studies at the university I informed the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev Dr Eamon Martin of my studies and of my particular focus to study the effect of transition on the lives of priests. He has been supportive of me engaging in this study.

As part of the interview process I presented my consent form to the participants partaking in the study. In this form the participants were given the assurance that they may decline to participate in this study and that they may end your participation in this study at any time. I informed them that if they decide to remain anonymous, maintaining their anonymity will be a priority and every practical precaution will be taken to disguise their identity. No-one will hear any audiotapes or see any transcripts without their prior consent. All materials generated from this or any interview will remain confidential and stored in a safe in which I am the only key-holder.

3.17 Limitations

A serious caveat raised for engaging with qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews is that as individuals, people are not always the most reliable witnesses of their own experiences, behaviours and motives. A central question arises as to whether the interviewees are more or less honest in their accounts when talking to a researcher, especially one from within their own Church? Interviews do not provide a precise mirror image or account of the wider social world but they do provide empirical data and access to the meanings people attach to their, experiences and social worlds. As Alvesson and Deetz (2000) explained, the ability of interviews to reflect broader reality or the subjective world of the interviewee has a limited function because statements are liable to reflect the interview context itself and "cultural scripts about how one should normally express oneself on particular topics' ... a research interview is a social situation and is 'better viewed as the scene for a conversation rather than a simple tool for collection of data." (Alvesson and Deetz 2000, pp 71-72).

Another limitation in the qualitative project was that the initial proposed group focused element taking place when the semi-structured interviews had taken place that had originally been planned for did not take place. A number of reasons for this include the diverse range of geographical areas where the interviewees were located (4 countries) and also the time scale it would take to organize this particular aspect of the research was prohibitive. I believe that not

having a focused group element did not diminish the overall finding of the qualitative research project section of this study.

3.18 Summary

Richardson (1996) suggests qualitative research is considered particularly appropriate where the area of interest is characterised by complexity and ambiguity. Furthermore, Silverman (1993) proposes a qualitative approach is valuable in that it recognizes social relationships and experiences are inherently subjective and as individuals we construe the behaviours and cognitions of others through our own subjective lens of perception, as simultaneously the other person is undertaking the same process within their subjective frame of reference. He argues when an interview takes place it represents the meeting to two subjectivities, implying that subjectivity needs acknowledged in order for some level of objectivity to be achieved. Throughout the implementation of the research methodology for this study I was constantly aware of my innate involvement in the subject matter having underwent this major transition in my life 12 years ago. I tried to ensure that I did not become enmeshed in the process but allow as free a process as possible.

Starks & Trinidad (2007) contend that a phenomenological perspective is especially valuable when the professional identity of participants is complex. Given the sensitive and delicate subject matter of this study combined with the openness of the respondents to freely share of their personal experience I believe I responded appropriately and empathically. In the next chapter I will explore the findings of the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

4. 1 Introduction

The current chapter presents the results of the analysis of data obtained by asking seven Roman Catholic priests questions on how they coped with the transition from seminary formation into ministry after their ordination.

During the semi-structured interviews in this study, the seven Roman Catholic priests were asked questions about their coping styles while in the seminary and how they coped as they transitioned from the seminary and entered parish ministry. They provided a variety of answers that could generally be classified under four types of coping; that is, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, religious-focused coping and self-regulated coping behaviours, all of which theorists on stress and transition and its management (for example Greenberg, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) frequently discuss. However, there was no consistent trend in the coping strategies used by the priests. Interview extracts are given to show the variety of coping strategies the priests availed of themselves as they dealt with a major transitional point in their lives. In some instances, they exemplify some of the known coping variables, at times in a clearly defined manner and at other times in a less articulate expression.

4.2 Respondent Profiles

The opening question of the semi-structured interview was asked so that the respondent could give a comprehensive overview of their lives since the time of their entry into seminary. All the respondents were ordained within the last five years. The various appointments held by the respondents since ordination include chaplain in schools, convents and hospitals; curate; assistant pastor; and vocations director. The countries they served in were Ireland, England, Scotland and America. Significantly for this study all the respondents had spent time in university or the work force before they entered the seminary. This could highlight a transition in the age of entrance for current newly ordained priests. Until very recently it was typical for someone to enter the seminary once they had completed their second level education. This, however, is no longer the case. Later in the interviews a number of the respondents mentioned how they were inclined to draw on experiences of coping with transition from secular employment to religious life as an aid to assist them in their coping strategies.

All the names used in this study are changed to protect the anonymity of each respondent.

Name	Native County	Location of Seminary	Currently Based	Age at Ordination	Current Age
Fr Piotr	Poland	UK	UK	26	29
Fr Peter	Ireland	Ireland and Italy	Ireland	25	26
Fr Andrew	Scotland	Ireland	Scotland	28	30
Fr John	USA	USA	USA	41	44
Fr Patrick	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	40	41
Fr George	England	England	England	38	40
Fr Bede	Ireland	Ireland and Italy	Ireland	28	32

4.3.1 Transition Point 1: The Seminary

Five respondents attended one seminary throughout their entire seminary formation, while two respondents attended two seminaries.

4.3.2 Prior Experience to Entering the Seminary

The respondents were asked to recall the impact the seminary had on his preparations for the transitions he would encounter as he entered ministry. This question was asked to assess his experience of transition experience prior to entering the seminary.

Fr Piotr spoke of his time before he entered the seminary as assisting him in his transition awareness.

> "What was important for me was the experience I had before seminary." (Response. Q2).

> "Huge sense of direction which for sure was the grace of God. It was very strong and it helped to cope and go through these difficult times. That is not my plan, I didn't come to fulfill my plan but I saw it as God's plan." (Res. Q2).

Fr John spoke of his experience of transition prior to entering the seminary.

"I didn't find the seminary experience particularly helpful, but then, I didn't find it detrimental either. The transition in life was more due to occupation changes and life occurrences." (Res. Q2).

Prior to entering the seminary in America, Fr John worked for a number of years and had attended a number of universities which he felt had already given him an opportunity to reflect on transition.

Fr Patrick who entered the seminary in early mid-life brought his experience of previous transitions when he in the seminary.

"I came in when I was in my mid-30's. I had experienced a lot of transition, coming from school to university and then university to the workplace, doing a number of roles with them." (Res. Q2).

"…we got a lot of training on transition within the company so I had some insight and some of the tools already in my tool box." (Res. Q2).

4.3.3 Discipline as Affecting Transition

Fr Piotr, who worked for a number of years in his native Poland before he entered the seminary in England, had enjoyed the freedom of setting his own timetable and had difficulty adjusting to the new regime of seminary life.

"Eh, in the seminary, it was very strict, the schedule of the day, prayers, breakfast, prayers, then lunch, prayers, eh, and it was something completely different." (Res. Q2).

Fr Piotr presented a very methodological approach to his day in the seminary. A problem-focused approach to how he coped with the new reality that he now faced in the seminary is very evident in his response.

Fr Patrick found he had to adjust to a highly defined schedule.

"…a fairly well regimented schedule in Maynooth, morning prayer at 7 o'clock, class begins at 9." (Res. Q2).

"When in the seminary your time was regimented and scheduled." (Res. Q7).

Fr Peter who attended two seminaries found it to be a structured place.

"When you are in seminary, things are very very structured." (Res. Q7).

Fr Andrew had a negative response on how seminary formation helped him cope with transition. He felt the seminary neglected to help him cope with the transitions he faced in life.

> "It really didn't prepare me for transition. It was more academic than pastoral. All about keeping rules. It didn't teach you how to live with other men with whom you had nothing in common with. Em. I found it difficult." (Res. Q2).

4.3.4 Social Supports as Assisting Transition

For Fr Piotr he found great support in rector and the community of seminarians to which he belonged. This took the form of being forced to speak a new language even though it could have been easier for him to speak his native language.

> "A great support was the rector and other seminarians. They were in the same situation. The rector was doing his best to find the best English schools and forcing me to speak English as there are other Polish seminarians. I received a lot of this kind of support." (Res. Q2).

Social interaction was important for Fr Piotr to assist him as he coped with entry into seminary, a return to formal education, learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture.

> "What helped me was this sense of community in the seminary. This feeling of being loved. We were in it together. Apart from studying we had a day off. Once a month, we went to the museums, to cathedrals of course. This helped. In a spirit of prayer, wanted to serve Church. The purpose was very clear for me. I want to serve church. I want to serve God's will." (Res. Q2).

Fr George contrasted the social support he received in the seminary as opposed to the feeling more isolated while he was in the parish.

> "Em some good friends, still good friends… em so getting used to being more independent, a bit more isolated when you are in a parish…. Em…. Was helpful from a personal level. Seminary experience itself is a very different." (Res. Q2).

The social support of friends featured highly for Fr Bede to help him cope with his seminary experience and the transition into the clerical life.

> "I know it sounds funny, the seminary was a block of academic formation and spiritual formation because I had a wonderful spiritual director. And a great arena for making friends." (Res. Q2).

4.3.5 Pastoral Support as Assisting Transition

The integration between the seminary and the parish gave Fr Piotr a secure environment from which he could relate his learning to the pastoral placement.

> "The seminarians are put to communities, to parishes to meet 'normal people' from different countries. Being with these people, learning from them, the culture, the manners, the transitions. Being with these people, being in the living church. It is very important to be with people who are outside…" (Res. Q2).

Being exposed to new situations was, one occasion, shocking for Fr Piotr. Through this exposure, a normalization process occurred for Fr Piotr as he adjusted to his new reality in his life.

> "When I came here, (laughing) I had huge surprise when I saw a female wearing a dog collar. I was scandalized (laughing). Eh, (cough), I was very much surprised. The lay people are much more involved in the life of the parish." (Res. Q2).

Fr Patrick enjoyed the experience of availing of pastoral ministry to gain insight what life would be like for him when he became a priest.

> "What worked very well in seminary was the year in the parish, the pastoral year. What it really did for me was when I asked myself if I could work in a parish?" (Res. Q2).

Fr George found his pastoral experience helpful to prepare his expectations of what parish ministry would entail. Through reflecting on his pastoral experience he was able to contrast it with life in the seminary.

> "I suppose the pastoral year was the most useful in that sense, and how different it is to seminary and getting used to pastoral ministry." (Res. Q2).

Fr Bede found his time in the parish as a deacon to be the most helpful aspect of his preparation for pastoral ministry.

> "In the parish that I worked as a deacon is where I actually learned how to be a curate. It was funny because I went from living in a library to wandering around [the name of the parish]. In hindsight, I think that the best preparation I ever had was my year as a deacon. It was like being a non-ordained curate, like dipping your toe in but not being qualified to actually jump in." (Res. Q2).

4.3.6 Leaving the Seminary

As Bridges (2004) highlighted, all beginnings start with an ending and prior to his ordination a new priest will leave the seminary. Respondents were asked how they coped with the transition of leaving the seminary and what supports and resources they drew on as a coping strategy to assist them with this transition.

Fr Peter felt amazed at the suddenness of the ending of his seminary formation.

> "The recollection I have is that it ended very quickly…It's amazing how quickly you forget seminary." (Res. Q3).

Fr Peter contrasted the intensity of the seminary regime with a less intense lifestyle in parish life. It took some time and personal negotiation to adapt to the new daily schedule after leaving the seminary.

> "It was good to be leaving seminary after 7 years. Intense studying and seminary being an intense way of life. I was looking forward to getting back to Ireland and getting home… I found it a good experience. I was happy to be finishing seminary and to be moving onto the priesthood." (Res. Q3).

It was apparent that Fr Peter was glad to have completed his seminary formation. During his time as a seminarian there was interpersonal conflict in the seminary which led to a lot of tension in the seminary environment.

> "Leaving the seminary system wasn't that traumatic… I was glad it was over. In last year in the seminary there was tension in the place. I was conscious that this was passing. This is a means to an end." (Res. Q3).

Fr George mentioned the suddenness of his leaving the seminary.

> "You just pack up and you go." (Res. Q3).

For Fr John, leaving the seminary was relaxing.

> "It was largely uneventful, though peace-instilling, since now I was getting along in the life of a priest with a specific skill-set and task-set in hand." (Res Q3).

Fr John spoke of contemporaries in the seminary who had a less successful transition from the seminary that the transition he enjoyed. The issue of loneliness and loss of friendships occurred on a number of occasions throughout the interviews when the respondents spoke about their transition from the seminary and entering ministry.

> "I know of several cases of newly ordained priests who, within months of their ordination, began in-patient, residential treatment for serious difficulties of various types. The tag-word "loneliness" is a descriptor, which, describes an emotional state concerning the man leaving the priesthood." (Res. Q3).

Of the seven respondents, Fr Patrick, had the most developed approach to leaving the seminary. He used active-planning in his coping strategy as he spent a considerable amount of energy and personal time discussing the process of leaving the seminary within the context of the professional support of his spiritual director.

> "With my spiritual director, we had worked a good bit on letting go and marking it in some way." (Res. Q3).

Fr Patrick was coping with a number of losses in his life (Kübler-Ross, 2005), including the loss of his sister due to her death and the loss of being in the seminary.

> "I remember my spiritual director saying to me to do something to mark it, not closure but to mark it." (Res. Q3).

He marked this final day by visiting the first room that he was lodged in and significantly there is even the notable change in the external environment of moving from light into darkness.

> "I remember when everyone had gone off for the meals and everything had died down. I kinda stayed… em… I walked around the grounds. I went to room [number] which was my room in first year." (Res. Q3).

> "It was emotional because I was in such as different place in a lot of ways since that first of day walking in, and I actually sat in the college chapel right beside where my sister had sat in her wheelchair for my diaconate. And just praying and crying, and I suppose a mixture of sadness for what had been the loss for the sister, but also looking forward, this is me now, I was in a way flying the nest. But that I was ready to go." (Res. Q3).

Fr Patrick spoke of a specific occasion that held significance as he coped with the transition of leaving the seminary.

"There was a lovely moment; actually… A member of security staff turned off all the lights in the college chapel. A very distinct memory for me was all the lights going off, one by one, and I thought it's time to go now. That definitely helped me." (Res. Q3).

Fr Andrew was delighted to have completed his seminary formation. The contrast for Fr Andrew was the joy of leaving the formal seminary sitting to sadness about the loss of friendships to feeling scared about his future which was unknown.

"I loved it, well… I was emotional leaving because I was leaving a place where I had spent six years and I had made friends. I was going out into the big bad world… I didn't like change at the best of time. So you change from one situation and not knowing where I was going to be six months after ordination. I felt scared, sad …. Worried." (Res. Q9).

Fr Bede articulated that he doesn't like change and enjoyed the formal structures that were offered in the seminary environment.

"I don't think any of us like transitions. Em, I certainly like everything to be the same over time and then I get comfortable at it." (Res. Q9).

4.3.7 Conclusion on the Seminary

While the seminary was often referred to as a place of discipline, with frequent use of words such as 'regime' and 'structure' there is also a considerable amount of social supports in the seminary. The respondents used a full range of coping strategies when they left the seminary with a preference for problem-focused coping strategy. Rarely were maladaptive coping strategies used, although they were present on a low level. Having completed their seminary formation, the respondents spoke of how their ordination ceremony assisted with their transition into ministry.

4.4.1 Theme 2: The Rite of Ordination

4.4.2 Presence of Priests

Fr Peter gave an insight into his image and understanding of priesthood with references to enjoying the privileges of being part of a club. This could denote that he had a high theology of priesthood rather than a servant/service model. With the reference to having lots of priests present at his ordination could also indicate their presence assisted him with the transformation into a club.

"There was a lot of priests at my ordination and an awful lot of goodwill. There was a great sense of welcome in the presbyterate. Once you are ordained part of the club, a fraternity, and all the rights and privileges that go with that. That was good… But as regards the rite of ordination and the priests of the diocese, very welcoming and very positive." (Res. Q4).

Fr John spoke of the attendance of fellow clergy as a support. He also referred to the fact that he had waited 20 years to be ordained after a lengthy period of discernment in preparation for ordination.

"I enjoyed the presence of priests especially as I had waited something like 20 years for the event to occur." (Res. Q4).

Fr Bede was his gratitude that so many priests attended his ordination when there was no compulsion for them to do so.

"It wonderful because so many clergy turned up and they didn't have to." (Res. Q4).

4.4.3 Physical Aspects of the Ordination

Fr John felt the most important part of the rite of ordination to assist him with transition was the physical action of having the bishop place his hands on his head for the actual moment of ordination to take effect.

"…the laying on of hands." (Res. Q4).

Fr Peter had a similar response to Fr John, although he developed his response to speak of his sense of fraternity of having the presence of fellow clergy and of specific moments of the rite of ordination.

"The ritual of ordination is very powerful, particularly when it comes to the laying on of hands and the kiss of peace." (Res. Q4).

Fr George was the most spiritual of all the respondents and it was clear that he utilized intrinsic religious-focused coping methods, (Pargament, Koening and Perez 2000). A prayerful part of the liturgy, the litany (also referred to as the invocation) of the saints held a lot of significance for him.

"I had a great sense at the litany, of people praying for you. I have a great sense of being prayed for. (Res. Q4).

The physical location of where the ordination ceremony occurred had an impact on Fr George. He felt it took a certain level pressure off him personally and the ordination ceremony was more of a church event. The church building assisted him in his coping with his transition into the priesthood. For Fr George it was important that it was located not in his local church but in the Cathedral. This had the effect to take the focus and stress off Fr George himself and give it a greater diocesan significance, which he felt helped him in his transition.

> "The scale of the events. We all have a lot of contacts, there was a lot of people in the cathedral. Because it was in the Cathedral it was less of a personal occasion, it was more of a church occasion. I was pleased we were together in the Cathedral…The stoplight wasn't on me." (Res. Q4).

Fr Piotr spoke in more general about his approach to the liturgy of ordination.

> "They speak in a very deep level to me. In the seminary I learned many things about the entire liturgy of ordination. The kiss of peace. The laying of hands. This kind of growth has helped me." (Res. Q4).

Fr Patrick poignantly recounted a very particular part of the liturgy where he felt connected to his sister who had died shortly before his ordination.

> "Obviously there was that grief of [sister's name] not being there. And the pain and being back in [the church were the ordination occurred] and me literally prostrating in June where her coffin had lain in August." (Res. Q4).

For Fr Patrick, along with coping with the transition into the priest he was also coping with his sister's death. His response was to keep the ordination ceremony as simple as possible, feeling physically connected to the place where her coffin was placed in the church and also by being surrounded by his family on the evening of his ordination.

As he spoke, Fr Bede was recalling that in the time immediately after his ordination he had not yet reincorporated his sense of self.

> "Em, it's funny, I know this might sound a bit pious, but I remember for a few weeks after my ordination having this really strange sense of my palms tingling and thinking what is this about?" (Res. Q4).

Like a number of other respondents, the liturgical aspects that had great significance for Fr Bede included the laying of hands and the kiss of peace.

"The lovely part of my ordination at the laying on of hands and the kiss of peace." (Res. Q4).

4.4.4 Family and Community Support

Fr Patrick stated he felt calm during the time of his ordination and his family were quite surprised his reaction. He felt freed by his individual creativity to have the ritual of ordination fulfill his needs at that moment in his life rather than being constrained by social expectation. He was able to exercise personal agency.

> "By keeping simple I wasn't wrapped up in a huge amount of things in that window between seminary and ordination. I felt relaxed. I was talking to my best mate and we said we better go up to the church. We walked up to the church and obviously there was relative chaos. I was grand." (Res. Q4).

After the Ordination Mass he was glad to spend time with his family.

> "That evening we [his family] had a meal together." (Res. Q4).

Fr George was aware of his family being present and the sense of fraternity he felt.

> Being with my family… There was a sense of fraternity." (Res. Q4).

Fr Bede linked the ritual of ordination to time in his family home and the assurance of his parents that he was not on his own. He marked out the separation phase (Van Gennep, 1960) of having people involved in his ordination ceremony visit his home as a particular moment of assisting with the transition.

> "And even like… the help with the liturgy, the Master of Ceremonies, all of those things, coming to the house after the practice for a cup of tea. My parents were assured as they knew that I was part of something and not freelance. It was really lovely." (Res. Q4).

Fr Bede felt astonished by the community involvement in the occasion of his ordination. Again this highlights the *communitas* bond that Turner (1969) had such an important part to play in rites of passage.

> "Going down the day before [the ordination ceremony] to make sure that everything was in place, going into the church and there were two or three ladies whose name I didn't know and they were on their hands and knees polishing the aisle in [the name of the church]. That really stayed with me, that here were people who were giving up of their Saturday. What was the priesthood for them in their eyes? This was the right thing for

them to do at that moment without any thanks. Someone put up a triumphant arch." (Res. Q4).

4.4.5 Ordination as not having an Impact

Fr Andrew did not feel that his ordination had a significant impact on his transition awareness.

> "I don't think it helped me at all. It was something you worked for ... Achieved... It didn't change me into a super human being... I don't think it helped me with the transition at all." (Res. Q4).

4.4.6 Conclusion on the Rite of Ordination

The respondents used an amalgamation of coping strategies in how the ritual of ordination assisted in how the coped with the transition into the priesthood and from the seminary into ministry. Only on one occasion did a respondent feel that the ordination ceremony had no impact on his transition. For most of the respondents, the physical moments were there occasions that stood out for them. Curiously, none of the respondents mentioned the new sacramental abilities that possible for someone who is ordained, such as the celebration of the Eucharist. None of the respondents mentioned the effect of receiving a new title once they were ordained and the impact the title of "Father" had on them. Only rarely was a religious-focused coping strategy operative in the responses presented by the respondents. This would seem unusual given the religious nature of the rite of passage and that the respondents were all ordained clergy. Having being ordained to the priesthood, the newly ordained priest begins his ministerial appointment.

4.5.1 Transition Point 3: Moving into Ministry

4.5.2 Formal Induction

Fr Piotr spoke positively about his induction training into the parish setting.

> "Before being sent to the parish all of us had an interview with two people in the seminary who are responsible for the parish placements. They were looking for the best place for all of us. They were seeing where I am comfortable." (Res. Q5).

> "The parish were I went. I enjoyed it. I learned many things. I was able to relate well to people. To prepare things with them. How to participate. I thought the interview helped me." (Res. Q5).

Talks were given on what to expect, which an active-planning coping strategy to actively anticipate any stressors that might occur as a priest begins ministry. Fr Piotr was aware that he was moving to an environment and social milieu which differed greatly from his native Poland.

> "There were also some talks before going there.What to expect. What we should be aware of. Especially with people from different countries. Em…We have different backgrounds, different morals, that we are different. To be open to learn." (Res. Q5).

Along with preparing for meeting people from different backgrounds and different morals, Fr Piotr's preparatory meetings also discussed the personality of the parish priest with whom he would be working alongside. Again this coping mechanism is unique amongst all the respondents.

> "To respect the parish priest, and people in charge of things in the parish. We were also aware of the difficulties in a parish. There are different people, different priests. In strange ways even, to be open. To discuss things with the parish priest." (Res. Q5).

Fr Piotr was alone in all the respondents in having a formal process to discuss these problematic issues.

> "And to discuss if there some problems, even if it is with the parish priests, to be able tomeet with our formators. They were open to help us, to grow, I always felt I could go. (Res. Q5).

He found the open-ended and consultative approach to be beneficial to him as his engaged with this major transition. The meeting which occurred before he began his parochial ministry was not a one-off occasion but led to monthly evaluative meeting to review progress in ministry and discuss pastoral reflections.

> "I would say there was good support. Every month we had a meeting to discuss pastoral reflections… What were our experiences? How we can participate. It helped very much in the transitions. What you can do, can't do." (Res. Q5).

Before Fr John began in his pastoral setting he met with his initial pastor how best to engage in pastoral ministry.

> "I was clued in about how things were done in the parish where I was assigned in a general way. No one could have given me all of the requisite knowledge for my first

assignment. After the first year, however, I felt unhappy, which I expressed to the Pastor. I was able to work things out better with him and others thereafter." (Res. Q5).

Holding bi-weekly meetings with his initial pastor provided Fr John with an induction process that met his expectations. The purpose of these meetings included information planning, active-planning, goal setting and task-oriented attempts to master stressful situations. Different organizational intervention strategies were employed for Fr John as he commenced his nascent pastoral ministerial activities which had the effect to increase his extrinsic satisfaction from his ministry. This process included meeting with important stake-holders, management skills, programme development, group decision making and goal setting. The use of religious-focused coping strategies did not feature in his response.

> "The pastor provided clearly written expectations for my service to the parish, and identified rules for rectory life. He also solicited my input for what I expected out of my pastoral year in the parish. I asked for instruction in every area of the parish in preparation for pastoring my own parish someday. He accommodated this request by having biweekly, one-on-one sessions. The sessions were comprehensive and exceeded my expectations." (Res Q5).

Fr John contrasted his initial induction to a pastoral setting to his second placement. Here, he was able to build on the experience on the experience he gained in his first parish along with challenging himself to undertake new projects which he felt would develop his professional capacity. In both his first and second parish settings, different organizational intervention strategies were employed for Fr John as he commenced his nascent pastoral ministerial activities which had the effect to increase his extrinsic satisfaction from his ministry. This process included meeting with important stake-holders, management skills, programme development, group decision making and goal setting. The use of religious-focused coping strategies did not feature in his response.

> "My next placement also had clearly stated goals, such as maintenance of schedules, responsibility for all aspects of the liturgy and general office duties. As a rule, the pastor shared virtually all priestly functions with me." (Res Q5).

Fr George's induction experience had certain similarities to Fr Piotr in the manner there was contact with the parish priest while he was still a seminarian, being informed of the key issues

and the key people to be aware of in the parish. The focus is forward planning and problem-focused coping.

> "Induction would be too strong a word. Meeting the parish priest. Knowing the parish priest before when he was in the seminary. I suppose talking to people." (Res. Q5).

> I knew the person I was taking over from. It was more conversation in a sense. Which I suppose is a kind of training, well preparation more than training. Em, but then there is an element of being thrown in there. It was more kind of key things to be doing, key people to watch out for, key people to look out for." (Res. Q5).

Fr George enjoyed the informal approach that was offered to him in his induction experience. He was glad of the amount of induction he received and he felt he received the correct amount without it being excessive. There is an element of discernment in his approach with the use of having someone to turn to for advice.

> "That wise ear. It was an informal approach." (Res. Q5).

4.5.3 Lack of Formal Induction

Fr Peter was very blunt when he was asked about what induction training he received as he began his first appointment.

> "Zero. That answers that question. Nothing." (Res. Q5).

He believed he received very little training in the celebration of the sacraments.

> "Saying Mass was fine. But the other sacraments, and possibly not even that. There was nothing." (Res. Q5).

Fr Patrick was unique in challenging his bishop when he asked for a welcome pack.

> "(Long laugh). As I said to the bishop one day, "I'm still waiting on my welcome pack." He just smiled and said, "Exactly." You don't get anything. You get a phone call to go and see him. (Res Q5).

Fr Andrew sounded despondent as he recounted the paucity of induction training he received as he entered parish ministry. He was saddened by the fact that the bishop didn't even tell him about his appointment.

> "None.... None. The chancellor told me." (Res. Q5).

Fr Bede felt any training he received was from the other curates in his initial parish. There was no sense that his initial pastor or his diocese provided him with any formal induction training.

> "Em. Em. I don't know how to answer that question, (a long laugh), I'll a have a go, yeah, emmmm, the induction would be (tempo of the respondent quickens) if there was anything that you really needed to know the curates let you know. A classic example was not answering the phone during breakfast because it was always the same person and the said person did not need sacramental assistance. It was something I learned in my first week and that helped me for the rest of the year. Little things, eh, the ordinary wonderful things in life, you would learn from other curates or you could ask for help." (Res. Q5).

Fr Bede was on vacation and a friend informed him his first parochial appointment. He felt surprise that he was informed in this way.

> "I was notified of my first appointment when an e-mail was sent to the priests while I was on holidays. A friend was with me, he checked his e-mail and he said the clerical changes were out and that I was going to [name of a parish]. And within 24 hours I had a phone call from the bishop and he apologized. So I found out from someone else's e-mail. You couldn't make it up. The Lord's sense of humour." (Res. Q5).

4.5.4 Pastoral Encounters

Fr Peter recounted a pastoral situation from one of his earliest days in the parish. As he was recounting the story it was apparent that there was a lot of energy for him in this pastoral encounter with a nurse. On evaluation of his induction, Fr Peter used humour as a coping strategy, possibly to mask what must have been a very daunted pastoral situation. He employed an active-coping strategy as he asked for assistance for a nurse who was close to him.

> "I came on the Sunday and I was on hospital duty on the Monday. I joke about itbut at the time it wasn't funny. I was in the hospital; I was anointing somebody. I remember asking the nurse, "Have I done this right?" And she said, "You're supposed to know that." I remember thinking, yeah, I know that I am supposed to know that but I don't." (Res. Q5).

Fr Peter went on the recall another pastoral encounter which helped with adjust to the new reality of pastoral ministry. On this occasion, he felt surprised that the other priests did not react in the same manner as he did to attending to his first death in the parish. This occasion helped him to re-adjust his expectations, an active problem-focused coping approach.

"I remember my first funeral. I was only there a couple of days and eh, I remember being called to a house where a death had taken place. I remember announcing to the whole group that a person had died. There was nearly no reaction, it was as if they didn't care. I realized that you get used to it. I remember thinking at the very beginning it was a huge, which it was but obviously you are more sensitive to things when you start. Death becomes more banal, the more routine it becomes." (Res. Q5).

The perceived indifference to people who are suffering caused Fr Peter a considerable amount of stress early in his pastoral ministry. He felt unprepared for it. When faced with this stress in his ministry his response blended both the problem-focused coping strategy, where he asked questions in relation to the nature of suffering, along with emotion-focused, where he relied on his inner instincts.

"A thing that caused agreat worry to me, was why are we so banal? Why are we do indifferent to the likes of human suffering? We become more immune to it. To human suffering. You weren't necessarily prepared for it. You had to rely on your own instincts." (Res. Q5).

4.5.5 Personal Agency

With the lack of diocesan or parochial support, Fr Patrick used intrinsic active problem-focused coping strategies. He acknowledged that he has no problem contacting the necessary diocesan officials if he needed. He felt despondent that the diocese was not of greater assistance to him, which left him feeling frustrated.

"I would be the kind of guy would have no problem ringing up [name of a priest], who was very good in those initial weeks… What do I need to do, who do I need to tell about these things? I was very forwarding with my questions. It was very much from me. There was very little from the diocese…It is symptomatic of the lack of joined up thinking." (Res Q5).

Fr Patrick mentioned conflict arising from financial issues and how as a newly ordained priest he, for a number of months received the lower-level remuneration of a trainee priest. He felt angry and used active problem-focused coping strategies to express his anger by contacting the diocesan office.

"I still got my seminarian stipend for September." (Res Q5).

Fr Patrick was the only respondent who mentioned terminology such as the liminal stage. For him, the liminal stage was expressed by questioning his behaviours, actions and activities now that he is priest. Fr Patrick had a greater interest in the problem-focused approach rather than emotions-focused.

> "You are in kinda a limbo between ordination and appointment. You are in the liminal stage, what do I do." (Res Q5).

Fr Patrick further developed his task-oriented approach to problem-focused coping strategies by the manner in which he drew on internal processes and resources such as being proactive, reaching out, advice seeking, and awareness of his capabilities that he is on a different life-span now than he would have been in his younger days.

> "I would be quite proactive. There was no check list from the diocese. Unless I reached out, which I did, but it was very much one way, me reaching out. My experience, definitely, is that you are on your own. I'm quite capable for that. I'm not sure how younger guys would cope." (Res Q5).

Fr John was able to develop his teaching skills in a pastoral setting, which he enjoyed.

> "I was also free to offer my own lecture series, since this is something that I enjoy doing." (Res Q5).

Fr George realized there were times when he had to draw on internal resources in pastoral ministry.

> "I suppose in some ways you have to invest yourself in it." (Res Q9).

4.6.1 Theme 5: Transition in the Primary Relationships

4.6.2 Priests

Fr Piotr received support from other priests and it had a positive effect on his entry into ministry. He felt freer in his relationships with fellow clergy.

> "The language. I am treated in a different way. I am now one of them. I am on that side. More relaxed, more freedom in the relationship." (Res. Q7).

Fr Peter also felt he could relate on a deeper level with priests rather than on lay people.

"I found my own support, in my clerical friends. When you talk about deep stuff as regards vocation, priesthood, I found I had to rely on my priest friends." (Res. Q7).

The communal support of priests and being able to participate in priestly functions were a support for Fr John. He enjoyed being able to function as a priest.

"I was invited for priest gatherings for Penance Services and the like. I felt like a member of the presbyterate. This was sufficient to help me get along." (Res. Q7).

Fr Andrew's relationship with other priests was based on advice seeking and external validation for his ministry.

"I asked them, "What would you do in this circumstance? This has happened what would you do?" Seeking advice." (Res. Q7).

Fr George's greatest support was his priest friends. There is an element of social-seeking support, and advice seeking. The social aspect of relaxation and going for a meal was a support to Fr George.

"The most significant support is priest friends. Sort of catching up. Comparing notes. There is a junior clergy thing. It was useful for the social side of things. There was a desire to have some input. It varied a bit." (Res. Q7).

People let down at short notice which is the classic thing… A lot of it was the meal. The social side. With a broad sense." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede found the presence of young priests in his new parish and neighbouring parish supportive.

"There was a young team in the parish. So it was nice not being in a place that was too sedentary. There were clergy in the neighbouring parish that you could." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede had a priest friend who lived close to him and who he could turn to for advice and support. When he friend was re-appointed to a new appointment, he missed his friendship.

"Em I was blessed that a priest friend was so close if I needed a chat. Or if this is the right way to fill out a marriage form or if somebody needs help and it's not particularly by the book, what do you do. Since he has gone, I miss him a lot" (Res. Q7).

4.6.3 Family and Friends

Through his relationship with his family, Fr Piotr was developing his sense of professionalism. By doing so, he felt he had achieved status within the Church.

> "For sure…traditional family. My father was very happy that I entered the seminary… he already ordained me." (Res. Q7).

> "Em, there are some expectations, healthy expectations. The family, knowing that I am a priest, want to participate more in the life of the church. I am asked for help. How can we solve this issue, what does the church think? I am like an ambassador." (Res. Q7).

Fr Piotr had an ambiguous relationship with his friends when he took up his first appointment. With some of them he feels more open and freer to speak and he noticed that with other friends they are more reserved. This caused him tension and he was unsure how to cope with this new aspect in his friendships now that he is in ministry.

> "Among the friends, there are some who were surprised that I entered the seminary. Friends who practice. When I am among them, they are aware, maybe they are not so much free to say everything. A disadvantage. There are times when I can be more open as a priest. They are more open… They speak about their problems. They seek advice." (Res. Q7).

There is a level of distancing as a coping strategy for Fr Peter when he spoke about his relationship with his family as he moved in parish ministry.

> "I found very early on in my priesthood that you couldn't rely on your family to understand different things. It's different with your clerical friends, so much has to be explained. They understand what you are going on for and they understand what you are going through. People who aren't priests don't necessarily get." (Res. Q7).

For Fr Andrew, the most important people in his life were his family and friends.

> "Basically friends and family. They were there for me." (Res. Q7).

Fr Patrick was grieving the death of his sister while he began his parish ministry. He felt a level of tension of wanting to be close to his sister while also separate from them.

> "I am only 18 minutes from home. It's great having my family so close but I also need my own space." (Res. Q7).

> "I don't know how well I would have done with that being further away." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede also felt the support of being close to his family. He was glad that his parents felt assured that he was not on his own.

> "My parents were assured as they knew that I was part of something and not freelance. (Res. Q7).

6.6.4 Initial Pastor

Of all the priests in the diocese, one priest has the most influential and essential role in the transition of the new priest. This is the initial pastor.

4.6.5 Initial Pastor as a Support

Fr Peter found the support he received from his initial pastor was simply get involved in the ministry. Fr Peter would have preferred a different model of entry than the detached model that was being offered by his initial pastor.

> "My parish priest at the time, a nice man, a kind man but being told by him that was it. The expectation was that you just rowed in and got on with it." (Res. Q7).

An issue for Fr John was his inability to express his emotions. He felt his hindered in transition especially in the area of intimacy.

> "The pastor served a teaching and mentoring role. He had a clear-cut plan for my engagement in the parish. He was also open to my expectations for what I wanted out of the experience, and he delivered in an exceptional way. I did ask to be able to offer adult education opportunities for the parish. Although my experience here was phenomenal and met my expectations, my inability to express myself cannot be underestimated." (Res. Q7).

Fr Andrew contrasted the welcome he received from his initial pastor with his feelings of loneliness and left him wondering if he had made the right decision.

> "The reaction of the parish priest I went to work with was nice. He made me feel welcome. It just told me there were two masses 8.15am and 10am and we would swop about. I felt lonely…. I thought what the hell have I come to?" (Res. Q5).

4.6.6 Conflict with the Initial Pastor

Conflict was also present for a number of the respondents when they recalled how their initial pastor assisted them in their transition into ministry.

Fr Patrick spoke of the conflict he had with his initial pastor.

> "Myself and [name of the initial pastor] would have had conflict over what the parish is expected to pay for and what I am expected to pay for." (Res. Q7).

> I'm not sure of the expectation of parish priests when new guys come in. I know there is a budget. He didn't stick to that initially. I reached out to a number of guys, some of the newly ordained and the senior guys… I think the parish priest's need to be a bit sharper on it. I have only one experience of it." (Res. Q7).

Conflict with his initial pastor was also operative for Fr George.

> "That was the character of the parish priest. I suppose there was a clash of personalities. I am a bit more organized in my mind, but we got on… you can allow for that. When you are living with maybe 40 guys to start to live with one other person." (Res. Q7).

Problem-focused coping was used by Fr George in claiming what was due to him in his new parish. He recounted that he had to be assertive to get his entitled days off which he found difficult.

> "Having to be more assertive to get days off." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede felt he could no trust his initial pastor with the deep issues that we affecting him as he began ministry.

> "You don't have to be Einstein to know that is not going to work." (Res. Q7).

4.6.7 Episcopal and Diocesan Authorities

Fr John shared with the bishop his concerns.

> "I have expressed my fear to the Bishop. Given the circumstances that I have seen and experienced, I wonder if the diocese cares about its priests as they begin their ministry." (Res. Q7).

Fr Andrew felt a lack of support from his bishop as he coped with the transition into ministry.

"The bishop didn't care." (Res. Q7).

Fr Patrick also used talking, humour, rationalizing and re-evaluation as problem-focused coping strategies when he met with his bishop for an informal meal a number of months after his ordination.

"Meeting the bishop in February over a bite to eat. Just having a chat about how I am getting on. Being able to have an honest conversation with him. About how I feel, this is what I see. I remember the first time I met him, he said to me, "How are you and [the name of the parish priest] getting on? Well let me put it to you like this, your Grace, [the name of the parish priest] isn't used to having someone who can do things and I am not used to not being allowed do things. He said,"that is very well put." We're working on it. It's an interesting dynamic." (Res. Q7).

In relation to diocesan supports, Fr Patrick used active problem-focused coping strategies. He felt comfortable in being proactive and if he needed information he contacted the necessary personnel. He lamented that the diocese had not been of greater support to him and his coping mechanism was to minimize the effect it had on him.

"I suppose I've always felt that when I've picked up the phone or e-mailed that the help has been there. It hasn't been very proactive coming to me. Maybe that's just my character, my personally. I'm fairly self-sufficient." (Res. Q7).

Diocesan personnel in Fr Bede's diocese provided an opportunity for priests who were less than five years ordained to come together for talks and discussions in a group setting known as the 'Under-5's'. He distanced himself from his formal approach and found supports in his own self-developed plan.

"If somebody comes with a plan I might rebel against it, and reject it. I haven't gone to the Under-5's because it's not my thing. I quietly go about my own business and do my own thing and when I need support it's there." (Res. Q7).

4.6.8 Professional Supports

Fr Piotr sought out the professional support of being able to speak with a spiritual director, seminary rector and catechist.

"Being able to talk to my spiritual director, seminary rector and catechist really helped me cope." (Res. Q7).

This had the effect to decrease tension in Fr Piotr's transition and seek professional advice and insight into how to cope with new pastoral situations he faced.

Shortly after beginning in ministry, Fr Peter sought professional therapeutic assistance to assist him cope with his entry into ministry. He was also proactive in seeking financial assistance from the diocese. The diocese was unsupportive to his request.

> "I sought out Vocational Growth Counselling. I looked for the diocese to support me financially in that but they didn't, it wasn't forthcoming. You had to rely on yourself." (Res. Q4).

Fr Peter also spoke of having a mentor.

> "I think it would be good if a newly ordained priest could have a mentor. Every priest should have a mentor, someone they can go and talk with, kind of bounce things off, someone who you could say, I'm finding this difficult, or saying, how do I do this, and get good advice." (Res. Q6).

Fr John also sought out the professional supports of spiritual direction and mentoring. While he was glad to receive spiritual direction, when he used an active problem-focused coping strategy of asking the diocese to provide a mentor he was informed the diocese no longer provided this service.

> "Having a mentor would have been a good thing. I inquired about this early on, but was told that since few priests wish for such a thing, the Diocese no longer offered them. However, given that I was overwhelmed at the start, I'm sure that this would have proved helpful in my case." (Res. Q7).

Professional supports where very important to Fr Patrick as he coped with his transition. With his spiritual director he discussed spiritual issues while with his priest mentor, he discussed pastoral issues. Along with a problem-focused coping approach, there an element of emotion-focused coping approach with processing his feeling in relation to nearing confessions.

> "Definitely, my spiritual director. I meet up every five or six weeks with [name of spiritual director]. That is extremely valuable. She knows me from my earliest days in the seminary. I was quite clear in keeping that relationship going." (Res. Q7).

> "I also have a priest mentor. That is something I sought out myself… He is an experienced parish priest. How do I feel with the stuff people tell you in confession to

what's the craic with mobile phones? Am I supposed to be doing this? How do I deal with this?" (Int. 5 Res. Q7).

Fr George used the professional supports as a talking coping strategy to unburden himself of his problems. He, like many of the respondents, sought a priest mentor rather than waiting for the diocese to provide one.

"Spiritual direction, a shoulder in that sense." (Res. Q7).

"In my second year, I found a priest mentor. Someone you can chat with about things." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede spoke about his desire to have a priest mentor.

"…like in the model of discipleship. I think that would be a lot more encouraging." (Res. Q7).

4.6.9 Parishioners

The focus of the ministry exercised by the respondents is dedicated towards people in the parish.

4.6.10 Parishioners as a Support.

Fr Piotr became animated when he spoke of the community in which he was based. He felt he could off-load his problems with them and relax with them. He was also grateful for the way they provided him with financial remuneration.

"Beautiful when I am in my community. People with whom I can speak with my problems. Financial assistance. Able to go to the pub with." (Res. Q7).

Fr John felt the support of parishioners in his ministry, especially when he could express his own unique skills and talents.

"Where I had the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the parish, and felt that I was making a positive contribution, the experience was more positive. If I was able to express myself through some unique activity with the parishioners, such as teaching, the experience was more positive." (Res. Q7).

Fr George felt the confidence that parishioners put in him when he began his ministry.

"People put a huge amount of confidence in you from day one and you are still very much wet behind the ears." (Res. Q2).

Talking as a coping strategy was important to Fr Patrick. Shortly after arriving in the parish he became friendly with a couple with whom he could express his emotions and this helped him to cope with the negative relationship he had with his initial pastor.

"There is a couple I can go to and have a bite to eat. I can go when I feel frustrated. I need to talk. These are all support mechanisms I can use." (Res. Q7).

"…people welcome the priest, especially a new priest." (Res. Q6).

Fr Patrick spoke the he found visiting patients in the hospital helped him to put a certain perspective on his own difficult situation.

"When I go into the hospital and realize that whatever stuff is going on in your life is nothing in comparison with their lives. There was one lady who was there when I first went into the hospital as chaplain. And 10 weeks later she was still there. She said, "The difference is, Father, you can go home at the end of the day." That struck em, the reality of it." (Res. Q7).

Fr Bede had a cognitive awareness that support was there for him but he had difficulty being consciously aware where it was present. He felt an onus on himself to locate this support through active problem-focused coping.

"The support is there, but you have to look for it. The support is there but it's kinda … The most supportive are probably the most silent in the parish. They are there, it's just that you have to go and look for them." (Res. Q7).

4.6.11 Tension with Parishioners

Adapting to a new cultural experience in the parish was also a tension for Fr Piotr. He had to cope with the more relaxed manner in which received the sacraments. This caused him tension.

"There parishioners have a more relaxed approach to the sacrament. We are trying to find ways to get people, not to reject them. I was taught something different. I was raised on something difficult. I struggle with it. There is a tension." (Res. Q7).

Fr John developed his feelings of tension and the conflict he encountered when he relied excessively on one form of coping, i.e. problem-focused, in his relationship with parishioners. When he felt unable to express himself he felt it was a negative experience.

"Experiences were negative with parishioners where I was unable to express myself, or where I recognized that my personal contribution was irrelevant, lacking in value, or was a circumstance where I personally did not matter or when they cut me off." (Res. Q7).

Fr Andrew found his relationship with parishioners changed when he was in the parish.

"…not being so special as a priest, cus you're expected to know what to do. They can be very unforgiving." (Res. Q7).

Fr Patrick struggled when he tried to initiate something new in the parish and faced a backlash from parishioners.

"And to not to be afraid to try something new. "Oh we've done that before." Well you actually haven't, not with me. I have that thrown at me a couple of times, in the parish by parishioners." (Res. Q7).

Fr Patrick encountered a certain reservation from parishioners at times.

"And there is this kind of standoffish with people." (Res. Q7).

Fr Patrick felt the anger of people when he set up an appointment system for people to call and see him.

"Certainly for me, there's an expectation that people cannot just come up to the door at any time they want. They are angry about it." (Res. Q7).

"…but somebody randomly ringing the door bell, "Father, can I see you for half an hour?" Well, actually no, or people ring you or Facebook message. Well, no I can't. We can do it tomorrow." (Res. Q7).

4.7.1 Transition Point 5: Expectations

All the respondents noticed a change in the role and expectation of the priest since their ordination and entry into parish ministry. The transitions in expectations covered various areas including human development, self-care, spiritual development, diocesan and episcopal expectations.

4.7.2 Human Development

Fr George noticed that he had excessively high expectations when he began in parish ministry and this approach had to change.

"Most people I've met want to save the world and save the parish in the first number of years." (Res. Q9).

"You have look afresh at things. You don't have to change it." (Res. Q9).

When he assessed how he coped with this induction into parish life, Fr Andrew reviewed his self-belief and referred to himself in a self-derogatory manner. He realized that his expectations were excessively high and needed re-adjustment, which seemed to help him to remove the stressful perfectionist approach that he previously held.

"I think I was an arsehole. I thought I could save the world. I soon learned it's about partnership." (Res. Q5).

Fr Patrick recognized that there are times of loneliness in the priesthood.

"…and to recognize there are moments when there is loneliness." (Res. Q9).

Fr John realized the need to treat priests as rather than label them.

"If we do not treat priests, especially newly ordained priests, as real human beings, then it is only a matter of time before they leave." (Res. Q8).

When reviewing his expectations of pastoral ministry, Fr John hoped someone would take away his rough edges.

"Lovingly correcting my rough edges." (Res. Q9).

Fr Bede felt that lowering his expectations helped me to remain a priest.

"What I had in my mind for what makes a good diocesan priest is much too high. When you don't meet the mark after four years, you start lowering that and that's good because I don't think I could have made it." (Res. Q9).

"Coming to terms with my own humanity, and my imperfections, was probably the most difficult part, getting the corners knocked off my perfectionisms, scruples and my idealism. (Res. Q9).

4.7.3 Self-Care

Fr Patrick realized the need to practice self-care when he entered pastoral ministry.

"The biggest, and the thing I still struggle with is giving myself time during the day." (Res. Q9).

"I need to take some time for myself." (Res. Q9).

"Having your own space and recognizing that you will be alone in that space and recognizing that you do need that self-care space to look after yourself." (Res. Q9).

Fr George felt the need to be more assertive now that he was based in a parish.

"If I was more aware of what to say no to and actually it's ok to take an hour out of the day go for a walk when you are feeling jaded or dejected." (Res. Q9).

4.7.4 Spiritual Development

Fr Peter felt there was too great a disparity between the ways prayer was celebrated in the seminary than in the parish. He felt this could have a detrimental effect on a new priest's prayer life.

"I really think that towards the end of seminary there could be the movement to the model of prayer that you would experience in a parish, em. I noticed that parish life is not regular. You could find yourself saying Morning Prayer 4 o'clock in the afternoon or later. When it comes to that, you can say to yourself I'm not going to bother saying it. Then your payer becomes affected." (Res. Q9).

Fr Patrick held a similar view to Fr Peter, although he was more focused on the extrinsic nature of his spiritual development.

"You can practice all you want. Nothing compares with actually being there and praying those words and being the presider and the responsibility that comes with that. Not being afraid to ask and say I don't know." (Res. Q8).

4.7.5 Diocesan and Episcopal Expectations

Fr George saw the benefit of the recently ordained priests coming together and having a group discussion to facilitate a conversation on parish ministry.

"Junior clergy, facilitating a discussion on change and see what happens." (Res. Q9).

Fr Bede acknowledged the individuality and idiosyncrasy of every newly ordained priest and believed that the diocesan support system should reflect this rather than going for one approach for everyone.

"I think every candidate is very different." (Res. Q9).

"I think that people do need support but it has to be a little tailored. And they are asked what is suitable for them so that it doesn't become a case of ticking boxed." (Res. Q9).

Fr Andrew after embarking on parish ministry felt being resident in a parochial house and making the journey into the seminary for training would be a preferential model.

"Maybe the whole notion of seminary needs to be looked at. Rather than staying in a seminary staying in a parish house and come into the seminary." (Res. Q9).

Fr John would like the bishop to have a connection with newly ordained priests and listen to their experiences.

"Having the bishop connect with his newly ordained priests, especially during the first year, and inviting feedback about parochial experiences." (Res. Q9).

Fr Patrick had a similar outlook to Fr John in wishing the bishop meet with newly ordained priests to assess how they were coping in their pastoral appointment.

"There is no formal sit down. There is the idealism of youth as a priest. How often does any bishop sit down with his priests, on a one to one and see how they are getting on?" (Res. Q8).

4.8.1 Conclusion

This research study explored the lived experience of seven newly ordained Roman Catholic priests as they reflected on how they coped with the transition of leaving seminary, being ordained a priest and entering ministry.

It examined the role of the seminary in preparation for ministry and how seminary formation may have assisted the respondent as they embarked on this major transition in their lives. The study explored how the rite of ordination, as the formal entry point of entry, may have impacted the respondents' transition into ministry. It also focused on how the primary relationship of the respondents changed as they began their pastoral ministry. The study investigated how the expectations of the respondents altered when they reflected on their experience.

To a certain extent, each individual reacted differently to the challenges and opportunities entailed in their transitions. The respondents' accounts reveal that a range of biographical and

contextual variables were involved in shaping their experiences of and their reactions to this major transition period in their lives and how they coped with the transitions.

The findings in this research study support the literature review that a range of coping strategies are utilized in helping newly ordained priests cope with a major transition in their lives.

The variations of results from this data, justified an exploration for a greater depth of inquiry, using the respondents' responses, reflections and experiences to locate the coping strategies that had great influence in assisting the individual respondent as he engaged with a major transition in his life. The recommendations and suggestions that the respondents offered in relation to a priest coping with a major transition in his life are considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are to analyze, synthesize and discuss the findings as reported in Chapter 4. This chapter includes the analysis of the findings, a discussion of main issues and challenges noted earlier in Chapter 2.

The methodological aim of the thesis has been to take some preliminary steps towards the development of creating revised coping strategies for priests engaged in the major transitions in their lives.This chapter brings together data from the research process which suggested that all the respondents were affected by the transition of leaving the seminary, being ordained to the priesthood and entering their ministerial position. The respondents had an awareness of the importance of, and were affected by, structural factors such as locality, relationships, and power dynamics. The following chapter reports those findings which can provide evidence of an awareness of agency and individual inputs into how they coped with their transitions. Structural and individual inputs and influences interact to indicate that both types of approaches were simultaneously present in how they coped with transition.

This research study has progressively discussed literature, methodology, methods, and data and from this an emergent theory has been developed. This emergent discussion chapter is a continuum with the methodology and style of the thesis. It extends insights, concepts and offers potential for further development in this research area. It also adds further literature to the study to offer alternative perspectives to coping strategies. It increases the scope and range of the theory by insight into the specific issues that are raised in the study. Some of the relationships and the potential contribution of this study's theory on coping in times of transition to existing theories are discussed, together with implications for ministry practice, knowledge and methodology. This raises implications of the theory for clergy to cope with the major transitions in their lives, which are applied further in chapter 6.

5.2.1 Coping Strategy 1: The Seminary

5.2.2 Prior Experience to Entering the Seminary

Unlike many of the seminarians in the past, (Murtagh, 2005) all the respondents in this study had spent time in third-level academic studies or in the workforce prior to entering the seminary. They drew on previous transitional experiences as a positive coping strategy to assist them with the transitions they were experiencing in religious life.

Fr Piotr was clear in the manner he used a religious coping strategy to situate with transition as 'part of God's plan.' Fr Patrick also operated in a religious coping strategy approach when he utilized both intrinsic and extrinsic religious coping strategies. Implicit in Pargament's model of religious coping (1992) is the assumption that people seek significance in religion and that religious systems provide the means to attain that significance.

By providing a theological understanding of transition, along with placing transition within a scriptural/spiritual framework can be a strategy to assist priests in their transition during their time in the seminary, in preparation for leaving the seminary.

5.2.3 Discipline as Affecting Transition and Increasing Personal Agency

Many respondents in Chapter 4 found the seminary to be a place of discipline. This seemed to have a negative impact in how the respondents coped with transition. This is significant as many studies in the literature review mentioned that in the past there was a greater focus to the keeping of rules and regulations in the seminary than is currently the emphasis in modern day formation (Ryan, 1973, Bleichner, 2004, Murtagh, 2005). One possible reason for this is that modern day seminarians spend a number of years living outside of a very structured educational environment than is offered in the seminary. In the experience of the respondents, there seemed to be more of an emphasis on rule regulation rather than freedom of expression, creativity and spontaneity of response to the stress of the transition of entry to seminary.

The effect on the respondents of feeling the seminary to be a place of discipline meant there was an excessive emphasis on keeping the rules and regulations rather than providing them with an opportunity to express their feelings at a deeper level. Fr Bede felt this had a negative on his transition. He felt the seminary helped him to be a good seminarian but that the skills he learned in the seminary did not translate well as he adjusted into parish ministry and so did not assist him in the transitioning process.

By increasing the influence of leaner centered modes of transition awareness throughout the life-span of the seminarian's duration in the seminary, culminating at the final stages of his departure from the seminary can assist the seminarian to prepare himself for leaving the seminary and entering ministry.

The seminary will be the seminarian's residence for six or seven years, and there can sometimes be a sense of unfinished business as he prepares to leave it, especially in the area of discipline. An example of this is Fr Peter, who when he was leaving the seminary, felt relieved not to have to deal with inter-personal conflicts. There is a sense of a conflict-avoidant coping strategy (Schnider, Elhai & Gray, 2007), maladaptive coping (Meyer, 2001; Yates et al 2011), and avoidance coping (Nahlén & Saboonchi, 2010, Vitaliano et al, 1985) in his leaving of the seminary.

Another mode of assisting the seminarian to cope in his transition would be to increase the level of student autonomy and active individualization, by making the seminarian the primary agent of his own transition. Fr Patrick highlighted this when he stated, "There are so many individual journeys they can't cover everything." (Res Q2). The possibilities of exercising these types of autonomy are dependent, to an extent, upon the seminarian's personal awareness and characteristics, which will have been developed in his human development as outlined in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992). This is the way in which structure interacts with agency and to develop his personal and idiosyncratic coping strategy while in the seminary.

5.2.4 Social and Pastoral Supports as Assisting Transition

Social support has been defined as "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient." (Shumaker & Brownell in Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2010, p. 3). Iruloh & Ukaegbu found in their study that "social support is a significant contributor to the prediction of academic adjustment." (Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2017, p. 29). This study found that social supports in the seminary assisted the respondents in their transitions. The findings in this study are in agreement with Shlossberg's Theory of Transition (1984), specifically in the area of support, which is that social supports can reduce anxiety and facilitate as Fr Patrick stated, "We would have done something on transition

on our final year. I found that really helpful, just to situate yourself in one of these transitions." (Res. Q2).

By utilizing the social supports and friendships made while in the seminary and continuing these supports and friendships while entering ministry can be a coping strategy that would be helpful for newly ordained priests.

The respondents in Chapter 4 reflected on the relationship between the seminary, their pastoral placements and how these settings assisted them in transition. For respondents, such as Fr Piotr, where the pastoral support worked well they felt engaged and encouraged by their transition. For respondents where the pastoral support did not work well they felt a lack in their pastoral training. Fr Andrew's felt his experience of pastoral support was lacking in the seminary and left him unprepared for ministry.

Pastoral placements can be seen as a dynamic social process because they shape and are shaped by the sum total of the seminarians' experiences, their beliefs and actions within the pastoral placement. It is not only a question of individual decisions but also developing pastoral skills such as relating to a team in order to accomplish set goals, which are the values acquired by the individual and valued by core church teaching. This was the case for Fr Piotr who felt he could bring any pastoral issues he had in ministry to the seminary officials.

An increase in the number of options and types of pastoral courses and experiences available to seminarians, and in modes of learning and studying, means that there can be more scope for personal decision making to be made while on pastoral placements in preparation for ministry.

The respondents were also presented with an opportunity to recognize the ways in which their pastoral placement was a significant channel for their awareness of coping with transition. This was reflected in the respondents' remarks, which concerned the importance of being able to reflect on their experience on transition that they received while on their pastoral placement and in turn bring that knowledge to their seminary experience. By ensuring that seminarians receive appropriate levels of support during their pastoral placements can enable them to have an insight of what might be expected of them when they enter pastoral ministry. This could assist them as they cope with the transition into ministry. Fr George felt that the seminary was a resource to him as he prepared for ministry.

5.2.5 Ritual of leaving the Seminary

During his time of leaving the seminary, Fr Patrick was coping with a number of losses in his life (Kübler-Ross, 2005), including the loss of his sister due to her death and the loss of being in the seminary. In the structure of professional support and in discussion with his spiritual director, Fr Patrick actively planned a way to mark his ending in the seminary by initially problem solving which then developed to the emotion-focused coping. "I remember my spiritual director saying to me to do something to mark it, not closure but to mark it." (Res. Q3).

Fr Patrick was the only respondent who, on his final day as a seminarian, ritualized his actual moment of leaving the seminary. During his response it seemed that the physical journey that Fr Patrick accomplished, of going for a walk around the seminary grounds, of visiting the room allocated to him for his first year of studies and praying quietly in the college chapel, mirrored his internal journey of transition. This would be in agreement with Musgrove and Middletown, that this turning point (leaving the seminary) had a clear symbolic value, standing for something other than or beyond itself and was clearly emotionally charged (Musgrove and Middletown, 1981). Also evident in the coping strategies employed by Fr Patrick is the notable use of a dialectical approach, which according to Cheng can assist with coping flexibility (Cheng, 2009). Fr Patrick began his response in Chapter 4 by stating how he was involved in communal activities such as the ordination to the diaconate and the celebratory meal and how he moved to ending his final day in the seminary on his own. He marked this final day by visiting the first room that he was lodged in and significantly there is even the notable change in the external environment of moving from light into darkness. Fr Patrick relied heavily on religious-focused coping to assist him with leaving the seminary. Pargament, Koening and Perez (2000) hypothesized that religious coping has five key functions: meaning, control, comfort/spirituality, intimacy/spirituality and life transformation. These five elements are apparent in the manner in which Fr Patrick coped with the transition of leaving the seminary.

By ritualizing the completion of the seminary experience, either by a formal liturgical experience offered by the seminary formators or a personal individualized ritual, this can assist the seminarian to bring closure to his seminary formation and prepare for ordination and the transition into ministry.

5.2.6 Conclusion on the Seminary

The seminary has also been a seminarian's home for the previous six or seven years. It provided him with many supports and he lived with a like-minded community. This changes when he begins his ministry. Many of the supports he found in the seminary have ended and he is faced with the reality of living in a completely different environment. He leaves behind important relationships that may continue, but in an altered way because of the change in circumstances.

From the data collected from the respondents in Chapter 4 it is evident that where there was a great level of continuity between leaving the seminary and beginning the seminary, the newly ordained priest coped in an adaptive and positive manner. Prior to leaving the seminary, knowing what parish a seminarian was going to be assigned as a newly ordained priest could be helpful. With this information a seminarian could prepare for the particular needs of the parish while he was still in the seminary with the assistance of seminary officials.

It was apparent from the respondents in Chapter 4 that seminarians benefit from having a programme in the seminary where they can discuss different issues relating to coping with transition. This was true in the case of Fr Patrick, Fr George and Fr Piotr. Some of the respondents in Chapter 4 found they had no one with whom they could discuss the issues that we affecting them and this did not facilitate healthy coping strategies. Examples of this were Fr Peter, Fr Andrew and Fr Bede. In *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II wrote of the need of this process for newly ordained priests as they cope with the transition into ministry.

> In order to accompany the young priest in this first, delicate phase of their sacerdotal life and ministry, it is very opportune and perhaps even absolutely necessary nowadays, to create a suitable support structure, with appropriate guides and teachers. (John Paul II, 1992, p. 209)

It is clear that the seminary formators still had a significant role to play in how Fr Piotr adjusted to his initial pastoral appointment. An interview was held with seminary staff prior to his deployment into a parish setting. The purpose of the meeting was to locate him in the parish which his formatters believed would suit his talents.

The experience of these priests are that there is a need for a greater link between the seminary and initial parish. There is a need for greater continuity between these locations than is currently offered. The results of this study is in agreement with Pope John Paul II's theory on priestly

formations. "The idea that priestly formation ends on the day one leaves the seminary is false and dangerous and needs to be totally rejected." (Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992, No. 73, p. 237).

5.3.1 Coping Strategy 2: The Rite of Ordination

A key component of transition into the priesthood is the rite of ordination. There were a range of replies from the respondents in Chapter 4 to how the liturgy and ritual of ordination assisted the respondents in how they coped with this major transition. For Van Gennep, rituals and ceremonies serve the function of guiding an individual through liminal transitory categories as one passes through the stages of separation, transition and reincorporation that he claims are present in all stages of rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960). Within current Roman Catholic liturgical principles, the Rite of Ordination (2012) is one of the most elaborate ceremonies that the church celebrates. It is also a "rite of passage" (Van Gennep, 1960), an instance of ritual that takes place within a ceremonial context (Moore and Myerhoff, 1977). The Rite of Ordination can involve many elements such as speech, song, touch, sound and smell, which is consistent within many rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960). The tangible elements of speech, song, touch and sound stood out for the respondents while smell, such as the use of incense, did not feature in their responses. Surprisingly, given the religious nature of the ceremony, only a few of the respondents in Chapter 4 mentioned the spiritual aspect of the ceremony and they did not, for the most part, rely on religious-focused coping (Pargament, Koening and Perez 2000).

5.3.2 Presence of Priests

Fr Peter spoke about the support he felt from the clergy present at his ordination and how he felt, now being ordained, that he felt part of a club. It was clear, that without being aware he of it, he was speaking about a bond which Turner termed c*ommunitas* (Turner, 1969). Through ritual, individuals can momentarily forego social differences and reaffirm their sense of *communitas*, or basic, shared social membership. Turner developed the theme of liminality with *communitas* being the "quick" of human interrelatedess and a sentiment of human kindness (Turner, 1969). For Fr Peter, the liturgy of ordination assisted him with this *communitas* which aided his transition into priesthood. This sense of *communitas* also with his changing self-identification now that he was part of the presbyterate or club, as it referred to it, along with the rights and

privileges that go with it. Fr Peter also gave an insight into his image and understanding of priesthood with references to enjoying the privileges of being part of a club. This could denote that he had a high theology of priesthood rather than a servant/service model. With the reference to having lots of priests present at his ordination could also indicate their presence assisted him with the transformation into a club.

While the presence of other priests is not necessary for the rite of ordination to occur, all that is needed is the candidate and the bishop, the presence of other priests, as a sign of community and fraternity can assist the newly ordained priest as his enters ministry.

5.3.3 Physical Aspects of the Ordination

Fr Bede, alone of all the respondents, felt a somatic response on how the rite of ordination assisted him in his transition. He equated it with being pious or holy. There was an element of confusion in how he felt now that he was a priest and he was grappling with what it meant for him to be ordained. For Van Gennep (1960), rituals and ceremonies serve the function of guiding an individual through liminal transitory categories as one passes through the stages of separation, transition and reincorporation that he claims are present in all stages of rites of passage.

Within the framework of the liturgy, the moments that had greatest impact on Fr Peter were the laying on of hands and the kiss of peace. Both these aspects of the liturgy express an occasion of fraternity into the priesthood. Like Fr John, Fr Peter had a strong sense of the tangible element of touch conferring a change on him (Van Gennep, 1960). He made particular reference to the laying on of hands, (the actual moment of ordination), and the kiss of peace (a sign of welcome and fraternity into the priesthood).

Fr Piotr was also the only respondent to speak of the liturgy assisting him in his growth, although he did not specify the particulars of this growth for him. Participation was a large factor in assisting Fr Piotr in the liturgy of ordination. He mentioned that prior to entering the seminary he had not being liturgically active in the church. This was a difference from the other respondents and from most priests in general. There was a strong sense in Fr Piotr's response of the liminal phase (Van Gennep, 1960) of the ordination being situated between the seminary period of his life and the parish period.

By highlighting the rite of ordination as a rite of transition with many composite parts can assist the newly ordained priest to become aware that in the liminal stage of transition and the ritual of ordination is a liturgical ceremony to assist him with transition.

5.3.4 Ordination as not having an Impact

Fr Andrew was pragmatic in his response about how his ordination assisted him in coping with transition. Uniquely, amongst the other responses he did not feel that the rite of ordination had an impact on how he coped with his transition into the priesthood. For Fr Andrew it seemed like his ordination was a success and something he worked towards achieving. The bluntness and brevity of his response was in contrast to many of the other respondents. Throughout his responses, Fr Andrew's image of priesthood was an image of service/servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2003). Given his image of priesthood, it is understandable that the ordination would be presented in a functional manner.

By being aware that for some priests the rite of ordination could have little or no impact in how they cope with transition could allow them a freedom of expression to locate other rituals or liturgical ceremonies that enables and facilitates transition for them.

5.3.5 Conclusion on the Rite of Ordination

Once his formal training is completed, the candidate prepares for ordination. The actual moment of the conferring of the sacrament of ordination is the laying on of hands. The transition that occurs at ordination extends further than a sacramental or ontological change. Once he is ordained, the new priest receives a distinctive role within the Church. He goes from being a private person to occupying a public role. There are many symbols within the rite of ordination that represent the transition that is taking place in the life of the man being ordained. While the power of the priesthood is communicated to the new priest at ordination, it can take some time for this new identity to be fully realized by the new priest. This outward transition can be overwhelming for some priests as they begin their ministry. The findings of this study are in agreement with the theory of Bridges, "That rites of passage or rituals to help individuals to let go of their outlived life-chapter and find a new one to replace it." (Bridges, 2004, p. xii)

5.4.1 Coping Strategy 3: Moving into Ministry

Many of the respondents interviewed in Chapter 4 were in spoke of the lacunae in the preparation they received in the seminary for dealing with practical issues in the parish. These included being chairperson of School Management Teams; the financial running of the parish; how to cope with living in a community of hundreds in the seminary to living on your own in the parish; conflict resolution; anger management; the structural fabric of parish property and the large volume of paper work. Due to the decrease in the number of priests, newly ordained priests can expect themselves to be pastors of a parish within a very short period of time. In some cases, this can occur within a year or two of ordination. Having courses in the seminary and after ordination that reflect the practical realities that face a priest can be helpful to new priests as they deal with new situations.

5.4.2 Formal Induction and Personal Agency

Before Fr John began in his pastoral setting he met with his initial pastor to discuss how best to engage in pastoral ministry. This could be referred to as a forethought stage, or a priori phase, where the newly ordained priest and his initial pastor prepare the scenario for his pastoral activity which leads to a task analysis process and then to the self-motivation progression which develops to a re-evaluation of action. This was true for Fr John, where at the conclusion of his first year he felt comfortable and confident to express the difficulties he was experiencing in his pastoral ministry to his initial pastor.

It is clear from both a review of the relevant literature and the responses from the respondents in Chapter 4 that the clearer and more connected that formal induction system is for the newly ordained priest, the smoother his transition into his public ministry will be for him.

Considering the conceptualization of stress as a process as opposed to a discrete event, (e.g. Lazarus, 1999), the negative adaptive outcome leading to stress is also interaction between individual factors and wider social contexts.

These complex interactions and confluences can then lead to an appraisal by the individual whether the transition being faced can be tackled effectively using coping assets or protective factors at their disposal.

As mentioned in the literature review, these protective factors broadly exist in two categories, namely, internal and external, both of which are significant to positive adaptive outcomes and resilience in coping with transition. Therefore, using a person-environment fit (Lazarus, 1999) could be key to how newly ordained priests cope with the transition they are engaged with as they being their public ministry. Taking this into consideration, it might be important to ensure that newly ordained priests are adequately equipped to cope with the demands of their transition to influence resilient outcomes as they begin their public ministry.

Beck has argued that studies of individualisation and related processes "all point to one central concern, the demand for control of one's own money, time, living space, and body." (Beck, 1992, p. 92). This comment about the importance of personal control is supported by the findings of the present study. External factors are important in shaping newly ordained priests' transition into ministry and other aspects of their lives, but so also are the internal factors, such as the outlooks, attitudes and aspirations of the individual. The use personal control was a central to how newly ordained priest coped with their transition.

By increasing the use of personal agency in the individual's transition into public ministry will have the effect of developing his personal capabilities.

5.5.1 Coping Strategy 4: Transition in the Primary Relationships

5.5.2 Priests

As the new priest embarks on his ministry the influence of other priests can be of significant value to him. From the responses in Chapter 4, it was evident that the members of the presbyterate provided wisdom of experience in various pastoral encounters that assisted the respondent in his transition. Social support was a frequent theme throughout the responses. The respondents also used problem-focused coping strategies and advice seeking in their relationships with other priests.

When the newly ordained priests used direct-action coping, they turned to other priests for help with aspects of the problem they could not solve. Interestingly, however, the newly ordained priests admitted that there were certain challenges they appraised to be beyond their coping capacities or felt surprised by the responses they received from their colleagues. In such cases,

they would try to rationalise or, in some instances, try to change how they felt about these challenges.

5.5.3 Family and Friends

At the ordination Mass the candidate for ordination is called forward from this family and friends. This part of the ceremony reflects the important part that family and friends have played in the life of the in priest. At the end of the ceremony he is sent out to begin his public ministry. Some of the respondents noticed a change in how they related to their family and friends. For some, they felt closer, while others needed greater separation.

Fr Piotr noticed a change in his relationship with his family, who were proud and happy that he was a priest. He noticed that a transition occurred in the way his family practiced their religion as they became more involved in church life now that he was a priest and he is proud of this participation. Significantly, Fr Piotr drew parallels with his professional status when he now viewed himself as an ambassador for the faith.

Well established theories of human functioning (Yalom, 1980; Maslow, 1943; Bowlby, 1969) all specify that connection to others to enable survival and prevent loneliness is an innate aspect of striving and coping with stress and that when it is thwarted in results in personal distress. These theories have been supported by the current study.

Goldschieder & Davenzo wrote of people having "semi-autonomy" that leaves them partially independent in how they live their lives while also leaving them partially relying on their parents (Goldschieder & Davenzo, 1999). By realizing that a transition is occurring within the family unit and friends of the newly ordained priest, as with the newly ordained priest could enable a smoother transition for these individuals. This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's proposition on roles as contexts of human development where he suggests that "the concept of role involves an integration of the elements of activity and relation in terms of societal expectations." (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 86).

5.5.4 Initial Pastor

All the priests interviewed in Chapter Four spoke of the importance of the initial pastor and the first placement of the newly ordained priest. Great care and consideration needs to be taken by

diocesan authorities and personnel boards to ensure that the initial pastor is a welcoming individual who will accept a newly ordained priest. Likewise, the first placement of the new priest needs to be one where he can use his talents as best he can.

Fr John felt his initial pastor had a helpful and guiding influence on him as he transitioned into ministry. He felt affirmed through the feedback, encouragement and commendation he received from his initial pastor. This allowed Fr John to develop a sense of belonging in the priesthood and in the parish, which enabled him to develop his confidence in a time of uncertainty. With clear boundaries and expectations there was a strong emphasis on problem-focused coping strategies.

A number of respondents mentioned the difficulties they experienced with their initial pastor. There was a considerable level of conflict between Fr Patrick and his parish priest. Of all the respondents his relationship with his initial pastor was the one with the greatest level of conflict. Fr Patrick was operating under the military model of induction (O'Rourke, 1978). Problem-focused coping strategies were operative for Fr Patrick when he discussed his relationship with his initial pastor. Aspects such as advice seeking, reaching out to other priests who were in a similar situation to him, contacting senior priests in the diocese, giving-up, re-evaluation, self-blaming were all in use. He sought out the relevant information and evaluated the information and compared it to the diocesan norms. Even though Fr Patrick received the news he wanted to hear in relation to his entitlements, he wondered if it was worth the fight. He questioned the suitability of his initial pastor to work with curates.

Fr George's coping strategy was to intellectualize and re-evaluate his relationship with his initial pastor. He mentioned the stress of adjustment in his new living situation.

5.5.5 Priest Mentor

Many of the respondents in Chapter 4 spoke of the need of having a priest-mentor. 'A new priest has a need for someone, other than the parish priest, not to tell him what to do, but to help him find the value of what he does; enable him to see when he is an asset and not a liability in his ministry and by swapping notes to see what he might have done better or more appropriately in a given situation', (Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1997). In her study, Schulte quoted a newly ordained priest spoke about the benefits of having a mentor.

'There is nothing more intimidating than to go to a pastor and say, "How do you do this?" You hear things differently when they come from the mentor rather than the pastor." (Schulte, 2007). Due to the exigencies of living and working in the same place some new priests find it difficult to turn to their pastor for support. By providing the necessary support structures the new priest may feel that he can adjust with greater ease from the seminary to ministry.

5.6.1 Coping Strategy 5: Expectations

With the decline of Mass attendance and the much reduced number of people going to confession, in recent years, this sacramental role has largely decreased in the life of the priest. It is apparent from the responses in Chapter 4 that newly ordained priests need to clarify for themselves what are the roles that they occupy in the modern environment that they are now located in. The findings of this research study are consistent with those of Rulla who found there is a tension for clergy between the expectations of what a person "should be" and what they "actually are", (Rulla, 1986, p. 22). Rulla suggested that the expectations a person has of themselves need to be clarified prior to their commencement of ministry and the data gathered from Chapter 4 supports this claim.

The expectations that a new priest has of himself and the expectations others have of him also need to be clarified. Roman Catholic Church leaders in Australia stated the need for newly ordained priests have to ask themselves do they identify with their role and being above the people or from being oneself and with the people, (Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1997). In a survey by Hoge and Wenger, 83% of newly ordained diocesan priests agreed with the statement that ordination confers on the priest a new status or a permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity in the Church, (Hoge & Wenger, 2002, p. 48).

As the new priest embarks on his ministry, greater clarity in role and expectations is required so that he can engage with the modern issues that are faced in parishes. When Hoge & Wenger concluded their research they reported

> The research is clear: a new type of priest has arrived. A process of change began in the early 1980s and picked up steam through the 1990s. Not only do our surveys indicate this

but everyone we interviewed said the same: new priests are different from the priests ordained in the 1960s and 1970s, (Hoge & Wenger, 2002, p. 61).

Hoge & Wenger concluded that recently ordained priests tended to have a

> Fascination with older liturgical forms and symbols –such as the ringing of bells at Mass and the priestly vestments (such as biretta and cassocks)… Priestly identity for these priests means having a unique and sacred position in the Church, clearly different from (though in principle not better than) the positions of lay people. (Hoge & Wenger, 2002, p 61).

One priest interviewed by Hoge & Wenger for their research succinctly described the difference in outlook between the different generations of priests, "A lot of older priests will say, "Oh, just call me Bill."…the younger priests will tend to say, "Just call me Father." (Hoge & Wenger, 2002, p. 87). The case could be made that recently ordained priests are trying to locate their role within a previous understanding of priesthood and this is a causing stress due to the conflict between wider societal expectations of clergy and the expectations of clergy within the Roman Catholic Church.

The data revealed underlying moods and frustrations of newly ordained priests as they balanced with the commitment and enthusiasm which they displayed for their pastoral care and their personal expectations of ministry. These aspects were evident from observations of the respondents' body language, expressions, voice tone and pitch. The respondents' reflected on their excessively high expectations prior to beginning ministry. It is possible that newly ordained priests have unrealistic expectations of transition into ministry due to the difficulties they have in accurately envisaging what it may be like for them. Gaps between students' expectations and the reality of ministry life can have a negative affect across several domains of their life including ministerial performance, psychological wellbeing and adjustment. This could appear strange as they have spent the previous six or seven years in preparation for the ministry which they enter. By increasing the level of pastoral reflection and experience prior to entering ministry may assist newly ordained priests to cope with entry into ministry.

5.7.1 Conclusion

As a seminarian leaves the seminary, he prepares for his ordination as a priest. The transition that he will receive in the sacrament of ordination is one that he has been preparing for some time.

From the responses in Chapter 4 it was apparent that when the ordination ceremony has concluded, the newly ordained priest begins to relate to others in a new way. It was also clear from the responses that when a newly ordained priest commences his priestly ministry he encounters new situations that may leave him questioning things that he once held with certainty.

An interesting related result from the research methodology was that it was not always the most effective coping strategies that were the most frequently used by the respondents. Although there was no definitive explanation for this finding, a plausible argument could be made that, in certain occasions, newly ordained priests might use a coping strategy more for its convenience than for its effectiveness as the engaged in the major transition in their lives.

To assist how a person copes with the transition from being a seminarian to a newly ordained priest new terms need to be emphasized. A new emphasis on biography, agency, expectations, personal ministry, individualization and ministerial understanding will complement previous coping theories and will help to create a depiction of how structures are experienced at a personal level as a newly ordained priest copes with transition. The finding of this research is in agreement with Folkman and Lazarus (1984) that the most successful transitions incorporate both problem solving and emotional focused coping strategies. The interface of structure and agency is situated in personal, individual, biographical experience, which in turn is based upon a combination of subjective viewpoints and experience of external, structural factors which integrate subjective and objective elements.

This chapter has clarified, assessed and discussed how a number of newly ordained priests coped with the transition of leaving the seminary, being ordained to the priesthood and entering ministry in light of the existing theories on coping. Discussion of the role of the seminary, the transition in primary relationships, the role of ordination, entering ministry and expectations have assisted in the formation of an emergent theory on how priests cope with the major transition of their lives. This chapter also drew on previous theories of coping to assist in the formation of an emergent theory. This research study hopes to stimulate further issues to challenge and test this proposed emergent theory of coping strategies for how priests engage in transition and this discussion will be developed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6. 1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to offer a number of emergent and developing typologies of practices and propositions that will develop a framework of coping strategies for newly ordained priests engaged in a number of major transitions. This chapter will focus on the lived and shared experience of newly ordained priests interviewed for this study, their professional trajectories narratives, their experience of transition, while also exploring new possible coping strategies from the current range of coping strategies assessed in Chapter 2. It will also outline limitations to the research, implications, contribution, suggestions for further study and my research journey.

Increasingly sophisticated theoretical analysis runs the risk of becoming alienated from problems and challenges of the practitioners. Therefore, it is necessary that the new emergent frameworks are developed with a sound theoretical base alongside the practical reality of a lived situation. AS this is a professional doctor on ministry, this study leads to a re-contextualization of current practices and an innovation for emergent frameworks for coping strategies.

The results of this study propose that newly ordained priests utilize a range of coping strategies as they leave the seminary, are ordained to the priesthood and begin their public professional priestly ministry. During these major transitions the newly ordained priests can experience anxiety, stress, loneliness, and liberation. This is a significant finding for professionals working with newly ordained priests, particularly bishops, diocesan officials, initial pastors, priest-mentors and seminary personnel.

The data researched in this study indicates that all four of Schlossberg's S's (1981) i.e. self, support, situation, and strategies, are pertinent and significant to reflect in the formulation of an emergent coping strategy for priests engaged in the major transition in their lives. The data also proposes that the 'Self' and 'Supports' together form a hinge on a dialectic continuum where a newly ordained priest has a developed sense of personal agency but this is insufficient unless the necessary supports are in place.

This study meets its research objectives, by having explored how priests newly ordained cope with the major transitions in their lives. The literature review and the discussion chapter

identified current practice which can promote or obstruct positive coping strategies such as influences from the seminary structures, bishops, the rite of ordination, initial pastors, parishioners, family and friends. Other promoting and obstructing factors were identified as personal agency, expectations, handling conflict, role ambiguity, integration of previous transition experience, role satisfaction, which were also indicated in the discussion chapter and the literature review chapter.

The study also highlights that religious coping (Pargament, 1997), is used but at a very occasional and reduced level by newly ordained priests as they engaged with transition. This is significant as it would be reasonable to expect that religious professed people would turn to the intrinsic, (such as turning to prayer,) and extrinsic, (getting involved in the parish), coping strategies to assist them. The data highlighted this was not the case for the respondents interviewed in Chapter 4.

6.2.1 Emergent Coping Strategies: Coping Strategy for Leaving the Seminary

The research study showed that a range of biographical and contextual variables are present in shaping seminarians' coping strategies as they prepare to leave the seminary. The seminal narrative analysis of Barry and Elmes (1997) elaborates on the strategic storytelling that people tell about themselves. This strategic storytelling was evident in the narratives that the respondents told about themselves and their specific needs when they are engaged in transition. Previous life experiences in relation to transition, and the integration and influence of these previous life experiences were also significant to facilitate the transition of leaving the seminary for the respondents in Chapter 4.

The research study also revealed that there were significant variances in how different seminaries marked the occasion of leaving the seminary. None of the respondents referenced a farewell ritual or 'sending out occasion' to officially mark the conclusion of the seminarian's time in the seminary. One respondent mentioned that he had created a personal ritual to assist him to mark the end of his time as a seminarian. In the instances where the seminary officials facilitated the transition from the seminary for the seminarian, the seminarians felt a smoother transition from the seminary. In this example he was cared for by the seminary officials and he was able to let go of unresolved issues such as conflict or loneliness. The findings of the study also reveal that

when seminary officials do not assist the seminarian in his transition from the seminary he can experience leaving the seminary as abrupt, sudden, jarring and issues such and conflict and loneliness can remain unresolved. The data also highlights the need for specific, idiosyncratic, targeted interventions be introduced to ensure the positive adaptive coping strategy is in place for newly ordained priests at these critical and pivotal transition moments.

An emergent coping strategy theory for leaving the seminary, arising from this study, proposes that in order to facilitate a smoother transition from the seminary, seminary officials should have a greater role to play by offering a ritual to mark the end of the seminarian's duration in the seminary. A second aspect to this emergent coping strategy theory also supports the claim that when the seminary has a greater role in bridging the time of leaving the seminary and becoming comfortable in public ministry, the newly ordained priest uses adaptive and healthy coping strategies such as being able clarify expectations, goal settings and reflective processes that assist him in this transition.

6.2.2 Emergent Coping Strategies: Coping Strategy for Ordination to the Priesthood

Most of the respondents in Chapter 4 recalled their ordination to the priesthood with fondness. There was one exception of a respondent who claimed that the rite of ordination did not assist him with how he coped with transition.

Significantly, the physical moments had a large impact on many of the respondents' memories of the occasion. The particular tangible elements of conferring a change, especially at the laying on of hands, (the actual moment of ordination), and the kiss of peace (a sign of welcome and fraternity into the priesthood) were the moments that the respondents remembered as having the most significance. The findings of this study are in agreement with those of Van Gennep (1960) that the use of ritual can be a helpful coping strategy in assisting in a reorientation of a person's worldview.

The findings of this study also support the claim of Lewis that if ritual is primarily a means of communicating messages, participants at rituals are often uncertain, conflicted and ignorant of the meanings behind the message (Lewis, 1980). Many of the respondents in Chapter 4 saw the ritual of ordination as a ritual of transition of who they are, 'part of a club' or 'a member of a

fraternity' rather than what they can do now they are ordained as Catholic priests, such as confecting the sacraments.

An emergent coping strategy theory for the rite of ordination to assist transition, arising from this study, suggests that a fuller understanding of what happens at the rite of ordination, to include what a priest can do both in sacramental and ecclesial, can assist a newly ordained priest.

6.2.3 Emergent Coping Strategies: Coping Strategy for Entering Ministry

In this research study, it transpired that the newly ordained priests who reported a smoother transition into public ministry had two keys elements. The first was having an opportunity to link in with, and draw on the supports and services of the seminary, for both problem solving issues and emotion focused issues. The second was the support the newly ordained priest received from his initial pastor in able to discuss his role, set clear boundaries and discuss various pastoral and personal issues as they arose. In this regard, this study is in agreement with the findings of O'Rourke (1978) which were discussed in the literature review chapter.

The findings of this study, arising from the data, also conclude that personal agency is insufficient to assist a priest to adjust and cope in an adaptive manner. When a newly ordained priest is unable to draw on the resources of the seminary, has an initial pastor who is disinterested in his ministry or transition, or if the newly ordained priest has no one with whom he feels he can speak about the issues that are affecting him, he will struggle in his transition and experience stress, conflict and loneliness. The findings of this study are in agreement of Ingold, (2000), "the individual person is… a product of the condensations of histories of growth and maturation within the fields of social relations. Every person emerges as a locus of development." Ingold, (2000, p. 3).

An emergent coping strategy theory for a newly ordained priest to assist transition, arising from this study, proposes that a newly ordained priest should be made aware of the initial parish he will serve in after ordination, prior to leaving the seminary and that his proposed initial pastor will meet with the candidate and seminary officials to discuss what his public ministry will entail. This will ensure that he has a smoother transition to public ministry.

6.3 Limitations to the Research

There are a number of limitations to this study. The geographical origin of reviewed literature is limited, predominantly to the UK, Ireland, Australia and North America. Future research could look to evaluate the literature for other locations, with a focus on the experience of priests in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

This study was fortunate to have benefited from the experience of 7 newly ordained individuals, who came from 4 countries. However, a limitation of the study is that they represented a 'Western/Developed World' outcome. None of the respondents came from a 'developing nation.'

The respondents in this study had all been members of the Roman Catholic tradition since receiving baptism shortly after their birth. A limitation in this study did not include any converts or people who had been members of other Christian denominations or religions.

The focus of this study was of Roman Catholic priests. By the nature of the Roman Catholic priesthood it was therefore limited to males, and all the respondents in this study were single (there are a number of married priests in the Roman Catholic Church, albeit a very small amount of the overall number). This study is limited to single Roman Catholic priests, though this not necessarily did not diminish the study outcomes.

There was a limitation in the qualitative based research methodology approach of was used in this study, the experience of seven newly ordained. More priests could have been interviewed to gather more insights, however resources for this study were limited.

6.4. Implications

The implications of this research study concern the coping strategies engaged by newly ordained priests as they leave the seminary, are ordained and enter public ministry to ensure that the transition is as fulfilling as possible. The Roman Church invests considerable resources in the formation and education of each priest, over a six or seven-year period. It is regrettable that after directing substantial resources in a priest's formation in the seminary that the Roman Catholic Church cannot ensure that the newly ordained priests feels as comfortable as he can once he is ordained. The findings of this study are in agreement with Elias, that "neither the individual nor society is to be construed as self-contained entities interacting externally with each other." (Elias,

1991, p. 456). Instead, "both the individual and society are viewed as mutually constitutive and co-defining impulses relying on complex responsive processes." (Stacey, 2007, p. 247).

Although some seminaries already provide a targeted service for seminarians during the valedictory period of leaving the seminary, the findings of this research propose that the seminary become more proactive in facilitating the newly ordained priest cope with the new role that he now occupies within the Roman Catholic Church once he is ordained. The findings also encourage newly ordained priests to mark their time in seminary by the formulation of a ritual which best suits their needs to enable them to leave the seminary.

The potential benefits to the Roman Catholic Church of embracing the emergent coping strategies offered in this study include a decrease in stress, anxiety and loneliness for newly ordained priests. It will also provide an opportunity for newly ordained priests to live a fulfilled life as they begin their priestly ministry.

6.5 Contribution

The contribution of this research is to enable newly ordained priests to have a strategy that will enable them to cope with the major transition in their lives. This study is not limited to newly ordained priests or to seminarians but also supports bishops, diocesan and seminary officials, initial pastor and all who are involved in the formation and encouragement of newly ordained priests.

This is a study of ministry but this study can also be of benefit to research about other professionals such as the health care and education.

This study is the first, to my knowledge that explores coping strategies for newly ordained priests from the time when they are leaving the seminary, being ordained and entering public ministry.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Study

The area of research could benefit from the extension of the study in the following areas outlined below.

Having a longitudinal study that starts from when a seminarian in his final year in the seminary, as he prepares for ordination and as he begins his first ministerial appointment, rather than a retrospective study of experiences.

This study focused on Roman Catholic priests who were ordained for the diocesan priesthood. Further research could look at the impact of transition for religious orders and institutes of religious life. The particular differences in these instances would be leaving the novitiate, the primary charism of a religious congregation and the impact of being a member of a particular community life.

A study to compare and contrast the coping strategies of newly ordained Roman Catholic priests with the coping strategies of other Christian denominations could be interesting. I have been enriched by listening to the experiences of other ordained Christian ministers during my duration as a student in UWTSD. I feel a further study of how we share similar transitional experiences could be of benefit.

6.7 My Research Journey

This thesis has been a personal development for me, and in turn this has assisted me with the emergence of new theory of coping strategies in transition. It has assisted me as researcher into the area of coping strategies, transition awareness and the symbolic use of ritual to assist transition. This study has helped me to broaden my focus into other academic areas that I had little previous experience of anthropology, psychology and sociology.

As an ordained Roman Catholic priest, I have experienced and coped with the transition of leaving seminary, being ordained and entering ministry. Through my reflective journey, not only in writing this study but the entire DMin process, I have been enabled to develop and to understand my own identity, and assisting me in a greater appreciation and self-awareness of how I cope in times of transition.

My association with UWTSD (then University of Wales, Lampeter) began, as a student of the MMin programme. At the time, I had just received a new appointment from my former archbishop, His Eminence, Cardinal Sean Brady, as a curate in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh and his Master of Ceremonies. In 2015, I made the transition to the DMin programme. More

recently, with the support and encouragement of His Excellency, Archbishop Eamon Martin, I have been able to study on a full time basis. Recently, I experienced a personal transition as I left the parish of Armagh, and moved to the Servite Fathers, in Chelsea, London, with the support of the prior and parish priest, Fr Patrick Ryall, OSM and the other members of the community. I am grateful of the support and encouragement of my lead supervisor, Revd. Dr Robert Pope and especially to Revd. Dr Michael Fass while on my DMin journey.

The words of John Henry Newman (1801-1890), who experienced many transitions in his life, seem appropriate to conclude this thesis on transition, "to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often." (Newman, 1845, 1960 ed, p. 30).

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Appendix

Questions asked in the Semi-Structured Interviews

Q1. How long you are ordained, what age were you when you were ordained at and what is your current role?

Q2. How did you find your seminary experience helped you to deal with the transitions in your life?

Q3. What was the experience of leaving seminary like for you?

Q4. Around the time of your ordination what kind of support, if any, did you experience in the ritual of ordination to help you in your transition?

Q5. At the time of your first appointment what induction training did you receive?

Q7. What supports did you receive when you started in your first placement?

Q8. How did you cope with the transition from being a student to a newly ordained priest?

Q9. Would you have any other suggestions to make concerning transition in the life of the priest?

Q10. Have you any further questions you would like to ask me or would you like go over any of the questions again?