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PASTORAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES IN
CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES: THE CLERICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

JUSTIN MATHIAS UDOMAH

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

December 2016

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I pray the Lord of infinite blessings to abundantly bless and reward each and every one of you.

Rev. Fr. Justin Mathias Udomah

DEDICATION

To Beryl Milburn, my special angel from God

And

To my late father, Mathias T. Udomah, in memory of his selfless sacrifice to make me who I am.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES IN
CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES: THE CLERICAL PERSPECTIVE

Udomah, Justin Mathias, PhD

University of the Incarnate Word, 2016

This interpretive qualitative study explored pastoral leadership experiences of 8 Catholic priests serving in the Central Texas area of the United States. The purpose was to understand what their pastoral experiences meant for them as religious leaders and how their various perspectives would portray pastoral leadership in the 21st century Church.

Participants were Catholic priests with 5 to 25 years' experience in the ministry serving as fulltime pastors in parishes. Data collection was through open-ended interviews conducted in conducive locations. One general question was asked that enabled participants to tell their stories about their pastoral experiences since ordination. These were followed up with questions that explored important issues in the stories. This measure provided clarifications that enriched research outcomes in terms of thick description. The data was analyzed using the management (description), abstraction (reduction), and interpretation model (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam et al., 2002; Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor, Barnard, 2014). Credibility was safeguarded through member check and triangulation of data.

Analysis of the data resulted in identification of 4 themes. These themes showed that participants understood and embraced the priesthood as a vocation as opposed to profession. Similarly, they understood and undertook pastoral leadership as a ministry of service and commitment, a ministry of complex realities, and a ministry with diverse challenges. The level of

commonality among participants in their experiences was 6 out of 8. By examining the themes vis-à-vis views in the literature and leadership theories, it was evident that participants' pastoral activities positively reflected views in the literature about pastoral leadership in the 21st century. Likewise, their styles exemplified the 4 characteristics of transformational leadership.

The research findings have provided a platform for understanding the state of affairs in the Church's pastoral ministry, albeit, participants' faith communities. Participants' description of their pastoral experiences revealed an understanding of Church leadership as a response to God's call to service. The outcome of this perception was a people-centered engagement that operated on the basis of Christlike qualities. Despite the challenges and setbacks that participants described in their stories, the visionary, creative, motivational, resilient, and collaborative qualities they exhibited resulted in tangible outcomes, namely, organizational growth and wellbeing of members in their parishes.

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Chapter One: Definition of Study

Background

My area of interest in the priesthood has always been pastoral theology which aims at providing “a practical basis for the exercise of the pastoral ministry of the Church” (Stravinskas, 2002, p. 579). This interest arose from my conviction that every sector of the economy has a duty towards the proper ordering of the society. Being the religious sector, the Church has the duty of forming people’s conscience and character for a life of fulfilment and responsible citizenry. This entails proper pastoral leadership that caters for the wellbeing of individuals and the community as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ. My concern about this inalienable role of the Church has led me to various programs and engagements in evangelization and community building. The most prominent of them is the doctoral program in organizational leadership which I perceived as a natural fit for my priestly life. It is a platform from which I could explore pastoral leadership in emerging situations of the time and contribute to the advancement of the Church’s mission.

With 22 years of pastoral experience as a Catholic priest by the time of the research, I have held various posts of responsibility in different national and cultural environments over the years. In these places of pastoral engagement, I have experienced series of disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 2009) that woke me from existential stupor or complacency to an awareness of the need for reflections, explanations, and sharing of experiences. These realities have reinforced my interest in and raised my concern about the state of the Church’s pastoral ministry. The following instances from my various national and cultural experiences illustrate how disorienting dilemma constituted the bedrock of the pastoral leadership issues I set out to explore in this research.

One Sunday in 1991, during my pre-diaconate year, one of the priests in the formation team was supposed to deliver a homily at mass in the seminary. Apart from Seminarians, there

were Church members in the congregation who used to attend mass from outside the seminary community. Instead of preaching on the scripture theme for the day and enriching the spiritual life of the people, the priest turned the homiletic moment into a comedy session, with jokes that made people reel in laughter the entire time. I felt a great sense of displeasure and the incident stuck with me psychologically and kept me reflecting on preaching as an important pastoral leadership function.

In 1997, I volunteered to go to the Republic of Chad as a *fidei donum* priest to help serve the needs of the Church in that country. On arrival, I experienced immense cultural conflict between my Ibibio cultural ethos in Nigeria and those of the Ngambaye people of Chad. This created inner tensions throughout my time in Chad and hindered a fruitful pastoral engagement in debilitating ways. I was expressively considering the cultural ways of the Ibibio people in which I was raised as superior to those of the Ngambaye people. By benefit of hindsight, I came to realize that my attitude against the Chadian culture was because it was different from the Nigerian culture I was raised in. With the sense of superiority, my thoughts were constantly on how I could implement Nigerian cultural and religious practices in Chad instead of respecting the Chadian culture and adapting myself to their *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi*. Having come to understand the realities of cultural diversity (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2008; Narahandi, 2012; Wyer, Chu, & Hung, 2009), I realize that the psycho-social crisis in my Chadian mission was due to my lack of cultural competency (Gannon & Pillai, 2010; Northouse, 2010).

Another significant experience occurred in the United States in one of the parishes I served as a pastoral associate. Within few days of my arrival in the parish, I received complaints about youths not attending mass on the ground that it was boring. I started then to reflect on what the problem might be, and how to engage the younger generation in Church activities and

liturgical celebrations. From my conversations with youths, I understood that the liturgical celebrations did not meet the socio-cultural appeal of their generation. Therefore, when I was assigned to celebrate the youth mass, I decided to animate the celebration to meet their needs. In addition to proper song selection and available musical instruments that made the music more contemporary and appealing, I encouraged everyone to clap their hands and join the choir in singing the songs. As the chief celebrant, I led by example. Consequently, the whole congregation sang joyfully, clapped happily, and danced modestly to the music. The atmosphere was electric. The youths felt at home in the celebration and left the Church in high spirit.

Having enjoyed a lively liturgical celebration, words started going around and the young people were looking forward with excitement to the following Sunday mass. However, when the pastor, a priest in his late 60s with more than thirty years in the pastoral ministry, heard of the clapping and dancing, he summoned me to his office the following day and ordered me never to do it again. His reason was that such liturgical actions were not conventional in the American Catholic Church. With the pastor's prohibition, I could not continue with my innovations aimed at meeting the religious and spiritual needs of the younger generation according to their socio-cultural circumstances.

The following Sunday, the Church was packed full and the young people were beaming with smiles when they realized I was going to celebrate the mass. They were looking forward to another exciting liturgical experience. When it did not go the way they anticipated, I noticed disappointment on their faces. Consequently, the rejuvenation of youths which the people were hoping for was stalled and their religious attitude in the parish returned to the *status quo ante*.

I was greatly impacted by these and numerous other experiences. They raised questions in my mind about the pastoral leaders' awareness of emerging socio-cultural and technological

changes that are redefining organizational life and framing people's attitudes in the 21st century (Friedman, 2006). They led me into pondering over the pastoral practices of priests in their pastoral leadership positions. These constituted the primary reason for my interest in exploring the pastoral experiences of contemporary Church leaders and the state of affairs in the ministry.

The second reason for my interest in this field of research was my constant conversations with priest friends and colleagues about the situation in the ministry. These conversations were offshoots of my reflections and what I heard from people. I was reaching out to friends and colleagues in my attempts to share my concerns with those I assumed would understand my story, those I supposed were informed about the state of affairs in the ministry, and were in a good position to reason with me. However, I eventually realized that rather than understanding the situation first, our discussions were in the direction of making condemnations based on our assumptions, and proffering solutions to problems we had not established. I was generalizing my experiences without being certain about what I was passionately arguing against. I had assumed that my personal pastoral observations and experiences, and the stories I heard from people about the deplorable state of the Church's pastoral ministry and leadership were descriptive of the general Catholic situation.

Prominent among the assumptions were accusations about priests' lack of pastoral enthusiasm that allegedly destroyed people's interest in the Church. I also had assumptions about priests' lack of commitment to preaching and teaching the doctrines of the Church. This led me to question the authenticity of vocations in the sense of what priests were expecting when they answered the priestly call. By implication, I was operating from a place of ignorance instead of informed opinion. Rather than seek to understand the pastoral situation, I surrounded myself with priest friends who reinforced my assumptions, instead of questioning them. Aware of this

misguidedness in the course of my doctoral program on organizational leadership, I decided to carry out a research on this aspect of the Church's life in order to understand the mindset of priests as pastoral leaders and the state of affairs in the pastoral ministry.

Another basis for my interest in this area of research was the online survey reports and media claims about plummeting statistics of Catholic membership in the United States (Byron & Zech, 2012; Hendershott, 2015; Miller, 2015; O'Loughlin, 2015; The Week, 2010). Hendershott (2015), Miller (2015), and O'Loughlin (2015) cited the 2015 Pew Forum report that claimed a three million people drop in membership in the Catholic Church since 2007. Statistics in The Week (2010) showed that the Church experienced 400,000 decline in membership in 2009 alone, with more than 1,000 parishes closed since 1995, and a decline in priestly vocation from 49,000 to 40,000 within the same period.

However, Hendershott (2015) pointed out the Pew report's inability to articulate the reason for the surge in attendance in certain U. S. parishes and dioceses. It could not also explain the reason for the significant increase in priestly vocations in the same dioceses. Similarly, The Week (2010) pointed out that the shrinkage in Church membership is not global, and cited Africa and Asia as places where the Church has experienced tremendous growth. The argument here is that while the Pew Report indicated a downturn in Catholic membership in the U. S., the reality as evident in the increase in mass attendance and in priestly vocations in certain parts of the country contradict the report. Moreover, the decline is not a global phenomenon.

On the other hand, I found a recent study that supported the Pew Report. In their survey of nearly 300 non-churchgoing Catholics in the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey, Byron and Zech (2012) reported several reasons for the downturn in mass attendance and Church membership. These included but were not limited to: issues with the hierarchy or wrong people running the

Church, lack of understanding Church doctrines and practices, unfulfilling liturgy especially meaningless homily and poor music, sexual abuse of minors by clergy, clericalism and its privileges, unaccommodating attitude toward gay and divorced members, and insatiable desire for money. Considering the ambivalence created by the variance in these views, I considered it expedient to carry out a study from the perspective of priests who are living the pastoral reality.

Statement of the Problem

There is a dearth of research in the area of pastoral leadership. Searching the literature, I found resources on various aspects of the pastoral ministry and leadership, both Protestant (Blasi et al., 1998; Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Kuhne & Donaldson, 1995) and Catholic (Culbertson, 1997; Hoover, 2010; Ranson, 2010). However, I did not find any research study that explored the experiences of Catholic priests in their pastoral leadership position in the contemporary society. I considered such research necessary as a scientific approach to understanding the pastoral condition of the Church and be able to deal with the problem from the perspective of leadership as in other sectors of the economy.

As I was reflecting on contemporary pastoral situation in the Church, I was also aware of the challenges in other sectors of the economy. Generally, these challenges refer to emerging socio-economic and political realities that were challenging the status quo globally at the turn of the third millennium (Anderson, 2012). Aware of the situation and realizing that good leadership is needed for transformation, the various sectors turned their attention to leadership development (Cardwell, Corkin, McCartan, McCulloch, & Mullan, 2011; Price, Pimentel, McNeill, Barnett, & Strauss, 2011; Sandercock, 2004; Toor & Ofori, 2008; Ziegler, 2011).

In education, D'Onofrio and Jackson (1999) called for an examination of those factors that would relevantly impact educational delivery. Sherrill (1999) indicated the need to prepare

teachers for leadership roles in the 21st century. Similarly, Eddy and Murphy (1997) suggested areas where new leadership practices will be needed in colleges and universities in the 21st century. In science education, researchers suggested adaptability, complex social and communication skills, nonroutine problem-solving skills, self-management and self-development, and system thinking as the four major skillsets that would help address the 21st century situations (Hilton and the national Research Council, cited in Price et al., 2011).

I observed similar concerns in other sectors of the economy about development through leadership in the new millennium. There were concerns in areas of science and technology (Todd, 1996), construction (Toor & Ofori, 2008), healthcare (Cardwell et al., 2011; Duffy, Foster, Kuiper, Long, & Robison, 1995; Mahoney, 2001), and politics (Smith, 2009). Other areas of concern include: facility planning (Tompkins, 1997), urban development (Sandercock, 2004; Ziegler, 2011), and sustainable water supply (Arriëns & de Montalvo, 2013; Bruins, 2000). The research efforts arising from these concerns were directed at addressing emerging realities of the new millennium from the leadership perspective.

Additionally, by following the news on global politics, I learned about the Arab Spring revolutions that were directed against authoritarian leadership in the Arab world in 2010 and 2011. These revolutions which occurred in Algeria, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Yemen, and other parts of North Africa and the Middle East were calling for political, economic, and social reforms (Ebienfa & Inokoba, 2012; Walker & Tucker, 2011). The agitations and revolutions were indicative of the people's disapproval of the prevailing socio-economic and leadership structure, and their desire for a socio-political system that would promote their collective wellbeing. On the ideological level, I found comparison between the

political upheavals in these countries and the Church members' disapproval of the status quo in the Church, and their agitation for reforms as reflected in Byron and Zech's (2012) survey.

Furthermore, I read about the social and cultural shifts that globally impact conventional values and behaviors (Nahavandi, 2012). Lifestyles and practices that were unacceptable in the past have become parts of the societal norms in many respects. For instance, abortion, gay rights, same-sex marriage, and other practices which were previously considered as aberrations have found their way into the socio-cultural main stream in many societies (McCormick, 2016). Likewise, the individualistic and self-centered attitudes and behaviors of the millennial generation is becoming a way of life in the society with a sense of independence that has driven people to downplay some traditional values (Nahvandi, 2012). How priests were ministering to the people in the light of these changing realities was lacking in the literature.

Another aspect of human development that attracted my attention by the way it has affected the Church was the various forms of technological advancements. These have considerably changed the way people live their lives and how they conduct their businesses (Friedman, 2006; Nahavandi, 2012). They have impacted people and the society in the areas of communication, administration, transportation, relationship, entertainment, accounting, worship, and in various other ways (Effects of Technological Developments on Globalization Process, n.d.). Influenced by the novel technological *modus operandi*, many Catholic dioceses in the United States have moved from QuickBooks to cloud accounting system called CathoNet (2010) which supposedly provides greater security to church finances. Additionally, the Church has introduced electronic offering in her operations (myEoffering, 2013). This is a technological innovation that enables members to make their weekly financial contributions electronically, even if they are not able to attend Church worship on a particular Sunday. I did not find research

studies on how pastoral leaders were leading their communities in the light of these technological innovations.

From the ethical and moral perspectives, I wanted to find out how priests in pastoral positions were currently impacted by the debilitating event of the clergy sexual abuse that created shame and embarrassment to the Church at the turn of the 21st century (Calitz, 2014; McGrath-Merkle; Moran, 2015). Many pundits have interpreted this experience as symptomatic of a systemic rot within the ecclesial community (Gardner, 2012; Weinhold, 2009). Coming to the United States of America from another culture, I considered this research as a platform for obtaining the emic perspective on how priests have lived the sexual abuse stigma in their priestly engagements. Such insights have not been provided in the literature.

I considered the various realities I have highlighted as issues that were continually building up and manifesting themselves in different forms. They constitute pastoral concerns that need to be addressed in contemporary situations. If there are to be meaningful changes and future-oriented transformations in the Church, I deemed it necessary to understand the daily realities that priests have been living in the pastoral ministry. To that extent, my intention was to use participants' responses as insightful perspectives into appraising the state of affairs in the Church's pastoral ministry from the leadership perspective. Understanding the pastoral leadership situation in the ministry goes a long way in enabling the Church to minister to the people meaningfully, and to authenticate her existence and relevance in the world.

The concerns that necessitated this research were on the operating dynamics in the ministry, whether pastoral leadership has been addressing contemporary needs or they have been justifying the claims about the deplorable condition of the Church. They arose from the lack of research studies addressing the pastoral leadership issues. The emphasis was on listening to

priests' stories about their pastoral leadership experiences and how those experiences were impacting their pastoral engagement and the faith communities they have been leading.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore pastoral experiences of Catholic priests as leaders of faith communities, in order to understand what the experiences meant for them, and how their perspectives could impact organizational outcomes in the faith communities they lead. Based on the changing socio-cultural realities in the contemporary society, my interest was to listen to participants' stories about their experiences in the pastoral ministry and make sense of the information in terms of how their experiences describe their understanding of pastoral leadership.

Apart from understanding what participants' pastoral leadership experiences meant for them, the findings also served as logical platforms or frames of reference in articulating participants' leadership approaches and how those approaches impact their various faith communities. My rationale for adopting this approach was that such holistic consideration of the subject matter would offer profound understanding of the situation in the pastoral ministry.

Research Questions

With reference to the central phenomenon of the research, which was understanding the reality of leadership in the pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church, I reflected on the major areas of concern I intended to focus on and formulated the research questions to guide the process. The questions were derived from the problem statement and research purpose. On the other hand, the research questions served as guides in the analysis that followed data collection. The questions were:

- How do priests describe their pastoral leadership experiences in the light of the current socio-economic realities and what do those experiences mean for them?
- What leadership theory or theories are discernible from participants' narrated pastoral leadership experiences?
- What organizational outcomes are perceptible in the respective faith communities of participants, based on their narrated pastoral experiences?

Theoretical Basis

This study is an inquiry into the pastoral situation in the Catholic Church in the light of the socio-cultural realities of the contemporary world. The field of research I intended to explore was organizational leadership, albeit pastoral leadership. To that effect, the theoretical framework for this study was the leadership theories (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010; Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010). Based on the research purpose, I adopted an open-ended or a loosely construed theoretical stance rather than select a specific theory of leadership. I took this stance because I was not intending to evaluate or justify a theory. Rather, I wanted to derive the theoretical foundation of participants' leadership approaches from evidence in the data. For this reason, I allowed the data to guide me into identifying the leadership theory that was operative in participants' pastoral engagements, according to their reports.

Based on this theoretical stance, I paid attention to participants' stories and the data throughout the research process, from the interview sessions to the different levels of analysis. By the end of the data collection stage, I had already started delineating emerging patterns that pointed to transformational leadership (Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010; Rost, 1993) as the overarching leadership theory operational in the pastoral ministry from participants' perspectives. The emerging patterns were idealized influence, inspirational motivation,

intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978; Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010). By adopting an organic approach in my attempt to understand participants' leadership style, it was evident that the theoretical basis for this research was leadership theories.

Significance of the Study

With the changing socio-cultural landscape of the new millennium, this research, which explored priests' pastoral experiences in the ministry is important for various reasons. To start with, it will fill a gap in the literature. The outcome will enable Church leadership on various levels to come to terms with the pastoral realities in faith communities. Such awareness would help them design suitable pastoral plans for a Church that should be both relevant in the present situation and future-oriented (Paul VI, *Ad Gentes*, no. 1).

Furthermore, the findings from this research shall provide relevant insights to formation teams in seminaries that could help in updating the program for priestly formation to meet the needs of the time. This may entail designing academic curriculum on pastoral theology and on leadership to address the various needs that priests are called to serve.

Moreover, this research will bring the academic community to understand the pastoral world of the Catholic priesthood and the socio-cultural forces that might be impacting priests' ministry. On that note, the academia will be aware of the interacting dynamics operating between the religious sector and the secular order, in terms of how the realities of the secular order might influence the outcomes in the religious sector and vice versa.

Lastly and most importantly, this research is intended to constitute a stepping stone in my plan to formulate a blueprint for pastoral leadership in the future-oriented Church. The research

outcome shall provide me with an insight into the prevailing situation in the pastoral ministry in parishes as well as a direction on my next course of action in realizing that objective.

Definition of Terms

I hereby provide explanations to uncommon terms and expressions that readers need to understand in the context of my research. These include:

Aggiornamento. This refers to the pastoral and spiritual renewal within the Church as envisioned, discussed, approved, and recommended at the Second Vatican Council.

Alter Christus. This is a Latin word meaning “another Christ”. It is a term used in describing the person of the priest as a visible representative of Christ in his pastoral and spiritual roles.

Fidei donum. This is a Latin word that literally means gift of faith. A *fidei donum* priest is a priest who is sent on mission to help in another diocese due to shortage of priest personnel.

Ministry. This generally denotes the field of pastoral engagements. In the context of this paper, it shall also be used as another term to describe the pastoral activities in the Church.

Pastoral leadership. This refers to leading in the spirit of Christ. In this research, the body of literature includes views from other Christian denominations. However, the analysis and discussion shall center specifically on the Catholic pastoral leadership.

Pastor. This refers to Church leaders who are given charge over the wellbeing of church members as pastoral leaders. In the particular context of this research, it refers to those who have been ordained into the Catholic priesthood and are occupying leadership positions.

The Church. There are two ways that church shall be used in this paper. When it is used with a lowercase “c”, it shall constitute an umbrella term for all Christian denominations. With

the uppercase “C”, it shall refer to the Catholic Church as the targeted population in this research.

Limitations

The first limitation in this study was time. The one year period that I had to finish this study was not enough to undertake sufficient exploration of participants’ pastoral experiences. Therefore, the data collection process was a one session interview with each participant. I was not able to return to participants for further inquiry about emerging issues in the analytic process.

The member check exercise was low because participants’ busy schedules did not allow them to respond to my emails. Five of the eight participants who had promised to cooperate with me throughout the research process were not responsive when I reached out to them to authenticate my transcription of their stories. Therefore, I worked with what I got from them.

Since the data for analysis were participants’ personal stories, I had no independent way of verifying the veracity of their claims. I trusted in their sincerity and worked with the materials they provided. If they told me what they thought I would love to hear, instead of expressing themselves candidly, I had no way of knowing. Therefore I took them by their words.

I undertook this research as a priest pastoral leader in the Catholic Church. I belong to the sample population I was researching. I therefore acknowledge the possibility of my pastoral experiences influencing the analysis in some ways, even as I made conscious efforts to bracket my biases. Although I made a personal commitment to be objective, I might not have represented the realities constructed by participants as objectively as I should have done.

Having provided an overview of my research interest in the introduction, I proceed to present the literature review in chapter two. The review explores important leadership issues, while emphasizing the various aspects of pastoral leadership as conceived of in the 21st century.

The views expressed in the review of literature constitute veritable resources for the discussion in the final chapter about the central phenomenon of this research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The 21st Century Realities and Leadership Concerns

As stated in the preceding chapter, this research intends to explore pastoral leaders' understanding of emerging socio-cultural situations that impact the pastoral ministry as well as their dispositions and efforts at effectively undertaking pastoral leadership responsibilities in the Church of the 21st century. The underlying issue in this consideration is that priests who are occupying pastoral leadership positions in the new century are serving in postmodern, pluralistic, and interdisciplinary environments (Park, 2007) that are arguably unprecedented.

The point of departure is to acknowledge the apparent difference between the socio-political and economic realities of the past and the emerging reality of the 21st century (Lau Chin, 2010), their effects on the society (Miles & Anderson, 1990), and on the pastoral life of the Church in the years ahead (Metropolitan Hierotheos, 1999). There are changes in various areas of the global polity - political, religious, economic, social, and cultural, which radically impact life in the contemporary society and demand taking adequate steps to meet the needs of the changing times (McFarlane, 2011).

As observed by Lau Chin (2010), the challenges of the 21st century are in the areas of “global warming, terrorism, world peace, and weapons of mass destruction” (p. 152) as opposed to the “Great Depression, the Cold War, the nuclear threat, and the arms race” (p. 152) of the 20th century. Furthermore, the colonial mentality of the conqueror in the 20th century by which western countries ruled the countries they occupied has shifted. Those former colonies and struggling economies such as China, India, and Brazil are increasingly claiming their identities in the 21st century and are distinguishing themselves in global competitions (Fisher, 2012; Voigt,

2012). These developments point to significant changes that have started occurring in the areas of authority, power, and influence in matters of leadership (Jooste, 2004).

The new developments of the 21st century have their challenges and implications. One such challenge was anticipated to be an increase in human existential problems (Metropolitan Hierotheos, 1999). According to this view, the problems arise from increasing attachments to materialism, science, art, or worldly knowledge to the point of deification. The implication is that the process of modernization and secularization in an increasingly complex society (Sterkens, 2009), to the detriment of spiritual needs, creates an increase in existential emptiness and inner anguish (Metropolitan Hierotheos, 1999).

From the socio-cultural context of the United States, Miles and Anderson (1990) projected dramatic changes and challenges that families and communities will face in the new century. This view is shared by Metropolitan Hierotheos (1999) who reflected on these problems within the context of individuals with “unsolved inner existential problems” (p. 97) such as diminishing middle class and income disparities (Miles & Anderson, 1990). These changes and new demands will include “children living in poverty, changing gender roles, an aging population, substance abuse, shift in ethnic and racial diversity and concern for both natural and social environment” (Miles & Anderson, 1990, para. 1).

From a pastoral perspective, these situations have implications for the Church in terms of her mission and pastoral leadership. The increasing secularism, as witnessed in the world, has created a lacuna between science and religion. This prompts a perception of religion as an enemy of science and progress, which in turn leads to loss of spiritual orientation and the development of a despondent attitude (Metropolitan Hieroteos, 1999). Consequently, people are increasingly developing a sense of independence with no recognition of God or higher power behind creation.

Faced with the challenging realities of the contemporary society, some Church leaders, in seeking relevance in the society, identify with worldly values, lose their spiritual orientation by lowering their values, and lose their ecclesial identity through their loss of self-consciousness. This culminates in a syncretic religious attitude and conduct, which places every religion on the same theological footing (Metropolitan Hieroteos, 1999). Here, Rosica (2010) warned against the temptation to fudge by diluting the Catholic, albeit, Christian faith to accommodate modern tastes and expectations. In line with Metropolitan Hieroteos' (1999) trend of thoughts, Rosica (2010) foresaw failure in an accommodationist approach that does not distinguish the Christian message from the teachings of other secularized religious faith.

Leadership Concerns and Efforts in Different Sectors of the Economy

In view of the imminent changes and challenges of the 21st century, various sectors of the economy have taken steps to address the situations. Views in the literature indicate that the primary area of focus in preparing for the predictable future is leadership. Education is one of the sectors where people have positioned themselves to meet the needs of the changing times.

At the turn of the present century, educators came to terms with the reality that the future environment is largely characterized by diversity and innovations. With this in mind, D'Onofrio and Jackson (1999) called for an examination of those factors that would impact educational delivery relevantly. These factors include fluctuations in demographics, globalization of markets, shifts in economy, and advancing technology. In the same historical period, Sherrill (1999) indicated the need to prepare teachers for leadership roles in the 21st century. For her, such preparation demands certain types of knowledge, responsibilities, and skills under the three phases of teacher continuum, namely, "teacher preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development" (p. 57).

In the same vein, Eddy and Murphy (1997) pointed out areas where new leadership practices will be needed in colleges and universities in the 21st century. These include: ethical leadership, team leadership, accountability leadership, privatization leadership, global thinking leadership, volunteer leadership, distance learning leadership, and multicultural leadership. One of the issues in these areas was malpractices where they suggested appropriate measures for improvement.

At the 2012 International Summit on the Teaching Profession, the issue of leadership was the theme of discussion and the focus was on preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century educational environment. This conference underscored the importance of leadership for the attainment of educational goals (Schleicher, 2012). The discussions on the relevant skillsets for education in the 21st century centered on different areas, namely, ways of thinking – creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and learning; ways of knowing – including communication and collaboration; and tools for working – including information and communication technologies” (Schleicher, 2012, p. 57).

In science education, researchers have suggested four major skillsets that would help address the 21st century situations. These include: adaptability, complex social and communication skills, nonroutine problem-solving skills, self-management and self-development, and system thinking (Hilton and the National Research Council, cited in Price, Pimentel, McNeill, Barnett, & Strauss, 2011).

Available evidence shows that these educational concerns have been noted and steps are gradually being taken to address the educational concerns of the present era. One such step is the innovative schools where educational design is planned to meet the needs of the high-tech age of the future, such as Sara Goode STEM Academy in Chicago (Foroohar, 2014, February 24). In

these schools, learners are not called students, but innovators, and their educational focus is on science, technology, engineering, and math. This is an effort in educational restructuring which aims at empowering citizens to assume impacting roles in the development of the economy.

Similar concerns have been raised about science and technology in the 21st century. Leadership in this area of human development requires preparing for the fast occurring changes of the time by ensuring a solid foundation in the fundamentals of the engineering sciences, such as being “multidisciplined, people-oriented, flexible, and adaptable . . . possessing professional status, and ensuring that life is a continuous learning process . . . be able to communicate, influence, set an example for others, and build teams” (Todd, 1996, p. 40).

There have also been concerns about leadership development for professionals in the construction sector of the economy for the 21st century. Addressing that concern, Toor and Ofori (2008) proposed a creative agenda for developing effective leaders capable of meeting the challenges of the time. This agenda specifies the roles of academia, industry, professional bodies, and government in ensuring the development of construction leaders for the future.

In the healthcare sector, Mahoney (2001) raised awareness about the need for leadership skills that would enable nurses, especially managers and administrators providing directions for a new generation of nurses. Notable efforts have been made to tackle the problem. Aware of the need for a relevant and beneficial service to the people in the 21st century, the faculty at the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing, Charlotte, North Carolina, collaborated with other healthcare and educational institutions since the 1990s to develop a future-oriented nursing curriculum (Duffy, Foster, Kuiper, Long, & Robison, 1995). The 1-2-1 program they designed was aimed at preparing future nurse practitioners to meet healthcare challenges of the new age.

From the perspective of leadership, this effort relates to developing skilled professionals who will serve the needs of patients in the healthcare sector.

Another area of concern in nursing was the management style of nursing executives, which should change for effective engagement in emerging situations (Fedoruk & Pincombe, 2000). With the new workplace culture that emphasizes appreciation of talents and a spirit of collaboration (Mahoney, 2001), the role of nursing executives will have to involve the concept of the learning organization (Senge, 1990) aimed at empowering both staff and consumers (Fedoruk & Pincombe, 2000). This means transitioning from a controlling and directive form of management to creating an environment that favors organizational transparency, which will recognize and value individuals.

Furthermore, the issue of diversity in the new age is a reality in healthcare as in other sectors of the global economy (Cardwell, Corkin, McCartan, McCulloch, & Mullan, 2011). As the healthcare sector is serving increasingly diverse populations, the needs continue to evolve. Reacting to this reality, Cardwell and colleagues pointed out that the sector has taken steps to develop effective plans for patients' care by nurse practitioners in their patient-centered service. These steps involve providing children and young people's nurses with fundamental skills and professional identity that will enable them to give "holistic care to an increasingly diverse population within the finitely resourced and litigation conscious healthcare delivery system" (p. 1382).

Reflecting on past experiences in US politics and the future of female leaders, Smith (2009) raised the question about the possibility of a female president in the United States. The question centers on the qualities that are needed for the realization of such leadership ambition. In discussing this issue, she pointed out the two parallel labels assigned to aspiring women

leaders in the United States which actually work against them in both cases. They are either considered “nice and warm but incompetent” or “competent but unpleasant” (smith, 2009, p. 487). She then introduced the concept of “mamisma” (Rubin, cited in Smith, 2009, p. 490) as the relevant leadership label for prospective female leaders. Her argument is that mamisma, which refers to femininity that is defined by mature and maternal qualities, is the leadership personality that would enable female presidential candidates to succeed in their political aspirations.

The leadership concerns about the new century were not limited to education, science and technology, healthcare, and politics. They spread into areas of material resources and services. Considering the impacting rate of change and total integration in contemporary business endeavors and how it will play out in the 21st century, Tompkins (1997) pointed out the need for facility planning that would involve total integration, blurred boundaries, consolidation, reliability, maintainability, adaptability, selective operable, and automation support as ways of directing leadership to sustain business in the new economic environment.

In the area of urban development, Ziegler (2011) suggested initiating a multifaceted partnership that would engage the federal, state, local, and private sector players in a collaborative planning action for the transformation of urban areas in the 21st century. In this partnership, the collaborating bodies would help metropolitan areas in a number of ways, including building on their economic strengths, fostering a strong and diverse middle class, and growing in environmentally sustainable ways.

Social cohesiveness in the 21st century is another area of interest in urban planning. Researchers on city planning underscore the need for a harmonious coexistence in the contemporary society and envision a situation where everyone could feel at home in the multicultural and ethnically diverse cities of today, despite their differences and backgrounds

(Sandercock, 2004). Their focus is on “social sustainability” (Sandercock, 2004, p. 134) or support of cultural diversity. In other words, researchers are advocating for city leadership that would work conjunctively with citizens and lay planners to create a peaceful society with layers of diversity.

At the turn of the new century, Bruins (2000) alleged fears about water decline that may affect life in the future. He pointed out possible factors that may trigger such a situation and proposed measures for containing this crisis. The factors include: drought due to lack of rain, earthquake which could disrupt the ecosystem and the attendant water supply, terrorism that could endanger water security through the poisoning of water sources with chemical and biological agents, and wars that could cause contamination of water with the use of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons. He therefore suggested sustainable development through various types of contingency planning and interactive crisis management.

Holding a similar view on the issue of water in the 21st century, global organizations, practitioners, researchers, specialists, and interest groups have expressed their concern by engaging themselves in the discussion of water challenges and seeking possibilities of “charting world’s path to sustainable development and green growth” (Arriëns & de Montalvo, 2013, p. 16). In undertaking this enterprise, they focused primarily on increasing water security and ensuring sustainable development, as suggested by Bruins (2000) through leadership development. These different engagements indicate the deep-seated concerns about emerging realities of the 21st century and concerted efforts at containing them effectively and profitably.

Pastoral Leadership

What is evident in the preceding section is the positioning of various sectors of the economy for sustainable presence and impact in the 21st century society. The shift of emphasis

in these organizations from ruling to serving or from dominating and controlling to connecting and collaborating, indicates the reality of a flattening world, as postulated by Friedman (2006).

In the new environment, national borders may remain intact but cultural boundaries are increasingly blurring by the influence of technology and globalization (Lewis, 2006).

“Globalization takes place among countries around the world from all major regions as a process of political, cultural, social, economic and technological integration” (McFarlane, 2011, p. 112).

This new reality stimulates a movement toward cross-cultural appreciation mediated by human and social interactions, as visible in such areas as fashion, cuisine, music, movies, architecture, and even religion (Stevenson, Rowe, & McKay, 2010). Generally the burgeoning interest in the new dispensation of global coloration (D’Onofrio & Jackson (1999) is to serve the needs of the people actively and adequately in their diversified socio-cultural circumstances.

From the point of view of the Christian mission, as envisioned by Christ, the changing contexts of the new world arguably present greater challenges for the Church than any other organization. As Greenleaf (1998) contended, “Unless churches become more effective, it is unlikely that people and institutions will do much better than at present” (p. 116). Therefore, if other sectors of the economy are aware of the generational variables that are impacting the wellbeing of the people in the 21st century and are exploring ways of improving the situation through leadership development, the Church should do better. By virtue of the mission that Jesus commissioned to her to fulfill, she ought to be more forthright and forthcoming in her pastoral plans. She needs to be even more committed to her spiritual goal of saving souls through effective pastoral leadership. In practical terms, this implies enhancing a positive and relevant presence of the Church in people’s lives and cultural situations. Briefly put, pastors should be competent leaders in their pastoral engagements (Code of Canon Law, nos. 524-529).

Pastoral challenges in the Church. Over the years, the Church has faced different forms of crisis. A search of EBSCO HOST, an online library database at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, with the search phrase “crisis in the Church” reveals 830 article entries from 2000 to 2014. These issues range from external factors such as modernization and secularization (Barrat, 2008; Metropolitan Hieroteos, 1999; Sterkens, 2009), to internal factors such as abuse of power and sexual misconduct (Regan, 2013; Robinson, 2004; Wirenius, 2011), with other related problems in between.

Available statistics show a progressive decline in Church membership and attendance. Taking Canada as an example, the percentage of Protestants was 41 in 1971. In 2011, it was 27. Catholics were 47 in 1971 but 39 in 2011. Other religions were 4 in 1971, but 11 in 2011. Lastly, those without any religious affiliation rose from 4 in 1971, to 24 in 2011 (Pewforum.org, June 27, 2013). A noticeable fact in the Canadian statistics is the rise in the number of the religiously unaffiliated group. Similar statistical outcomes are evident from other regions of the world, such as the Netherlands (Sterkens, 2009).

Generally, the literature points to a growing decline in the different areas of Church life (Barrat, 2008; Sterkens, 2009). Vocations to the priesthood and the religious life have decreased, church attendance is waning, members’ attitudes to Church doctrines are changing with the growing tendency toward individualism, materialism, and relativism; and the various scandals that have occurred over the years are not helping matters (Barrat, 2008). More importantly, the rate of youth participation in Church activities is declining as well (Singleton, Webber, Joyce, & Dorissa, 2010).

McGrath-Merkle (2011) compared the pastoral crisis of the new age to the challenges of the sixth century in the time of St Gregory the Great. For McGrath-Merkle, the threats of nuclear

war among opposing ideologies, global warming, and the secularism of the post-modern culture, which have destabilized traditional values, create the same feeling of chaos and doom similar to the social atmosphere that preceded the fall of the Roman Empire.

Certain demographics of the population are confronted with problems that constitute considerable challenges to the church. With reference to the African-American racial bloc, Butler (1997) mentioned the “metamorphosing evil” (p. 113) that plagues the population and creates pastoral difficulties in the ministry. He named health and social issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexism, classism, violence, imprisonment of the young, and destruction of value system as some of the factors that are placing a burden on the Church. LaMothe (2012) objectified this argument with the observation that some social, political, and economic factors do lead to existential vulnerability and anxiety, which in turn create destabilizing effects on social and ecclesial orders, as well as causing hostile conflicts and inter human alienation.

Another key problem facing the Church is the stigma of child abuse by pastoral leaders, especially the clergy (Cochran, 2013; Weinhold, 2009). This has created ripples of impacts over the years. It has led to the mistrust of ecclesiastical authority at different levels, imposed financial burdens on dioceses, with some of them going bankrupt, and caused diplomatic strains in Church and state relationships (Formicola, 2011). One important issue is the question of safety for children and vulnerable adults. The patterns and statistics of sexual abuse have shown that women and children of both sexes are often the victims within the society (Robinson, 2004). In the Church, these are also the demographics that have been abused by priests who occupy pastoral leadership positions and bear the sacred trust of the faithful as *alter Christus* (Guido, 2008). Considering the different challenges that the Church faces in her missionary enterprise, it could be said that sexual abuse by Church leaders is unique. This is because it negatively impacts

an individual's spiritual journey, which is the soul of a person's religious or faith commitment (Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Mahoney, 2008).

The problems of the Church, as exemplified in this review imply a need for greater amount of introspection, refocus, re-strategizing, and pastoral update for a fulfilled mission in the shifting contexts of the future. One way of undertaking the needed pastoral reform is to focus more on ministering by action rather than by words. As observed by Greenleaf (1998), the emphasis so far seems to be more on doing instead of on being.

Pastoral measures for effective leadership. There are different areas of pastoral *aggiornamento* that the Church needs to address in order to create a significant and relevant presence in the constantly emerging situations of the new world. Generally, these include developing pastoral leadership qualities and leadership styles to enhance pastoral effectiveness, and forming pastoral leaders and agents to meet the needs of the time. There is need for a balance of focus in meeting both the temporal and spiritual needs of the faithful. "We need to prevent a kind of 'spiritual' pastoral care that fixates on comfort and compassion and that only offers relief by the provision of a kind of 'pie in the sky when you die by and by'" (Van den Berg, cited in van Rensburg, 2010, p. 6).

Pastoral measures for effective leadership should envision personal growth and development of Church members (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). They need to be geared toward the increase of membership in the Church and in the Christian family (Nelson & Everett, as cited in Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Furthermore, they ought to be designed to help pastors consider organizational challenges as opportunities that have to be embraced (Bandura, as cited in Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Furthermore, it should work toward active Church involvement in community life (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

Developing pastoral leadership qualities and leadership styles. As implied in the introductory section of this paper, the primary goal of the Church's existence and the focus of her mission in the world is the salvation of souls (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). In functional terms, this requires helping people attain their material and eternal goals. In this age and time, being designated as a pastoral leader does not imply leadership suitability *ipso facto* (Knott, 2011). Therefore, beyond being ordained and assigned responsibilities, pastors need to make themselves relevantly effective at their duty posts. In advocating for a pastoral action for the socio-economic wellbeing of South Africans, Dames (2010) appealed to Freire's theory of conscientization, and surmised that pastoral leadership should be oriented toward liberating individuals and communities from the shackles of poverty and dehumanizing situations. This underscores the need for the type of pastoral care that would help obliterate the burdens of those with socio-economic pathologies.

For this reason, McGrath-Merkle (2011) described pastors as physicians of the heart. In a qualitative study of 30 church members who had experienced crisis in their lives, Stone (2004) found that church support in their crisis situations provided psychological benefits to members. He concluded that "crisis care is an important way in which the love of God can be expressed to persons at their times of greatest need" (p. 419). Whether the care is given by the members of the community or by the pastor is a secondary issue. Primarily, it is the Church that is helping out.

One pastoral implication of Dames' (2010) statement and Stone's (2004) finding is that pastoral roles are becoming more complex. Pastors are not only spiritual leaders anymore (Cohall & Cooper, 2010). They are increasingly assuming roles in the society as "political strategist, social activist, economic advisor, and educator (Cohall & Cooper, 2010, p. 27). This conclusion came from a quantitative research that surveyed 225 Baptist pastors of different racial

backgrounds on various pastoral issues. Such issues include: how they perceived their roles as spiritual, social, and political leaders; how their work and education impact their job satisfaction; and their understanding of effectiveness and vocational longevity.

In a similar qualitative study of five Protestant pastors (Kuhne and Donaldson, 1995), the result showed the managerial and administrative demands of pastoral leadership with 13 specific working roles that were classified under four categories. These roles and categories include: Impersonal roles – figurehead, leader, and liaison; informational roles – monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson; decisional roles – entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator; and professional roles – mentor, care-giver, and preacher.

What these research studies have demonstrated is the growing complexity of the role of pastoral leadership with the incorporation of sets of spiritual and temporal leadership functions in increasingly complex situations. The implication is that pastoral leaders need relevant leadership qualities and skillsets to be able to minister effectively to the needs of the people in their respective socio-cultural contexts and historical periods. In this sense, the question is about the type of leadership that will help the Church fulfill the command of Christ. Is it transactional leadership style, in which “the leader provides followers with resources and rewards in exchange for motivation, productivity and effective task accomplishment” (Nahavandi, 2012, p. 192)? Or is it transformational leadership style, in which the leader identifies with aspirations and needs of followers and provides guidance and motivation in their process of attaining personal and collective goals (Northouse, 2010)? The questions are about the leadership style that will help the Church fulfill her mission in the challenging and fast changing society of the 21st century.

Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Neo-Five Factor Inventory (FFI), and Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS), Carter (2009) measured the leadership styles of

93 pastors to find out whether leadership style, personality traits, and spiritual qualities would predict pastoral leadership effectiveness. The result showed significant correlation between transformational leadership style and pastoral effectiveness based on the four dimensions of transformational leadership, which include charismatic, inspirational, intellectual, and individual considerations. The conclusion was that achievement oriented, organized, and reliable clergy are more effective pastoral leaders.

Similarly, Rowold (2008) conducted two studies in Germany with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to explore the effects of transactional and transformational leadership of pastors on various outcome criteria. The findings showed positive correlation between transformational leadership and five performance indicators which include “followers’ satisfaction with their pastor, their extra effort, their effectiveness, and their job satisfaction,” as well as “positive effect on worshippers’ satisfaction with the worship service” (Rowold, 2008, p. 403).

In a quantitative study of 330 participants, Hillman (2006) intended to identify the difference in leadership practices between two sets of seminary students, based on their level of leadership involvement in the ministry. The result from the MANOVA test showed that students who were involved in weekly ministry for 10 or more hours scored higher than those with nine or less hours of involvement. He used Kouzes and Posner’s Leadership Practices Inventory-Self (LPI-Self) that measures the five leadership practices of exemplary leadership. These leadership practices, which would help in effective pastoral leadership, as also recommended by Jooste (2004) for the nursing profession, include:

- Challenging the process: Being innovative, challenging status quo, risk taking, and accepting mistakes as learning opportunities

- Inspiring a shared vision: Envisioning the future of the organization, bringing others to share their vision, enlivening the shared vision, and sharing exciting possibilities
- Enabling others to act: Fostering collaboration and building spirited team, actively involving others, observing mutual respect, creating an atmosphere of trust and human dignity, sharing information and providing choice, and empowering subordinates
- Modeling the way: Creating standards of excellence and leading by example, establishing organizational values, creating small wins, creating opportunities, and discouraging bureaucracy
- Encouraging the heart: Recognizing individuals' contributions and celebrating accomplishments

Additionally, the research underscored the importance of internship or pastoral experience and practice involvement in the ministry during the years of formation as a proactive measure for effective pastoral engagement (Hillman, 2006).

A qualitative study of 101 senior pastors across various denominations by McKenna and Eckard (2009) showed various leadership standards by which pastors and those in authority positions measure their own effectiveness in the ministry. These measures were classified under leadership outcome, congregational outcomes, ministry outcomes, and objective outcomes. Leadership outcomes, which related to the attitude and behavior of the pastor, were measured by their implementation of the golden rule, their demonstration of good intention for the future wellbeing of the church, and the extent to which they are faithful to their vocation.

Congregational outcomes which focused on church members' welfare included spiritual development of others, as well as "congregational and staff health, belonging and fellowship, morale, and feedback from the congregation" (p. 308). Ministry outcomes which focused on the

pastor's accountability in the ministries included "meaningful worship, developing leaders . . . , youth ministry, and community/ministry outreach" (p. 308). Objective outcomes, which were calculated in terms of projected goals, included "numbers . . . , weekly attendance, finance . . . , new believers, volunteers serving, Church planting, and other specific targets identified by the Church board" (p. 309).

The different leadership qualities so far articulated could be reduced to Grove's (2004) three R's of pastoral care or Manala's (2010) triad of pastoral leadership. If Grove's (2004) suggestion for pastoral care in school setting is broadened to include other pastoral contexts, pastoral leadership revolves around the three R's. It is about relationship in terms of having a functional and positive connection with the people through honest and open communication; it is about respect in terms of recognizing and honoring the dignity of every person as the basis of a positive and nurturing relationship; and it is about responsibility in terms of the readiness and willingness to take charge of the people entrusted to the pastoral leader. Similarly, Manala (2010) considered the pastor as a facilitator in the threefold position of leader, manager, and servant, and argued that "facilitation of strong leadership, prudent management and dedicated and committed service are required for the church to remain the dynamic life-giving body of Christ" (p. 1).

Leadership in church ministries. One expressive dimension of pastoral leadership is to facilitate service to the people in their temporal and spiritual conditions, especially those in their care which may involve the leaders personally, collaboratively, or by delegation (Blasi, Husaini, & Drumwright, 1998; Delia, 2005; Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007; Powell, King, & Clark, 2005). Pastoral leadership is expressed in varied and multiple contexts. In the deeper understanding of vocational requirements, pastoral leadership is an outcome of a generous self-giving. Within this

context, leaders are called to walk caringly with the faithful in their faith journey and guide them lovingly in their human experiences, whether it is about celebrating the sacraments or assisting people in their life situations (Champlin, 2007; Toups, 2008). They are called to express the presence of Christ to people in their existential struggles (Gilchrist, 2005).

One of the many outlets for pastoral leadership is ministry to the sick and the elderly. A qualitative study conducted by Meyerstein and Ruskin (2007) in the hospital on patients with different medical conditions articulated the resources and strategies that are useful in supporting and encouraging the sick. From the Jewish perspective, which could be adapted to suit other cultural contexts, the researchers found music, singing, personal prayers, psalms, and traditional bible texts to be creative and useful multi-sensory tools in pastoral visits to the sick. They also noted that in such patient-centered engagements, the pastoral visitors should be mindful of the patient's level of tolerance for conversation, their level of energy, the severity of their condition, and their level of receptivity. They should watch for nonverbal cues for discomfort, be respectful in entering and interacting with patients and families, and should possess good communication techniques. These qualities are considered to be necessary because the purpose of the visit is to help patients connect with God in their sickness, make them feel comforted and cared for, and replace their anxiety with a greater sense of peace.

In the case of ministering to the elderly, Blasi et al. (1998) studied African American Christian congregations in the Nashville, Tennessee area, to explore how the typical African American clergy attends to the needs of their elderly parishioners who go to them with their mental health problems. The outcome of their study showed that, faced with the varied human needs of the elderly under their care and the attendant sense of helplessness and abandonment, the pastors made efforts to help them meet their needs. They helped by giving them calls and

talking to them, giving them rides to the Church, providing transportation and company for their doctor's appointments, and keeping watch over them. Beyond this, they organized special programs that would give the elderly a sense of belonging and appreciation, went on sick visits, took collections to assist them, and referred more serious cases to competent professionals. The more important leadership role they played was to bring the needs of the elderly to Church members, organize and empower the congregation as teams or individuals for the continuous ministry to the material, social and spiritual needs of the elderly, and enable them attend proximately to the needs of the elderly in the community. This research validates Cohall & Cooper's (2010) observation about the rising complexity of pastoral leadership demands in the Church of the future.

From the point of view of the youth ministry, Delia's (2005) qualitative study of 500 spiritual biographies of college students identified seven themes needed for pastoral guidance of the young ones. A healthy spiritual relationship in the form of mentoring and role modeling is needed for their faith journey. There is need for broadminded faith guidance that truly reflects the accommodating and inclusive spirit of Jesus. There is need for proper education on faith and culture. Proper interpretation of biblical and church teachings is necessary. The Christian faith needs to be exemplified coherently by pastoral leaders through their actions and words rather than create cognitive dissonance in the minds of the youth. There should be programs for religious and spiritual education of the unchurched youths. Lastly, youths should be exposed to the living conditions of people in other social and economic contexts.

As stated in the qualitative study of different denominational youth ministry leaders in Melbourne Australia (Singleton et al., 2010), the different outlets for engaging youths effectively include camps and retreats, youth worship services, mission activities, drop-in coffee shops,

weekend youth clubs or groups, music groups, performing in local events, sporting events, meditation groups, online communities, and participation in welfare programs. From the perspective of the Catholic Church, Canales (2009) considered “bible time, contemplation, honesty, introspection, journaling, meditation, music, prayer, retreats, rosary, spiritual direction, and time usage” (p. 65) as the areas of ministering spiritually to the youth. Additionally, pastors who connect easily with youths should be assigned to youth ministry (Ji & Tameifuna, 2011).

These different findings and suggestions point to the need for training in theological understanding, adolescent psychosocial development and family dynamics, multiculturalism, creative and innovative learning programs, and collaboration between educators and practitioners (Powell, King, & Clark, 2005). The goal is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus in the world, to draw them to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community, and to foster the total personal spiritual growth of each young person (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

In matters of sacramental confessions and pastoral counselling, an analysis of 200 letters from individuals who have gone to confession in Finland to examine people’s experiences of confession showed, among other things, that the focus of confession should be on finding ways of helping people in their psychological, moral, and emotional challenges (Kettunen, 2002). The implication of this finding is the need for Church leaders to serve as pastoral caregivers and counsellors. A therapeutic understanding should constitute a part of the framework of confession to help people in their psychological, moral, and emotional needs.

Factors and strategies for enhancing effective pastoral leadership. Knott’s (2011) leadership-oriented comment “that most Catholics want to be good and serve God, but many do not know how and many of us priests do not know how to lead them there” (p. 22) provides a

lucid explanation of the needs in this discussion. Hoover (2010) undertook a yearlong study of parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago who participated in the Identify, Nurture and Sustain Pastoral Imagination through Resource for Excellence (INSPIRE) process. From the study, he identified task orientation and ministerial isolation as some of the adverse factors that contribute to pastoral setbacks in Churches.

In task orientation, pastoral leaders focus on accomplishing set tasks instead of developing a more nourishing parish life such as community-building, faith formation and evangelization. In ministerial isolation, they mostly work autonomously instead of working interdependently, and they lay greater emphasis on finance and personnel with no concern about pastoral vision and communication. This unhealthy pastoral approach suggests the need for a more competent, informed, and caring pastoral leadership that is oriented toward individuals, families, faith groups, and the general society at large (LaMothe, 2012).

Effective pastoral leadership should empower the people through a holistic pastoral process by addressing both the spiritual and temporal needs of the people (van Rensburg, 2010). In meeting these needs, Hillman (2006) suggested developing “people skills” (p. 142) such as managing self, interpersonal communication, managing people and tasks, mobilizing for innovation and change, applied problem solving, vision casting, teamwork, and time management as necessary strategic actions that should be undertaken. As observed by Hoover (2010) in the pastoral analysis of a Chicago parish study, failure in pastoral leadership occurs when pastors do not have interpersonal skills such as “listening, group facilitation, reading people’s emotions, and how to consistently communicate a pastoral vision” (p. 51). Many pastors, unaware of the impact of their words, covered up their lack of emotional intelligence by dismissing their non-administrative leadership skills as “touchy-feely or unmanly” (p. 51).

Some strategies suggested for pastoral engagement and reaching out effectively to the congregation in the various pastoral contexts are the use of humor (Young, 2012) and play theories and practices (Koppel, 2007) that could enrich the pastoral ministry. Young's (2012) mixed method research on the use of humor in pastoral ministry showed that wit is necessary for effective pastoral ministry and needs to be cultivated. However, in applying this strategy, everything should be in moderation and there should be a meaningful feedback system in place. In Young's view, humor enhances stress management in the ministry as a coping mechanism, it enhances relational proximity in terms of its resourcefulness in developing closeness between the pastor and parishioners, and it enhances message receptivity. The caveat is that pastoral leaders should avoid politically incorrect humor by not allowing the humor to cross the line of propriety, by being sensitive to people's feelings and guarding against unintended missteps, and by not using humor at other people's expense, thereby causing embarrassment.

Drawing on Freire's critical pedagogy and Moltmann's theological worldview, Koppel (2007) proposed a playful pastoral education method that will enliven congregational life in pastoral care and worship, and enhance psychological health and wellbeing in the ministry. The highpoint of his contribution is the importance he assigned to creativity and playfulness as pedagogical strategies for effective pastoral leadership. "Through play, ministers discover layers of identity within themselves and in cooperation with others, awakening personal renewal which can lead to social transformation" (p. 440). This view presents divergent ways of teaching and learning beyond the traditional educational setting.

Formation for effective Pastoral Leadership

The longstanding comment by Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1998; 2002) about the seminary as a place of formation for pastoral leadership requires attention. He considered the seminary as an

institution with a prominent role for the formation of pastoral leaders. Against this consideration, he insisted that churches have been struggling to sustain their members in a deteriorating society without much sustaining support from the seminary (Greenleaf, 1998). This statement implies that seminary formation has not been adequate for effective pastoral engagement. Although the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2006) pledged to give priestly formation the highest value in the Church's priority list, Greenleaf's (1998) observation that seminaries are marginal institutions needs to be practically proven wrong. His contention is that "in our highly institutionalized society, they do not carry the weight of influence and leadership that their place in the scheme of things makes possible" (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 177).

Seminary formation. Expatiating on Greenleaf's (1998) view, Hoover (2010), Knott (2011), and others designated significant aspects of formation that need improvement. Hoover (2010) mentioned insufficient opportunity for development of practical skills in seminaries even when the Program for Priestly Formation (PPF) stipulates the need for seminarians to learn leadership skills "in order to encourage and promote interdependent ministry" (p. 51).

One significant area is spiritual leadership development. Knott (2011), a former seminary formator and professor noted that seminaries focus very much on personal piety without paying attention to developing effective spiritual leaders for faith communities. Therefore, the seminary should redesign the curriculum to afford seminarians greater opportunity to develop and practice necessary skills (Hoover, 2010). Contributing to this argument, Hillman (2006) questions the purpose of the seminary formation by asking whether its intention is to train theologians or practitioners. In response, he suggested incorporating a period of internship which will serve as a time of experiential learning. The rationale is that it will serve as a link between theory and practice, and will help to create real world learning experiences not obtained in classrooms.

Based on the provisions of the priestly formation document of the Catholic Church (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), Fischer (2010) and Lamothe (2012) identified four pillars of priestly formation, namely – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Human formation involves deepening self-awareness and accountability (Lamothe, 2012). This will enhance pastoral leadership, which should be exercised with obedience to the spirit of Christ (Fischer, 2010). Spiritual formation connects pastoral authority to the leader's identification with the servant-mission of Jesus the Christ (Fischer, 2010). Intellectual formation introduces learners to a variety of intellectual and cultural perspectives (Lamothe, 2012). It incorporates theology, epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, and the philosophic basis of leadership (Fischer, 2010). Lastly, pastoral formation helps in developing knowledge and skills such as emotional and social intelligence that help in ministering to the people in their needs (Lamothe, 2012). Seminarians gain pastoral leadership experience through courses that are offered in pastoral formation (Fischer, 2010).

Lamothe (2012) signaled the importance of educating “the kind of pastoral leaders who witness the possibility of hospitality instead of exclusion, of communion instead of alienation, and of care instead of indifference and hatred” (p. 465). In that regard, Talvacchia (2006) recommended that seminary formation for pastoral leadership should include courses on other religious traditions in an attempt to engage the multi-faith reality of the contemporary situation. This is achievable by forming religious leaders in an integrative way that allows them to encounter and engage religious differences maturely and confidently.

Another significant area of formation underscored in the literature is human sexuality. The recent experiences of sexual abuse and ongoing arguments on sexual orientations call for the formation of pastoral leaders that will enable them understand the physiology and psychology of

sexuality *vis-à-vis* the doctrine of the Church on sexual ethics and the complexity of human relationships so that they may understand and respect sexual boundaries (Grosch-Miller, 2008). However, there should not be too much emphasis on sexual boundaries to the extent of not ensuring that priests are able to provide visionary leadership that will enrich both the people and the parish life (Hoover, 2010).

With reference to the formation at United Theological College in Sydney, Australia, Purnell (2004) outlined the goals of seminary formation. It aims at enhancing proficiency in seminarians as reflective pastoral practitioners who are self-motivated and able to plan and implement their pastoral practices thoughtfully. It enables seminarians to develop disciplined theological reflection in their practice. It aims at enabling them undertake self-assessment realistically, in order to attain their full pastoral and spiritual potential. It aims at enabling them lead effectively and encourage a ministry of care and justice. Additionally, it aims at inculcating the virtue of integrity in seminarians, so that they may create a just and happy society for all.

Theological foundation and scripture-based preaching. Evidently, a prominent function of pastoral leaders as ordained ministers is preaching the gospel message within and outside the liturgical setting. This responsibility demands a solid theological foundation and scriptural knowledge. In Beeley's (2009) view, "Theology lies at the center of the work of Christian leadership and the identity of a sound Christian leader" (p. 12). With this in mind, pastoral leaders who are teachers of the things that pertain to God need to be thoroughly founded on sound theology (Britton, 2009). For this reason, seminary formation needs to seriously teach scriptural courses, liturgy, Church history, ethics, pastoral care, and other courses in divinity (Beeley, 2009). These theology-based courses are meant to prepare pastoral leaders for effective ministry.

Incidentally, Rosica (2010) pointed out that some students in their last year of theological studies in Master of Divinity programs complained about their scripture courses. Their displeasure was that the contents of the course did not relate to the reality in the field of pastoral ministry. The implication of this complaint is that it is important to emphasize the contextual components of hermeneutics in educating students on scriptural courses (Pratt, 2009). This is important in view of the fact that this knowledge will be applied in the field of practice. As St Paul pointed out, the scripture is intended to instruct the people in God's ways and lead them to participate in the divine life (Beeley, 2009; 2 Timothy 3:16). However, it will not be possible to attain these goals if pastoral leaders are not able to interpret the scriptures in ways that address people's existential concerns or relate to their sociocultural experiences (Acts 8:30-31; Romans 10:14-15). Therefore, "pastoral leadership means having something to say" (Britton, 2009, p. 105). This refers to preaching the message in ways that help the faithful deal with the challenges they face in their daily lives.

From the evangelical perspective, Chappie (2001) provided practical considerations for good evangelical preaching. This could generally be summarized as not centering the message on judgment, condemnation, and damnation; addressing the dilemmas of the human experience and life predicaments of the people and bringing them hope of God's salvation; engaging the people in their life experiences, making the message comforting and challenging; and providing the people with enlightenment. From the Catholic perspective, Berchmans' (as cited in Nguyen, 2010) tips for preparing the homily include: reading the scripture passage for the celebration, researching and reflecting on the text, identifying the themes in the text, finding the scriptural foundations of the text, expanding on the theme, connecting the message to existential conditions, tying the message together, and using story-telling effectively. These measures will

help the Church community and individuals draw close to God and bring them into an intimate union with him (Beeley, 2009).

Learning on-the-job. Pastoral leaders may have received adequate formation in the seminary. However, the reality of life in the ministry and evidence from the literature shows that they will be learning on-the-job day by day. In a qualitative study of 100 senior pastors of various denominations that explored the learning agility of pastors in their on-the-job experiences, McKenna, Boyd, and Yost (2007) identified situational factors associated with the learning, as well as personal factors that helped in dealing with pastoral exigencies. The findings pointed to the situational factors as outcomes of disorienting dilemma in a transformational learning process (Mezirow, 2009) that constituted lessons from on-the-job experiences. Those factors include “drawing on God and others, learning from results, stepping to the edge, managing the ministry, and managing change” (McKenna et al., 2007, p. 196).

Personal factors in the study revealed attitudes associated with presencing (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005) that enable the pastor to respond properly to the challenges. These factors are: “learning and development, personal character and values, establishing & maintaining relationships, relying on faith and calling, and using expertise and knowledge” (McKenna et al., 2007, p. 197). Situational lessons included taking time to reflect on the event and learn from it after the impact, acknowledging the importance of God’s grace and good relationship in the ministry, embracing the discomfort zone that comes with the experience, and acknowledging the need for change in some situations. Personal lessons included being open to learning, relying on others, self-awareness and purposefulness, as well as reliance on God.

It is important to note also that social contexts matter in the ministry and that some pastoral leaders will fare better in some contexts than others. In a quantitative research on United

Methodist Church clergy, Miles and Proeschold (2012) tested the claim that rural ministry is a more challenging occupational setting than non-rural settings. The result showed no correlation between rural ministry and higher levels of stressors or stress-related outcomes. The difference between the conditions of the rural and non-rural pastors was not statistically significant. This finding is important in allaying the fears of those who might dread rural ministry due to imagined challenges. Moreover, pastoral workers need to reflect on their contextual preference in view of effective engagement in pastoral ministry. Personal experience in the pastoral ministry indicates that some priests prefer rural parishes, some prefer suburban parishes, and others prefer urban parishes. This observation is validated in the study to show the relativity of interest in pastoral settings. It shows that no one socio-cultural setting is objectively more preferable to others.

Openness to ecumenism in pastoral ministry. Historically, a common experience with many pastoral leaders of different religious denominations was that of cultivating a pride in their own church traditions, rituals, governance, and ministry. This ended up producing uncompromising attitudes and prejudices in members against other denominations and religions (Collins, 1995).

The causal factor that leads to this worldview is proselytism (Haughey, 1998; Karkkainen, 2001) which entails denouncing other religious groups in view of winning over members. The attendant characteristics are self-containment, self-righteousness, and self-perpetuation (Collins, 1995). Instead of focusing on proselytism, the Church needs to engage herself with evangelization, which focuses on the spiritual conversion of the hearer through authentic and selfless proclamation of the good news of Jesus (Haughey, 1998). Far from struggling for members to fill the pews of their particular denomination, pastoral leaders should learn to survive side by side and in perfect equality (Collins, 1995).

Exemplifying the type of ecumenical spirit expected from pastoral leaders, Edwin Morris, then Anglican bishop of Monmouth, Australia, instructed his clergy on May 13, 1946 to minister to all the souls in their parish which included Catholics, nonconformists, and the unbaptized (Denison, 1999). Denison's interpretation of this gesture is that pastoral leadership should be oriented toward the service of all people living within the geographical jurisdiction of the clergy irrespective of their religious orientations. James and Emily Macarthur, who belonged to the Church of England, exemplified such spirit of ecumenism in Australia in the 1840s, by offering acres of land to the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church (Collins, 1995).

Diversity and cultural competence. Cultural diversity is the new existential experience of the 21st century that has permeated the social, political, economic, and religious aspects of human endeavors (McFarlane, 2011). According to McFarlane, it affects the religious life more than any other sector of the global polity. This is not surprising because by commanding his disciples to go into the whole world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), to proclaim the good news to all creation (Mark 16:15), and to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8), Jesus intended his followers to establish the faith in every culture. That commission made the Church a missionary entity by nature (Paul VI, *Ad Gentes*, no. 2) and placed the duty on the Church to effectively disseminate the gospel message and demonstrate her relevance by interacting with the different people in the world (Sheridan (2011).

To carry out her responsibilities effectively in every age, the Church has to examine the signs of the time and interpret them in the light of the gospel (Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 4). This demands paying attention to the events of the time, discerning, interpreting, and evaluating them in the light of the gospel message (No. 44). The fact of the religious, ethnic, and generational factors that have converged to shape the future of the world necessitates the

development of dynamic leaders. These leaders will maintain a proactive stance on change and diversity by educating the people to be aware of the reality of the time (McIlwain, 2009). To ensure this, pastoral leaders have to be founded on the Christian doctrine and be culturally competent. This means understanding the cultural context, applying the Christian doctrine in a way that fits the context, and leading the people from an emic perspective (Dean, 2009).

Ranson (2010) noted the challenges in Australia that came with the introduction of priests from other nationalities into the Australian Church, due to their cultural differences. Although the move enriched the presbyterate with diverse perspectives in ministering to the multicultural communities, it also disenfranchised those communities that could not contain the ethnic and ecclesial differences with their pastoral leaders. The cause of the problem in this situation is attributable to the lack of cultural competence which made it difficult for the foreign priests to minister effectively to the culturally others. To lead effectively in contemporary situations, the pastoral leader should be able to adequately address the different needs of the people in their pluralistic and multicultural circumstances (park, 2007).

The challenge of diversity was tested in a multicultural class session in a New Zealand seminary. The subject of discussion was on hospital visits. While the instructor's western value prohibited the visitor from sitting on the patient's bed, a Samoan student pointed out the need in the Samoan culture to maintain close contact to assure the patient that he or she is still valued (Culbertson, 1997). The same cultural differences were identified in the discussions on other pastoral issues. Examples include: the counseling setting between the western and Solomon Island cultures and the ideal characteristics of the husband and the wife in Christian marriage between western and Tongan cultures. Without cultural competence, the leader will not fit into the culture of others. Based on similar issues of diversity and cultural peculiarities, Butler (1997)

insisted that pastoral response should be tailored to meet specific socio-cultural needs of the people served.

To ensure “a philosophy and practice of tolerance and acceptance regarding various cultural, social and physical issues” (McFarlane, 2011), Whiteman (cited in Dean, 2009) suggested establishing the Church in various cultures in ways that are both meaningful and relevant such as praying, conversing, preaching, and singing in the language of the people (Fransen, as cited in Dean, 2009). In the case of the Australian Church mentioned earlier, the foreign priests needed to assume a missiological and pastoral approach that fit the Australian context. This may mean adapting to their host culture through intelligent, creative, and strategic measures (Ranson, 2010). As Dean (2009) suggested, Christian leadership does not have to be a particular style. What is needed is a culturally appropriate leadership style enlivened by Christian principles. Acknowledging and accommodating cultural variations in pastoral work will enhance collaboration and harmony leading to a more productive organization (McIlwain, 2009).

Personal Care for Pastoral Effectiveness

An old Latin adage states that *nemo dat quod non habet*, meaning, no one can give what he or she does not have. To that extent, the level of wellbeing of the people of God depends on the wellbeing of pastoral leaders, as their wellbeing will enable them offer better, richer, and more fruitful service to the people they are called to serve (Espelage, 2009). For this reason, it is imperative for the pastoral leader to eliminate all stressors that would constitute hindrances to effective ministry and be personally disposed for the demands of pastoral leadership.

Eliminating stressors in pastoral ministry. It is important for pastoral leaders to take care of their physical, mental, and spiritual health (Espelage, 2009). A survey of 270 pastors to examine the debilitating effect of pastoral burnout showed the primary predictor to be spiritual

dryness (Chandler, 2009). This research explored the relationship between spiritual renewal, resting, and support system practice of pastors and the three dimensions of burnout, which include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. From the findings, Chandler recommended self-care practices that will enhance resilience, vitality and wellbeing of pastoral leaders.

From the result of counseling sessions with Korean Protestant pastors, Shinhwan (2006) made an extensive and insightful presentation on the threats of stress and burnout. Defining stress as “the human body’s response to its environment in either fight or flight” (p. 243), he indicated that it leads to burnout, which is “the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do” (Maslach & Leiter, as cited in Shinhwan, 2006, p. 242). Building on these, he indicated the elements of burnout to include exhaustion, indifference, and reduced personal competency. Similarly, stress factors include eco-biological factors, vocational factors, psychological factors, spiritual factors, cultural factors, and personal factors.

Eco-biological factors include poor diet and poor exercise habits. Examples of poor diet are consuming excess caffeine, refined white sugar, processed flour, and salt. Vocational factors refer to situations that create setback in pastoral commitment. These may be situations such as “career uncertainty, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, lack of opportunities to ‘derole’, be yourself, loneliness, and time management frustrations” (Shinhwan, 2006, p. 243). Psychological factors refer to affective experiences such as losing a loved one, divorce, suffering personal injury or having to deal with illness, the demands of preparing for liturgical seasons, and traffic citation. Spiritual factors may arise from sexual temptations and experience of despair, jealousy, anxiety, or anger. Cultural factors are stress conditions that arise from the cultural challenges, such as being individualistic in a collective culture or vice versa. Lastly,

personal factors arise from being narcissistic (Shinhwan, 2006), that is, excessive self-love and craving for attention (Manala, 2010).

After outlining stress factors that lead to burnout, Shinhwan (2006) went on to describe the different stages of burnout. The first is the stress arousal stage, which carries physiological and psychological symptoms such as “persistent irritability, anxiety, high blood pressure, insomnia, forgetfulness, heart palpitations, unusual heart arrhythmia, concentration problems, headaches, stomach problems, and acute gastro-intestinal symptoms” (p. 244).

The second is the energy conservation stage, which results from failure of attempts to cope with stressors. The outcomes are “excessive lateness, procrastination, excessive time-off, decreased desire for sex, persistent tiredness, withdrawal from friends and family, increased cynicism, resentment, increased substance use, and excessive apathy” (Shinhwan, 2006, p. 244).

The third and last stage is the exhaustion stage, which is the culmination of burnout. Its symptoms include chronic sadness or depression, chronic stomach or bowel problems, chronic mental fatigue, chronic physical fatigue, chronic headaches or migraines, the desire to get away from family and friends, and even recurrent suicidal ideation” (p. 244). Chandler (2009) observed that it is through self-care practices that pastoral leaders will be able to maintain their fitness for effective pastoral engagements. This starts with the disposition of the heart.

Psychological and spiritual disposition. In Barton’s (2009) view, the most important contribution of a pastor to leadership in the Church is not intelligence, talents, or skills but a transforming self. Elaborating on this, Barton opined,

In the process of spiritual transformation the Spirit of God moves us from behaviors motivated by fear and self-protection to trust and abandonment to God, from selfishness and self-absorption to freely offering the gifts of the authentic self, from the ego’s desperate attempts to control the outcomes of our lives to the ability to do God’s will even when it is foolishness to the world around us. (p. 28)

This statement reflects Greenleaf's (2002) opinion of leadership as an act of self-giving, operating from the inner disposition to serve. Put together, Barton (2009) and Greenleaf's (2002) statements indicate that pastoral leadership should begin with introspection and self-analysis that will result in personal congruence, otherwise "every parish will be used as a stage upon which the minister re-enacts ad nauseam his or her own unresolved psychological issues" (Culbertson, 1997, para. 24). When the pastoral leader is present to God and to other people, and is able to discern the needs, then the leader will be truly effective by virtue of leading from the inside (Barton, 2009).

Spiritual development. The primary responsibility in the pastoral ministry is spiritual leadership. The pastoral leader is called to lead the people internally from their existential struggles to a deeper discipleship with, and a life of fulfillment in Christ (Knott, 2011). In this configuration, the leader serves as an agent in a person's response to God's call to holiness (Exodus 19:2; Matthew 5:48) through "invitation, persuasion, example and the skillful use of the Church's rites, rituals and rules" (Knott, 2011, p. 20).

To be able to fulfill pastoral obligations, the leader needs to lay a spiritual foundation by entering into an enriched personal relationship with God, from whom pastoral leadership derives its authority (Barton, 2009). Through various ongoing spiritual exercises, the pastoral leader will stay connected to God, restore strength and emotional energy (Chandler, 2009; Isaiah 40: 31; Shinhwan, 2006), and be spiritually empowered to carry on the ministry (Shinhwan, 2006).

Part of spiritual development for pastoral leadership involves spiritual discernment which demands listening on a deeper level and leading from it (Barton, 2009). In this discernment, the pastoral leader goes beyond the thinking level in addressing the needs of the community by listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, self-knowledge and self-examination

are important, which means being aware of personal feelings and physical conditions (Barton, 2009; Shinhwan, 2006), and allowing God to show them the difference between “the performance-oriented driven-ness of the false self and the deeper calling to lead from our authentic self in God” (Barton, 2009, p. 33). It is about listening with the heart, allowing God to be in charge and lead the way, and following faithfully step by step.

Rest, solitude, and silence. An important strategy for a refreshing pastoral engagement is balancing pastoral activities with equal amount of rest (Chandler, 2009). In principle, it is stipulated in the law of the Church that priests should take annual vacation for a period of thirty days (The Canon law, 1983). In addition, priests are allowed a day of rest once a week for the good of his health (Diocese of Austin, 2014). With these provisions, pastoral leaders should make time for rest in order to replenish lost energy for the week (Barton, 2009). Along this line, they need to establish healthy boundaries in pastoral activities to ensure positive self-care and opportunity for rest and renewal (Chandler, 2009; Espelage, 2009). “There will always be more ministerial needs than resources, but the concept of embracing a ‘twenty-four, seven’ priest is filled with danger” (Espelage, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, pastoral leaders need to rest, relax, and recreate with friends. This would also be beneficial within the context of a structural and personal support system for those in the circle of friendship (Shinhwan, 2006).

Pastoral Collaboration. Collaborative ministry is a term that came into prominence in the 1980s and 1990s (Ranson, 2010). It entails sharing pastoral responsibilities and functions in the spirit of solidarity and communion of purpose (Tidd, 2009). Even though there have been concerns that collaborative ministry might diminish the priesthood to a functional definition and create the tendency “to regard ministry within the church from an erosive ‘congregationalist’

perspective” (Ranson, 2010, p. 150), historical and existential evidence attest to collaborative ministry as indispensable for effective pastoral leadership.

Historically, Jethro suggested a collaborative ministry approach to Moses as the viable option to prevent pastoral burnout (Exodus 18:17-23). Similarly, God directed Moses to act collaboratively when the latter complained about the stress of pastoral responsibilities in leading the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land (Numbers 11:16-30). At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus invited people to work with him as an acknowledgement of the importance of collaboration in the ministry (Matthew 4:18-24; Matthew 9:9; and Luke 5:1-11). The Second Vatican Council recommended the collaborative way in undertaking the mission of the Church by virtue of the shared responsibility that the common priesthood of all the baptized bestows on all members (Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, 10). Elaborating on the importance of collaborative ministry, the council emphasized the significant role of the laity who are called to witness to Christ by what they do within the human society (Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, 43). This role of bringing the spirit of Christ into parts of the society where ordained ministers may not be able to reach implies the division of labor operating within the general framework of pastoral leadership.

Pastoral collaboration requires different forms of sharing at various levels. Manala (2010) broke down pastoral leadership into sharing of humanity, responsibility, authority, control, and vision. Sharing of humanity implies giving up the desire to always be at the center stage and the desire to be the chief benefactor of the rewards. Sharing of responsibilities implies delegating duties to colleagues or subordinates. Sharing authority refers to allowing others the power to take necessary decisions that go with the responsibilities of their positions. Sharing control implies giving up the attempt to control every aspect of pastoral operations as that might result in crisis.

Lastly, sharing of vision implies inspiring team members to active involvement by sharing anticipated outcomes with them.

It is necessary that pastoral leaders maintain healthy boundaries in pastoral activities, as such self-restraint will enhance personal wellbeing and ensure effective service (Chandler, 2009). A viable strategy for maintaining this boundary is to involve others in pastoral responsibilities. To that extent, the pastor's duty is to serve as the catalyst and enabler who connects, mediates, and facilitates in the system (Manala, 2010).

Moral conduct. In the survey of priests and lay people on the moral rectitude of priests, the result showed that 87.5 percent of priests and 80.9 percent of lay people were of the opinion that a priest's moral conduct should surpass that of others (Espelage, 2009). This refers to their ethical and value oriented behaviors, as well as maintaining professional boundaries and understanding violations. There is a tendency in the ministry to be seduced by power, prestige, and flattery, especially for those who undertook the ministry with self-serving purposes such as need for attention and affirmation (Knott, 2011).

Rosica (2010) noted a resurgence of triumphalism among the younger generation of priests. These are individuals who favor highhanded exercise of authority, such as aggressive condemnation and excommunication, based on the belief that the Church has both the truth and all the answers to every problem. Rosica (2010) and Doyle (2006) associated this behavior with emerging clericalism which exaggerates the authority of the pastoral head, thereby creating a new authoritarianism. Rosica (2010) warned against "talking head" (p. 81) priests, sisters, and Church leaders prone to talking at people instead of engaging them maturely in a conversation. Similarly, he noted a tendency toward legalism among some groups of people in the Church who

refer to Church laws to justify the ecclesiastical structures and ideologies. For Doyle (2006), it is clericalism that has empowered priests in the sexual abuse scandals occurring in the Church.

To guard against any form of clericalism and authoritarianism, pastoral leaders must first realize that they are human beings with their own weaknesses and woundedness (Nolte & Dreyer, 2010). However, they are wounded healers who are called to lead others that are equally weak and wounded (2 Cor. 11:29; 1 Cor. 9:22; Nolte & Dreyer, 2010). To that effect, they need to realize that the power attached to pastoral leadership position is that of trust and authority (Robinson, 2004). The reality in the ministry is that even as pastors are guiding the people to a life of wholeness and blessedness, they have their own inner struggles (Nolte & Dreyer, 2010). It is therefore important for them to be mindful of the challenges of leadership. Among other things, they need to develop cultural competence in order to understand the hierarchical power dynamics that are inherent in their relationship with Church members. This refers to being aware of the power imbalance that exists in their interactions with church members to ensure that there is no abuse of any kind – physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, or sexual (Robinson, 2004).

Furthermore, pastoral leaders have to be honest and transparent, and come to terms with their woundedness and struggles because “it creates spaces wherein pastors are able to experience their woundedness as a sign of emotional energy and that their emotional pain can, paradoxically, be used as a means towards healing” (Nolte & Dreyer, 2010, p. 7). Transference and countertransference are a reality in the pastoral ministry. The position and responsibilities of pastoral leaders bring them into a close and intimate relationship with the people they serve. This relationship can result in either of two ways. It can be healing and nurturing. On the other hand, it can also create problems (Robinson, 2004). When a member becomes very vulnerable in a crisis situation and trusts the pastor profoundly, the care and intimacy that the pastor provides

could lead to boundary violation if the issues of transference and countertransference are not checked. To uphold good moral conduct in the pastoral ministry, pastors should endear themselves to spiritual role models such as John Vianney in his holiness and virtue; John Henry Cardinal Newman in his friendship; Jerzy Popieluszko in his courage, boldness, conviction, and faith; Michael McGivney in his care for the sick; and Andre Bessette in his spirit of service (Rosica, 2010).

Another important aspect of personal conduct in pastoral leadership is accountability. Pastoral leaders have to be accountable for their actions and own up to their mistakes instead of covering up and giving excuses (Anderson, 2004). In the light of pastoral responsibilities that need to be met and accusations that might arise, they should keep record of personal schedules in safe locations for personal protection and accountability in case of need (Espelage, 2009). Since the power attached to pastoral leadership comes with trust and authority (Robinson, 2004), pastoral leaders should be accountable in words and actions for the purpose of preserving the trust reposed on them by the faithful.

Implications of Pastoral Leadership

From the religious and spiritual point of view, pastoral leadership is a unique and special call to service. The prerogative of the call belongs to God, while pastoral leaders only respond (Hebrews 5:1-4). It follows then that the call is not for pastoral leaders to assert their will, but to accept and accomplish God's will (Psalm 40:7-11). Therefore, every pastoral plan has to align with God's will for his people, as exemplified by Jesus (John 6:37-40). In living out this reality, the Church has constantly renewed herself and her intention to be able to fulfill God's will for his people in the community of faith. These efforts are visible in the 21 ecumenical councils that have been convened so far in the Church (Knight, 2007).

In line with the desire of the universal Church to fulfill God's purpose according to the needs of the time, Pope John XXIII took a bold step to implement necessary reforms in order to address the needs of the Church that was moving into a changing and complex future. This resulted in the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (Stravinskas, 2002). The aims of the intended *aggiornamento* are articulated in the first article of the first council document. It states,

The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all mankind into the Church's fold. (Paul VI, Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 1)

This statement of purpose expresses the new impetus that the Church mission and evangelization have assumed which is geared toward renewing the life of the Church and positioning her for a more impacting presence in the world (Barratt, 2008).

To accomplish this in the contemporary world, the Church needs "new initiatives in evangelisation, renewed in zeal, open to try new techniques and finding appropriate new ways of articulating the unchanging good news" (Knight & Murray, as cited in Barratt, p. 767). Pastoral leaders should not lead the faith community with a false sense of security, closing in on itself and ignoring the realities that are emerging in the society (Culbertson, 1997). In view of the complex nature of the contemporary society, the Church needs to engage the world relevantly through effective pastoral leadership (Sheridan, 2011). In doing this, pastoral leaders have to continually rethink the mission of the Church in an increasingly complex and pluralistic world (Pratt, 2009). This means adopting new methods and approaches in her evangelizing activities (Barratt, 2008).

Generally, the primary focus of pastoral leadership should not be proselytism, which seeks to increase Church membership. Rather, it should be evangelization, which is about educating the people to be aware, understand, and appreciate the Christian way of life in a

manner that will impact their values and enable them to live happy and fulfilled lives (Pratt, 2009). As Karl Rahner (as cited in Pratt, 2009) argued, the church's evangelizing activities should be Christocentric or Christ-centered, instead of ecclesiocentric or Church-centered. In this sense, pastoral leaders should be concerned primarily with leading people to Christ, not to the church. The duty of the Church through pastoral leaders is to serve as an expression of God's presence in the world with the objective of bringing God's love to the people (Pratt, 2009).

An important point to note is that the Church is not a secular institution. Therefore, her focus should not be exclusively on achieving the humanistic goals of meeting the existential needs of the people. The focus should be on attaining the higher goal of satisfying the deeper existential hunger and thirst of the people (Metropolitan Hierotheos, 1999). This is about connecting the people with God in a more profound spiritual relationship (Pratt, 2009). With reference to the Catholic Church, Clark (as cited in Barratt, 2008) outlined the features of the new evangelization to include: an upgrade of the old method, a deepening of personal relationships with Christ, an engagement of baptized believers, a focus on nominal or marginal believers, invitation of nonbelievers to active participation, re-evangelization of traditionally Catholic countries, use of new methods and forms of communication, and involvement of all members of the Church.

Expected Pastoral Outcome

The literature review has advanced ideas for an impacting pastoral leadership in the 21st century. When pastoral leadership is set on a sound footing, the outcome is a healthy Church that functions in terms of the dynamics operating in the ecclesiastical system. Such outcomes will be visible in the building and maintenance of relationships on intra and inter-personal and group

levels, adhering to sound doctrine, fulfilment of practical tasks, as well as spiritual nurturing and growth of members (Manala, 2010).

In summary, the review of literature indicates that pastoral leadership training should be oriented toward future needs rather than focusing on the present (Culbertson, 1997). John Paul II exemplified the qualities of such future-oriented pastoral leadership in the areas of personal values, pastoral attitude, and interpersonal relationship (Udomah, 2014). On the level of personal values, he was “Pro-life, courageous, optimistic, hopeful, prayerful, spiritual, compassionate, trusting, faithful, intelligent, and resolute” (Udomah, 2014, p. 7). By attitude he was “ecumenical, inclusive, activist, innovative, purposeful, outreaching, engaging, charismatic, and visionary” (p. 7). Relationship-wise, he was “cheerful, fraternal, cordial, respectful, collaborative, sociable, accommodating, tolerant, and influential” (p. 7). In the final analysis, the future of the Church’s pastoral leadership will be defined by “congregational unity, harmony, sound doctrine, responsibility, discipline, competence in ministry, efficient and effective leadership and holistic Christian healing and spiritual health and growth” (Manala, 2010, p.1).

Despite the amount of literature on the subject of pastoral leadership, there is minimal research on pastoral leaders’ personal stories about their experiences in the pastoral ministry. This refers to their perception of and engagement in the pastoral leadership (Cohall & Cooper, 2010; McKenna & Boyd, 2007; Miles & Proeschold, 2012), especially in the shifting contexts of the future. This gap in the literature was the reason for my research on priests’ understanding and commitment to pastoral leadership. In a formal interview setting, I listened to participants’ stories about their experiences in the pastoral ministry, analyzed the findings, and presented my interpretation within the context of the central phenomenon of this research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this research was to explore the pastoral experiences of participants as leaders of faith communities in the socio-cultural environments of the new millennium. My interest in this area of study was to understand what participants' experiences meant for them and how their roles were impacting organizational outcomes in their respective pastoral situations. I undertook this project through the perspective of social constructivism, which states that knowledge is socially constructed (de Gialdino, 2009). In other words, knowing occurs through social interactions. In order to understand the central phenomenon of this research, I entered participants' stream of consciousness, albeit vicariously, and listened to their storied experiences in the pastoral ministry. I used interview as my means of data collection and proceeded inductively from data collection to theorizing (Ormston et al., 2014). The three stages in the process were description, analysis, and interpretation.

The theoretical framework I adopted in the analysis was leadership theories (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010; Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010). My aim was to understand the content of participants' leadership experiences in the pastoral ministry. I chose an open-ended or a loosely construed theoretical stance in the analysis, rather than select a specific theory of leadership. My intention was not to justify a theory, but to identify the theoretical bases of participants' pastoral leadership experiences. Through the methodological approach I adopted, I was able to attain my objective. In this chapter, I present the methodological approach I used in the research process.

Methodological Approach

To attain the purpose of this research, I used qualitative approach as the suitable method of study. This method is based on the constructivist epistemology that, "meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). It explores

“their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories” (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014, p. 4). Therefore, I considered it to be the appropriate approach for conducting a research study on the meaning participants construct in their interaction with the 21st Century pastoral environment. The qualitative design I used was the interpretive qualitative study with a strand of narrative design. I used the narrative approach only for data collection, namely, in constructing the interview question. I had one major interview question in which I asked participants to tell me about their experiences in the pastoral ministry, while I listened to them without interruption till they finished (Kelly & Howie, 2007; Reissman, 1993). I then asked them follow-up questions to seek clarifications or to explore issues they raised in their stories.

I used the interpretive design in subsequent parts of the study, namely, in the description, reduction, and interpretation phases. From Merriam’s (2002) methodological perspective, I found this research design useful in understanding the meaning participants made of their pastoral experiences in the parishes. My interest was to make sense of their pastoral perspectives and worldviews as these impact their leadership in the socio-cultural environments of the contemporary society. For this reason, my strategy was inductive. I proceeded from participants’ individual situations to building themes based on the commonalities I identified in their stories. In the interpretive process, I “inductively analyzed the data to identify . . . common themes that cut across the data” (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). In the final stage of the research process, I discussed the findings in the light of the literature review. Additionally, I identified the overarching leadership theory that was operative in their pastoral engagements.

Research Setting and Entry

I visited urban, suburban, and rural parishes in the Central Texas area of the United States to collect the data for this research. I chose diverse geo-social and cultural settings in order to

obtain multiple perspectives that represent the diversity in contemporary pastoral situations. My method of selecting participants was purposive sampling. I needed a distinctive demographic of participants who would provide the type of information I needed to enrich this study (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant, & Rahim, 2014). Since the research interest was on the pastoral situation in the contemporary cultural setting, I chose participants I considered to be relatively in tune with contemporary socio-cultural realities.

The method of participant recruitment for this research was by personal contacts. With purposive sampling in view, I approached priests I knew would meet the criteria I have specified for participation. I explained the subject matter of my investigation to them, and asked if they would participate. In doing this, I ensured that I did not pressurize or give any impression of pressurizing them. Since I could not personally identify enough participants, I asked those I contacted to suggest names of priests they knew were qualified for participation. I contacted those ones as well, and everyone I contacted accepted to participate.

I contacted potential participants by face to face meeting or by phone call. I considered face to face and phone interactions to be personable and efficient instead of electronic means, which I considered as impersonal. I spoke with them, and they asked questions to clarify their concerns and clear their doubts in order to make informed decisions. I found personal contacts to be more engaging than written messages such as email.

As the priests I contacted agreed to participate, I collected their contact information, which were phone number and email addresses. These enabled me to reach out to them according to need. After completing selection of participants, I contacted each of them to plan for interviews. I asked them to choose the suitable date, time, and location for the meeting. I allowed them to make the choice while I worked around it for their convenience. I rescheduled

the interview with one participant because he had to attend an unforeseen important event that took precedence over our scheduled appointment. I was 10 minutes late for one interview due to heavy traffic. I waited about 20 minutes for one participant who was celebrating a funeral and could not finish before our scheduled time for the interview. There were interruptions during two of the interviews. In the first case, a parishioner rang the doorbell and the participant had to attend to her. In the second case, a heavy rain and tornado disrupted the interview, and we had to change the location. Generally, participants were flexible in terms of dates, times, and location for the interview.

Research Participants

Selection of participants was by purposive sampling. Participants had to meet the necessary criteria in order to qualify for selection (Ritchie et al., 2014). The basic criteria were that they had to be priests with 4 to 25 years of pastoral leadership experience and were not above the age of 50. Four years are generally the average amount of time priests spend as associates before assuming positions of pastor. Within this timeframe, they are expected to acquire sufficient amount of experiences in pastoral leadership. Secondly, I limited participation to 50 years of age and 25 years as priest. I considered those as the reasonable age and years respectively in the ministry that participants could offer relevant historical continuity in terms of the recent past and the unfolding future. In other words, this demographic of research population would be more current with regard to the realities of contemporary time.

My original intention was to interview 12 participants, but the commonalities I observed with the first eight indicated saturation point (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Research by Design, 2013). This was based on the homogeneity of the group (Research by Design, 2013). I asked them one common question for the interview and followed up with questions on the same areas of pastoral

leadership for exploration of issues in their stories. I have provided the table of commonalities in Appendix A. The average number of commonalities was six out of eight as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Average of Commonalities

Number of Participants	Number of Descriptive Items	Total Commonalities on Items
8	17	136
7	9	63
6	8	48
5	9	45
4	4	16
3	4	12
2	4	8
1	2	2
Totals	57	330
Average	$330 / 57 = 5.789 = 6$	

All eight participants had similar experiences on 17 of the 57 descriptive items. Seven of the eight participants had related experiences on 9 of the items. Six participants expressed related experiences on 8 issues. Five of them had similar experiences on 9 issues. Four of them shared similar experiences on 4 issues. Three of them expressed themselves on 4 similar issues. Two of them also had similar experiences in 4 areas. One each had lone experiences in two areas. The total number of commonality for 8 participants was 136. For seven participants it was 63. For six participants it was 48. For five participants was 45. For four participants it was 16. For three participants it was 12. For 2 participants it was 8. For single participants it was 2. The total

number of descriptive items was 57 while the total amount of commonality was 330. The commonality average was 6. Therefore, an average of six participants had related experiences on the different areas of pastoral ministry. The high level of commonality made me end data collection with eight participants.

Similarly, I chose rural, suburban, and urban parishes as research locations in order to obtain a broad-based exploration of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). For that reason, I selected participants from varied socio-cultural backgrounds and socio-economic environments. I also wanted diversity and multiculturalism to be reflected in the study. Therefore, I drew participants from diverse global cultures. Racial composition of participants included: One diocesan Indian priest, one diocesan African priest, one missionary African priest, two Caucasian diocesan priests, one diocesan Hispanic priest, one Korean diocesan priest, and one Philippino religious priest.

Participants were Catholic priests, which means they were all males, baptized, confirmed, and ordained. They were at least 25 years old, following the basic requirements for admission into the Holy Orders (The Code of Canon Law, 1983), and not older than 50 years except one priest who was 53 years old. Additionally, they were all in communion with the Church. In other words, they were in active service in a Catholic diocese at the time of the research.

Academically, they were all graduates with master's degree in divinity or related theological discipline. Table 2 shows participants' age, number of years as priests, the interview time in minutes, and the averages.

Table 2

Participants' Age, Years in Priesthood, Interview Time, and Averages

Participants	Age in years	Years in Priesthood	Interview Time in minutes
Fr. Ambrose	44	19	57.34
Fr. Brendan	46	8	70.38
Fr. Camillus	40	5	74.07
Fr. Domingo	53	23	75.58
Fr. Emmanuel	41	13	60.46
Fr. Fintan	44	8	73.50
Fr. Gerald	39	10	72.53
Fr. Hector	35	5	91.24
Averages	42.75 (Approx. 43)	11.375 (approx. 11)	71.887 (approx. 72)

The average age of participants was 43 years. Their average number of years in the priesthood was 11 years and the average time I spent with participants in the interviews was 72 minutes.

I considered a brief background information on each of the participants would be necessary to give readers a good understanding of the issues in the discussions. I assigned pseudonyms to participants in place of their real names. None of the names corresponds to the real name of any participant.

Participants' Background Information

Fr. Ambrose. He is Asian and a religious priest from the Philippines. As at the time of the interview, he was 44 years old and has been a priest for 19 years. He has served as priest in

Italy and the Philippines. At the time of the interview, he was serving as pastor in central Texas, United States of America. In Italy, he was assigned to perform administrative duties. He also directed retreats in various religious institutions. In the Philippines, he was a formator in the seminary training seminarians for the priesthood. Since his arrival in the United States, he has been doing pastoral work in parishes as pastor. The demographics of the people he has served in his ministry include: Italians in Italy and Philippinos in the Philippines. In the United States, he has worked with Hispanics, German, Czech, Polish, Irish, and Italian Americans. His declared area of interest is pastoral ministry and teaching.

Fr. Brendan. He is a diocesan priest of African origin who described himself as black. He was 46 years old at the time of research and has been a priest for eight years. Since his ordination, he has worked in two parishes in his diocese of incardination in Texas, USA. Diocese of incardination means the ecclesiastical jurisdiction where a diocesan priest pledges his allegiance. He first served as an associate pastor in a parish before being assigned to the parish he was serving as a pastor at the time of research. His work engaged him with pastoral duties in the parishes, as well as pastoral care in hospitals and nursing homes. The demographics of people he has served in these places included: Anglos, young families, elderly people, Asians, Africans, Philippinos, Koreans, and Vietnamese. Fr. Brendan did not mention his special area of interest in the ministry.

Fr. Camillus. He is a diocesan priest of Asian background and described himself as Korean. He was 40 years old at the time of the interview and has been a priest for five years. So far, he has served in three parishes in his diocese of incardination in Texas, USA. In the first two parishes, he served as a parochial vicar before being posted to his current assignment as pastor. The demographics of people in these parishes were predominantly Anglos and Hispanics. Before

becoming a priest, Fr. Camillus was a pilot. His avowed areas of interest in the priesthood are sacramental theology and pastoral ministry.

Fr. Domingo. He is a diocesan priest from India who described himself as Indian. He was 53 years old and has been a priest for 23 years. In his years as a priest, he has served in India and in the United States. He moved to the United States at the invitation of a bishop and was incardinated into a diocese in Texas. However, he moved from his diocese of incardination to another diocese in Texas where he was at the time of research. In India, he worked with the tribal people in the jungle of Calcutta and in his home diocese. In the United States, he has served in different parishes in two dioceses in Texas. He did not specify the demographics of people in his story. His stated area of interest in the priesthood was understanding the mysteries of God.

Fr. Emmanuel. He is a diocesan priest with American background who described himself as Anglo-Caucasian. He was 41 years old at the time of this research and has been a priest for 13 years. He has served in three parishes as parochial vicar and has been a vocation director recruiting young people for the priesthood and the religious life. He was a pastor at the time of research. The demographics of people he has served in his different places of assignment include: Retired and young families, Hispanics, Anglos, Mexican Americans, Mexican immigrants, multi-cultural students, and young men discerning the priestly life. His interests were working with youths, especially college kids, and providing vision.

Fr. Fintan. He is a 44 year old American diocesan priest who described himself racially as Slovak-American. He was a priest for eight years at the time of research. He has worked as a parochial vicar in one parish and as pastor in two parishes. In these places of assignment, he has served people of different racial backgrounds such as Anglo, Hispanics, Vietnamese, Indians,

Nigerians, Philipinos, Africans, and Asians. His areas of interest were social studies, history, and the study of culture.

Fr. Gerald. He is a missionary priest from Nigeria who described himself as black. He was 39 years old and has been a priest for 10 years. In his missionary work, he has served in Nigeria and in the United States. In Nigeria, he worked with the tribal people in the middle belt region of the country. He also worked at his missionary headquarters in Nigeria. Coming to the United States, he worked in the mission development office in their regional headquarters before being assigned to a parish as pastor. In his places of assignment, he has worked with Tribal people in Nigeria, with a religious group, with administrative personnel, and with people of ethnic and racial diversity in the United States. According to him, he likes working with the poor in rural areas and with youths.

Fr. Hector. He is an American diocesan priest who identified himself as Hispanic. He was 35 years old at the time of research and has been a priest for five years. So far, he has served as a parochial vicar in two parishes before being assigned to his current parish as pastor. In those different places, he has worked with people he demographically described as Spanish speaking Hispanics, English speaking Hispanics, and Anglos. His special interest in the priesthood was the healing ministry. The background information of these participants is tabulated in Table 3. This table summarizes participants' personal information about their age, racial backgrounds, number of years in the priesthood, places they have been assigned to serve, their areas of interest in the ministry, and the demographic of people they have worked with so far.

Table 3

Personal and Background Information of Participants

Participant	Age	Race	Priestly Years	Places of Priestly Ministry	Areas of Interest	Demographics of people they served
Fr. Ambrose (Religious)	44	Asian	19	Seminary in Asia, administration in Europe, parishes in US, hospital ministry	Pastoral ministry and teaching	Italians; Philipinos; Hispanics; German, Czech, Polish, Irish, Italian Americans
Fr. Brendan (Diocesan)	46	Black	8	2 parishes in central Texas – US, hospital ministry, nursing homes	Not stated	Anglos, young families, elderly people, Asians, Africans, Philipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese
Fr. Camillus (Diocesan)	40	Asian - Korean	5	3 parishes in central Texas – US, hospital ministry	Sacramental theology and pastoral ministry	Hispanics, Anglos
Fr. Domingo (Diocesan)	53	Indian	23	2 places in India, 2 dioceses in Texas – US, hospital ministry	Understanding the mysteries of God	Tribal people in India, Americans
Fr. Emmanuel (Diocesan)	41	Anglo-Caucasian	13	4 parishes in central Texas, vocation office	Working with college kids and providing visions	Retired and young families, Hispanics, Anglos, Mexican Americans, Mexican immigrants, multi-cultural students, young men
Fr. Fintan (Diocesan)	44	Slovak – American	8	3 parishes in central Texas - US	Social studies, history and the study of culture	Anglo, Hispanics, Vietnamese, Indians, Nigerian, Philipinos, Africans, Asians
Fr. Gerald (Missionary)	39	Black	10	1 parish and administration in Nigeria, Mission development office in US, 1 parish in central Texas – US central	Working with the poor in rural areas and youth ministry	Tribal people in Nigeria, religious group, people of ethnic diversity in the U.S.
Fr. Hector (Diocesan)	35	Hispanic	5	3 parishes in Texas – US, Catholic schools	Healing	Spanish speaking Hispanic, English speaking Hispanics, and Anglos

Data Collection: Location, Technique, and Equipment

The technique I used for data collection was face to face interview. My choice of this technique was driven by the reality I intended to explore as expressed in my research question (Arthur, Mitchell, Lewis, Nicholls, 2014). I visited participants in their respective places of assignment and conducted interviews with them in convenient locations they chose within their Church facilities. These were either in the office or in the rectory.

I used two audio recording devices for the interviews in order to provide a back-up and prevent a situation of losing the data due to technical or mechanical fault. In addition to the recording devices, I followed the interview protocol process by using a writing pad to take note of notable issues for further exploration (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, I used the writing pad to record observations I considered important for the research (Walsham, 2006).

Before turning on the recording devices to begin the interview, I sought participants' consent. I explained to them that my reason for using the devices was to record the content of the interview for easy recall. I informed them of their right to answer or not answer any question if they so choose and the freedom to end the interview at any point without adverse consequences. Moreover, I gave them the consent forms to read and sign. After explaining these rights to them and obtaining their consent through a signed form, I proceeded to begin the interview.

Interview

The interview structure was face-to-face and one-on-one encounter with participants, using open-ended questions (Creswell, 2012). I allowed them to tell their stories, share their experiences, and end on their own without interruptions. I sought for clarifications and asked follow-up questions after making sure they had finished their trend of thoughts on the subject at hand. I treated the interview data as a resource (Rapley, 2001) by considering them as materials

that reflect participants' reality which I used for analysis. Moreover, I did not pressurize participants by any means to elicit information or give them any impression to that effect.

The average time span I had planned for the interview was 90 minutes. I considered that amount of time to be judicious for data collection. However, only one interview lasted up to 91 minutes. In the first interview I conducted, the participants, who has been a priest for 19 years, finished relating his pastoral experiences at 11 minutes 12 seconds. It threw me off balance but I directed the interview to last for 57 minutes and 34 seconds. The average time for the interviews was 72 minutes as shown in Table 2. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participants for their assistance and requested their cooperation if I had to reach out to them in due course. They all accepted to be available in case of need.

Ethical Issues

In the course of the research, I followed ethical regulations as demanded in academic research. I ensured anonymity in all respects (Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2014) even when one participant did not mind having his identity disclosed. I assured participants that in presenting my research report, nobody will be able to associate them with the information they provided (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012) and I used pseudonyms for all participants (Webster et al., 2014). However, I made them aware that I was obliged by law to inform respective authorities about any behavior I learn from the interview that might be injurious either to the participants or to others or both. Such injurious information concern abuse of a child or vulnerable adult (Lapan et al., 2012).

To ensure confidentiality, I preserved the datasets in a safe place in my house that was not accessible to any other person except myself. Furthermore, I stored personal information of

participants such as names and contacts in a separate place from where I stored the interview data (Webster et al., 2014).

To safeguard ethical treatment of participants, I ensured that participants partook in the research voluntarily by obtaining their valid informed consent and avoiding any form of harm to them in all circumstances (Webster et al., 2014). Concerning disclosure, I informed participants of my research intentions in terms of what my research was about and what I planned to do with the outcome. Similarly, I avoided any conflict of interest throughout the process (Webster et al., 2014). There were moments in the interviews when participants expressed views I did not agree with. I resisted the urge to give my opinion. There were other moments when they made lengthy pauses in search of the right expressions. I refused to supply the words, although I knew what they wanted to say. Generally, I refused to take any position, give my opinion, or disagree with participants' views even if I held a contrary position on the subject of discussion. I suspended all forms of judgment, especially in my capacity as a member of the system I was researching.

Data Analysis

After completing the data collection, I began an interpretive qualitative data analysis. There are three sources of data for qualitative analysis (Froggatt, 2001). These include: observation, interview, and documents (Wolcott, 1994). I based my analysis on the interviews and used observations as a tool for triangulation. I undertook an interpretive qualitative analysis using the data management (description) – Abstraction (reduction) – interpretation model (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam et al., 2002; Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor, Barnard, 2014). I approached the data substantively by capturing and interpreting meanings in the data, and focusing on the contents or “what the text says” (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 272). I began the analysis by delineating the ideas from the interview documents and labeling them either as “in

vivo concepts” (p. 272) which meant using participants’ words and expressions, or as “emergent concepts” (p. 272), which meant creating terms that were grounded in the data. In the subsequent stages of the analysis, I used “abstract interpretive concepts” (p. 272) by replacing participants’ words with collective terms that expressed what I understood from participants.

Guided by this model, I proceeded systematically from transcription, segmentation, categorization, to thematization. In this process, I converted the verbal data or audio recordings to transcribed texts (transcription). I broke down the written text into sections according to ideas – (segmentation). I designated the sections as narrative segments (Riessman, 2002) because they embodied strands of ideas that I used as materials for analysis. I delineated strands of ideas from the narrative segments. Strands of ideas refer to the meaningful phrases that contained individual ideas in respective narrative segments. I grouped the strands of ideas under descriptive terms. I classified the descriptive terms into categories (categorization). Then I classified the categories into themes – (thematization). This process is illustrated in Figure 1.

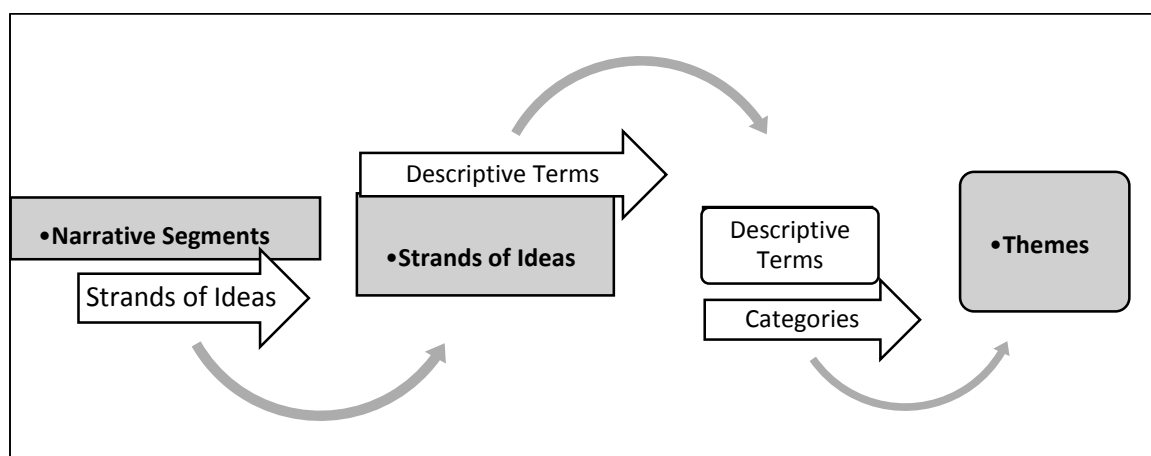


Figure 1. Flowchart of the analytic process from narrative segments to themes.

Through the description, reduction, and interpretation process I obtained interview texts, narrative segments, strands of ideas, descriptive terms, categories, and themes as illustrated in Figure 2.

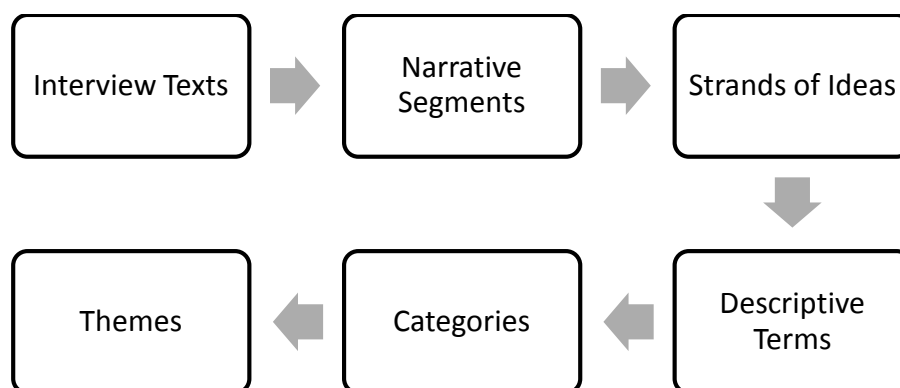


Figure 2. Flowchart of analytic process from transcribed interview texts to themes.

I was doing reduction and interpretation simultaneously throughout the analytic process from the point I started delineating strands of ideas. This means that as I was reducing the data, I was also moving away from using participants' own expressions to generating abstract terms. At this level, interpretation consisted of expressing participants' words with different phraseologies. The following is an example of the initial reduction, interpretation, and abstraction in the analytic process of Fr. Gerald's interview data from a narrative segment to a strand of ideas.

Narrative segment:

And he saw that as a brilliant idea and two of us sat together and exploited that avenue that we grouped them into different teams, and then he said, and we said to ourselves, if we take three masses each Sunday, each of us, that is six masses every Sunday, and if we divide, if we concentrate on one zone each week, you know, we'll, by the end of the year, all of them will get at least one mass and they will get to see the priest at least once a year. And we actually did it like they get to see the priest once every three months which was very exciting to the people and to us.

Strand of ideas:

His pastor acknowledged his bright ideas and sat down with him to draw up a pastoral plan that enabled them to visit the different church communities at least once in three months

In this example, I altered the original phraseology in the transcribed text. I moved away from Fr. Gerald's own words in the interview to different terms that conveyed the same message. In that process, I summarized the narrative segment (reduction), changed from participant's original expression (interpretation), and made it more representative than concrete (abstraction). Using a similar process, I transformed this strand of ideas into descriptive terms such as "collaboration and pastoral development". I grouped the descriptive terms into categorical items as "pastoral impacts." Finally, I classified the categorical terms under a theme, "a ministry of service and commitment." This process is illustrated in Figure 3.

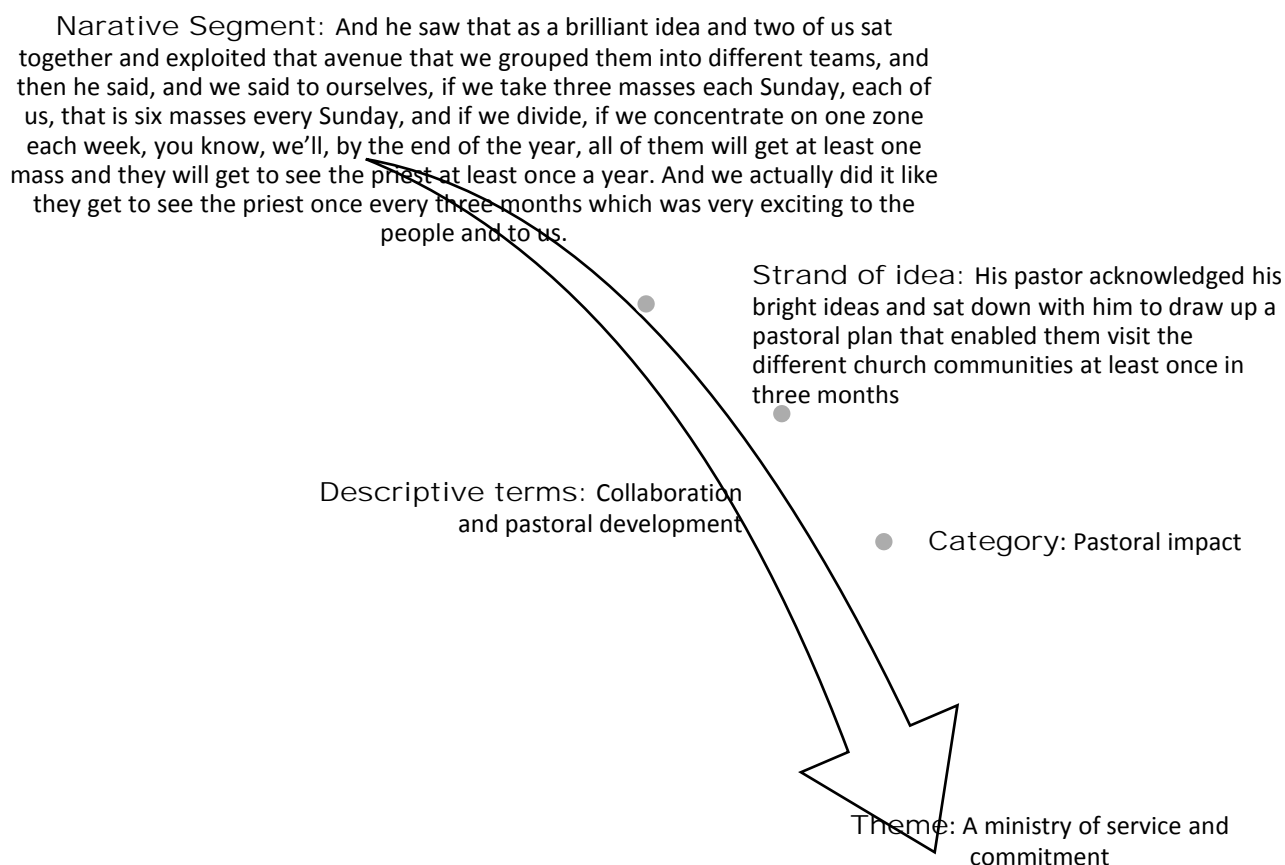


Figure 3. Sample simultaneous analytic process of reduction, interpretation, and abstraction.

The figure shows the analytic process from the initial breakdown of the interview materials to the generation of themes. I adopted this approach in order to arrive at the constituent elements in participants' information that explained their pastoral leadership engagements.

Transcription. The first step in my three-level analytic process was transcription. In this first step, I converted the audio recordings or verbal data into textual documents. I began by listening to the recordings in each dataset in order to be familiar with the contents and note the ideas they conveyed. After listening, I transcribed the documents in prose format. This means, "I constructed a written record" (Riessman, 2008, p. 29) from participants' taped conversations. I represented their information in a free flowing literary style. I punctuated the stories in their written form, inserting commas, semicolons, and periods to make it understandable to the reader. My interpretation started at this point because by punctuating the transcribed documents and omitting some "paralinguistic utterances" (Riessman, 2002, p. 698) and filler words, I altered participants' original verbal presentations of the stories. In each case, I rolled the tape, listened to participants' message piecemeal, according to how much I could retain at a time. I then typed out what I listened to and carried on accordingly, until I completed the transcriptions. Many times, I had to replay the segments and listen again to ensure I reproduced the information correctly.

After each transcription, I proofread the script twice against the audio recording in order to be sure my transcriptions were accurate. I made considerable efforts at transcribing every word I heard from participants including filler words and linguistic utterances such as "you know" and "aaahm". However, my focus was on the "what" (Reissman, 2008, p. 53) or the "told" (p. 54) in the stories associated with content analysis, not on the "how, to whom, and for what purposes" (p. 54) associated with structural analysis. Therefore, I did not consider it necessary to painstakingly translate all the filler words. I might have omitted some of them.

Overview of analytic levels. There were four levels of analysis. The first was segmentation. It consisted of breaking each participant's interview text into segments and delineating strands of ideas from those segments. The second was conceptualizing descriptive terms. This consisted of contracting the strands of ideas in each interview dataset through the use of "emergent concepts" (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 272) or replacing the strands of ideas with abstract terms that were grounded on the data. The third was creating categories. At this point of analysis, I brought the descriptive terms together from various datasets and grouped them according to commonalities. I created "abstract interpretive concepts" (p. 272) to embody each group of descriptive terms in the category. The fourth and last level was formulating the themes. This consisted of grouping the categories according to how they gave meaning to participants' pastoral experiences. In the first two levels of analysis, namely, segmentation and conceptualization of descriptive terms, I analyzed participants' interview datasets individually. In the third and fourth levels, I analyzed them collectively to present the overarching meaning that participants made of their experiences in the ministry as pastoral leaders.

Segmentation. As a major step in the analytic process, this was my first level of reduction. My objective at this level was to turn the interview texts into groups of ideas. I started by delineating strands of ideas in the interview documents and placing them in segments.

Narrative segments. This refers to labeling the transcribed interview documents according to the strands of ideas they expressed, which I needed as materials for further analysis. Having transcribed the verbal data from the interviews into textual documents, I created a two-column table for narrative segments. I designated the left column as "Narrative Segments" and designated the right column as "Strands of Ideas." Under the narrative segment column, I copied and pasted the transcribed interview texts. This was my first step in changing the transcribed

texts format from a free flowing prose format to segmented format. In this process, I read the transcribed texts purposefully to identify strands of ideas in each interview dataset. As I identified the ideas they contained, I broke the texts into segments according to individual ideas I noted in each portion of the interview document. I then numbered the segments chronologically, as a way of labeling the strands of ideas for easy iterative exercise. Through this process, I obtained major ideas I needed from the interview documents under the label of “strands of ideas.” I have provided an example of this process in Table 4.

Table 4

Sample Descriptive Analysis Table With Numbered Narrative Segments and Corresponding Descriptive Statements

Participant 3 – Fr. Camillus: Narrative Segments	Strands of Ideas
46 So, immediately, I sensed there is a need for the pastoral ministry there which is good. So, when I got there, the, the, the, the many people came to me and asked me how thirsty they were.	With his assignment to youth ministry and encounter with people, he sensed the pastoral needs in the parish
47 Now the Church grew up tremendously there, but yet a lot of people, when I got there a lot of people expressed their desire to get to know Jesus better.	People came to him and expressed their desire for spiritual growth
48 So, the first thing I did was, I had adult formation, continuous formation program. So, once a month I brought some lectures, you know, I brought some good speakers and then, almost every month, the faithful were invited to come to the, the lecture series.	He started adult faith formation program with lectures and invited speakers

As the table shows, the left column contains the original text of Fr. Camillus’ interview that I divided into segments. The right column shows the strands of ideas I delineated from the text.

Descriptive terms. Having delineated the strands of ideas, I created another two-column table for each participant to obtain descriptive terms. These are meaningful singular phrases that summarize the strands of ideas. This table enabled me to capture the essences of participants' words in the data by using abstract terms to replace stands of ideas. It was the beginning of the taxonomic analysis I undertook for the purpose of obtaining themes that would collectively articulate the meaning of participants' pastoral experiences.

I designated the left column "Strands of Ideas" and named the right column "Descriptive Terms". I placed the numbered strands of ideas from the previous level of analysis in the left column. To obtain descriptive terms for the right column, I thought of the conceptual term that would best represent or describe each strand of idea. I obtained suitable terms by finding the semantic relationships based on Spradley's (1980) *The Developmental Research Sequence* model. To establish a relationship that would provide an insight into suitable descriptive terms to replace the strands of ideas, I asked a question in each case about what each strand of idea referred to. When I obtained a suitable term, I placed it in the right column under descriptive terms and in the same row as the numbered strands of ideas. Table 5 provides an example of this level of analysis based on strands of ideas from Fr. Hector's interview dataset.

The table shows the transformation process in Fr. Hector's interview dataset from strands of ideas to descriptive terms using the semantic relationship model. The descriptive terms are in the same rows as the numbered strands of ideas they represent. Through this process, I obtained 57 descriptive terms as shown in Appendix B.

I numbered the narrative segments and the strands of ideas from which I obtained the descriptive terms. I did this to facilitate textual references in the iterative process of interpretation. Through the numbers I assigned, I was able to access any part of the interview

data. To do this, I went regressively from the themes to any analytic level I intended to access, whether it was the categories, the descriptive terms, the strands of ideas, the narrative segments or the interview records. Figure 4 shows an illustration of this process.

Table 5

Descriptive Terms Obtained From Strands of Ideas Through the Semantic Relationship Model

Strands of Ideas: Fr. Hector's Interview	Semantic	Descriptive Terms
19 He was nervous because his Spanish was not good enough for the place he was posted to	Refers to	Challenges and obstacles
43 There was a period he struggled with depression in his early ministry years	Refers to	
64 He got along really well with his second pastor especially at the beginning	Refers to	Relationships
91 He gets on well with staffs in all the parishes	Refers to	
30 He did a lot of marriage counseling with Hispanics in his first parish out of need	Refers to	Pastoral engagements
312 He is progressively working to get the youths involved in the liturgy	Refers to	
111 He sees himself a type of priest that does better by himself	Refers to	Self-perception
191 His depression was also because he was prideful and self-reliant	Refers to	

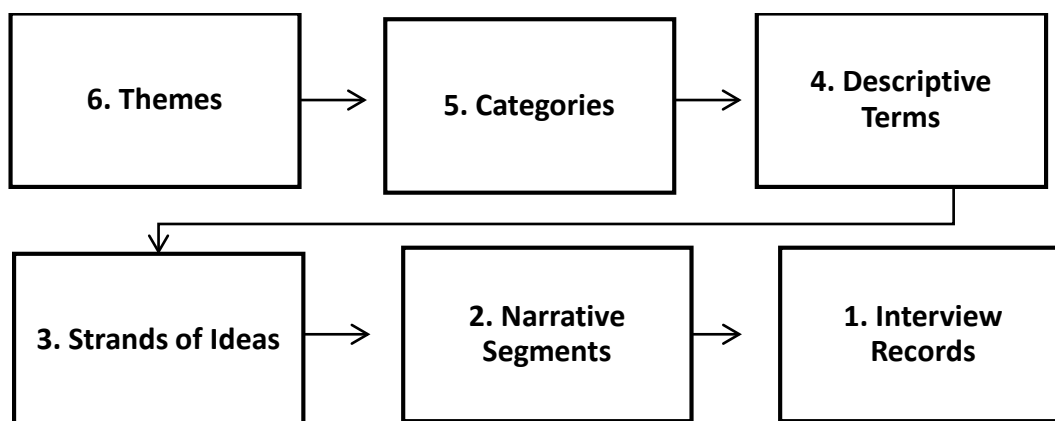


Figure 4. Iterative reverse process from themes to interview records.

As the figure shows, I was able to go back through the layers of analysis and retrieve needed information from the previous levels of analysis. In other words, the outcome of previous levels of analysis provided the operational data for my next level of analysis.

Categorization. In the second level of reduction, my goal was to group the descriptive terms in categories according to their commonalities. After obtaining the descriptive terms which were conceptualizations of the strands of ideas, I proceeded to create categories for these groups of ideas. I created a two-column table. I named the left column “Descriptive terms” and the right column “Categorical items”. I created empty rows for the prospective categories I was going to generate. I then transferred the descriptive terms from Table 5 individually and sequentially into applicable rows under the descriptive terms column, according to commonalities.

Before transferring a descriptive term, I reflected on the overarching idea it embodied. Again, I employed Spradley’s (1980) *Developmental Research Sequence* model. To establish necessary semantic relationships, I asked myself a question about what each descriptive term was referring to concerning participants’ stories about their engagement in the pastoral ministry. With the ideas I obtained, I created categorical items that suitably represented the descriptive terms and placed the terms in the row under the “Categorical item” column. The categorical items

represented participants' shared perspectives concerning their experiences in the pastoral ministry, based on their commonalities. The different categories indicated the various pastoral issues they discussed in the interview as shown in Table 6.

The sample table of categorization shows how I grouped the descriptive terms from all participants into categories according to commonalities. From this analysis, I obtained seven categories, namely: Background, efforts and impacts, pastoral qualities, pastoral perspectives, personal care and development, areas of service, as well as challenges and setbacks.

In transferring the next descriptive statement, I reflected on what it referred to, and generated the term using the semantic relationship process. If the emerging idea conformed to an already existing item in one of the rows for categorical items, I moved the descriptive term to that row. If an emerging idea had no commonality with the ones in existing categories, I created a new row for the new categorical item. Using this technique, I assigned all the descriptive terms to respective categories under applicable categorical items according to their commonalities.

I developed categorical items and added categories, according to need. I used the expression "categorical item" to describe the contents of the right column, because they constituted the data resources for thematization in the next level of analysis. After categorization, I double-checked the categories to ensure that all items in each category were appropriately classified. If, upon crosschecking I discovered discrepancies, I moved the misclassified item to its proper category.

Table 6

Sample Categorization Table With Descriptive Terms Classified According to Commonalities

Descriptive Terms	Semantic Relationship	Categorical Items
Pastoral difficulties/ frustrations/ struggles/ Disappointments	Refers to	Challenges and setbacks
Culture shock	Refers to	Challenges and setbacks
Oppositions and resistance	Refers to	Challenges and setbacks
Pastoral perceptions/ observation	Refers to	Pastoral Perspectives
Pastoral/ ministerial interests	Refers to	Pastoral Perspectives
Pastoral leadership style, approach, and strategy	Refers to	Pastoral Perspectives
Structural development	Refers to	Efforts and Impacts
Spiritual/ pastoral developments	Refers to	Efforts and Impacts
Ministry to the sick and homebound	Refers to	Efforts and Impacts
Self-care/ recreation	Refers to	Personal care and development
Learning moments/ learning on the job	Refers to	Personal care and development
Management	Refers to	Areas of service
Education and social services	Refers to	Areas of service
Technical services	Refers to	Areas of service

Thematization. This was the ultimate level of analysis. My aim was to condense the categories into themes that would embody the meaning of participants' pastoral experiences and characterize the reality in the pastoral ministry from their perspectives. The outcome of this level of analysis constituted the material for interpretive analysis in chapter four. Repeating the

process I adopted for categorization, I created a two-column table with multiple rows. I labelled the left column “Categories” and the right column “Themes”. I kept the right columns empty to be filled with emergent themes. I then transferred the categorical items in the categorization table individually and sequentially into the left column rows. As I moved each categorical item into a row, I reflected on the possible theme that would give suitable meaning to the item. I used Spradley’s (1980) semantic relationship process to achieve this purpose. I did this by asking a question about the area of pastoral reality the item revealed. Therefore, the themes I generated revealed the various aspects of pastoral realities that participants addressed in the interviews. This process is represented in Table 7.

Table 7

Sample Thematization Table With Categorical Items and Corresponding Themes

Categorical Items	Semantic Relationship	Themes
Background Pastoral qualities	Reveals	Priesthood as vocation
Efforts and impacts Pastoral perspectives	Reveals	Ministry of service and commitment
Areas of service	Reveals	Ministry with complex realities
Personal care and development Challenges and setbacks	Reveals	Ministry with diverse challenges

After generating a theme, I placed it in the right column row. All categorical items that expressed related pastoral reality, I placed together in the same row in the left column. I placed the corresponding theme that embodied that reality in the right column of the same row. The total number of themes I generated in this process were four, namely: 1) priesthood as vocation, 2) priesthood as a ministry of commitment and service, 3) priesthood as a ministry with complex

realities, and 4) priesthood as a ministry with diverse challenges. I continued moving the categorical items and generating new themes according to fresh subject matters that emerged from the items. I followed this method until I completed thematization.

Summary

With the themes, I undertook interpretive analysis in chapter four. I started by presenting each theme as a heading that represented an important aspect of how participants perceived the pastoral ministry. I explored the themes with the use of subthemes. I derived the subthemes from an iterative-interpretive process. In this process, I went back through the levels of analysis to the descriptive terms. I described issues the descriptive terms were addressing and used the phrasal outcomes of the descriptions as the subthemes. For instance, in presenting my findings on ‘priesthood as vocation’, I went back iteratively from the theme ‘Priesthood as vocation’, to the category ‘Background’, to the descriptive term ‘Journey to the priesthood’. I reflected on what ‘Journey to the priesthood’ pointed to and realized it pointed to the unique circumstances that gave rise to participants’ response to God’s call. From this reflection, I generated the subtheme, ‘uniqueness of vocational experiences’. Through this process, I generated the subthemes that enriched my analysis of all the themes.

In chapter five, I discussed the findings in the light of the literature review and the leadership theory I identified in participants’ experiences. With reference to the literature review, I discussed the research findings under the various pastoral themes that were suggested in chapter two. My goal was to find out whether participants’ experiences reflected current views and opinions in the literature about pastoral leadership in the 21st century Church. Concerning the leadership theory, I presented my findings on the theoretical basis of participants’ pastoral

leadership approaches. I ended the discussions with implications, suggestions for future research, and conclusion.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Findings

The purpose of this research was to understand the pastoral leadership situation in the Catholic Church of the 21st century through the lens of priests who served as pastoral leaders in different faith communities and parishes. I based the study on the general conceptual framework of leadership theories. My intention was to understand what pastoral leadership meant for participants in the socio-cultural environment of the 21st century. Based on views in the literature and trends of thought in organizational leadership theories, I also wanted to find out how participants' leadership experiences and perspectives were impacting their respective parish communities.

In this chapter, I present an analysis of participants' interview responses based on the four themes I derived from the description, reduction, and interpretation model of thematic analysis. The themes include: 1) priesthood as vocation 2) pastoral leadership as a ministry of commitment and service, 3) pastoral leadership as a ministry with complex realities, and 4) pastoral leadership as a ministry with diverse challenges. I derived these themes from the commonalities I identified in participants' responses as they explained what the priesthood and engagement in the pastoral ministry in the 21st century meant for participants.

For this analysis, I adapted Spradley's (1980) domain analysis approach, as explained in the second level analysis in chapter three. I followed the procedural framework of domain analysis without using the particularities. In place of Spradley's nine universal semantic relationships, I created my sets of semantic relationship terms, such as "refers to," "indicates," "reveals", and "means" with their included terms and cover terms. I established the semantic relationship term in each case by asking a question about participants' intention in saying what

they said or the meaning they intended to convey. These guided me to understand what each segment of participants' stories referred to, indicated, or meant to express.

Priesthood as Vocation

Etymologically, vocation is derived from the Latin verb *vocare* which means to call (Stravinskas, 2002). In the generic use of the word, it refers to a call to any kind of engagement in life such as career calling (Veith, 2011). In the religious sense, it refers to a call-response relationship between human beings and God, with the goal of carrying out God's plan and serving him by a life of commitment and purpose (Stravinskas, 2002). Analyzing the interview responses, I found that participants understood their priestly vocation as a personal response to God's invitation to a life of relationship and service in the Church. Their stories showed that their faith response was personal and they were positively disposed for engagements in the ministry. Furthermore, they showed that their vocation was sustained by their religious convictions. The flowchart of this analysis is illustrated in Figure 5.

Personal faith response. Five participants started narrating their pastoral leadership experiences by recalling their journey into the priesthood. They indicated that being priests was a personal decision arising from inner conviction in their relationship with God. The two characteristic features of participants' personal faith response were: 1) differing circumstances that described their journeys, and 2) the sacrifices that this choice of life entailed for them.

Differing circumstances. Participants' stories showed they experienced the priestly call and responded to it at different moments and under differing circumstances. Fr. Ambrose used the expression "just one straight life" to convey the message that he followed a linear path in his priestly vocation. He said, "I started as a minor seminarian and then immediately continued without looking back." A minor seminarian is a student in Catholic boys' school who

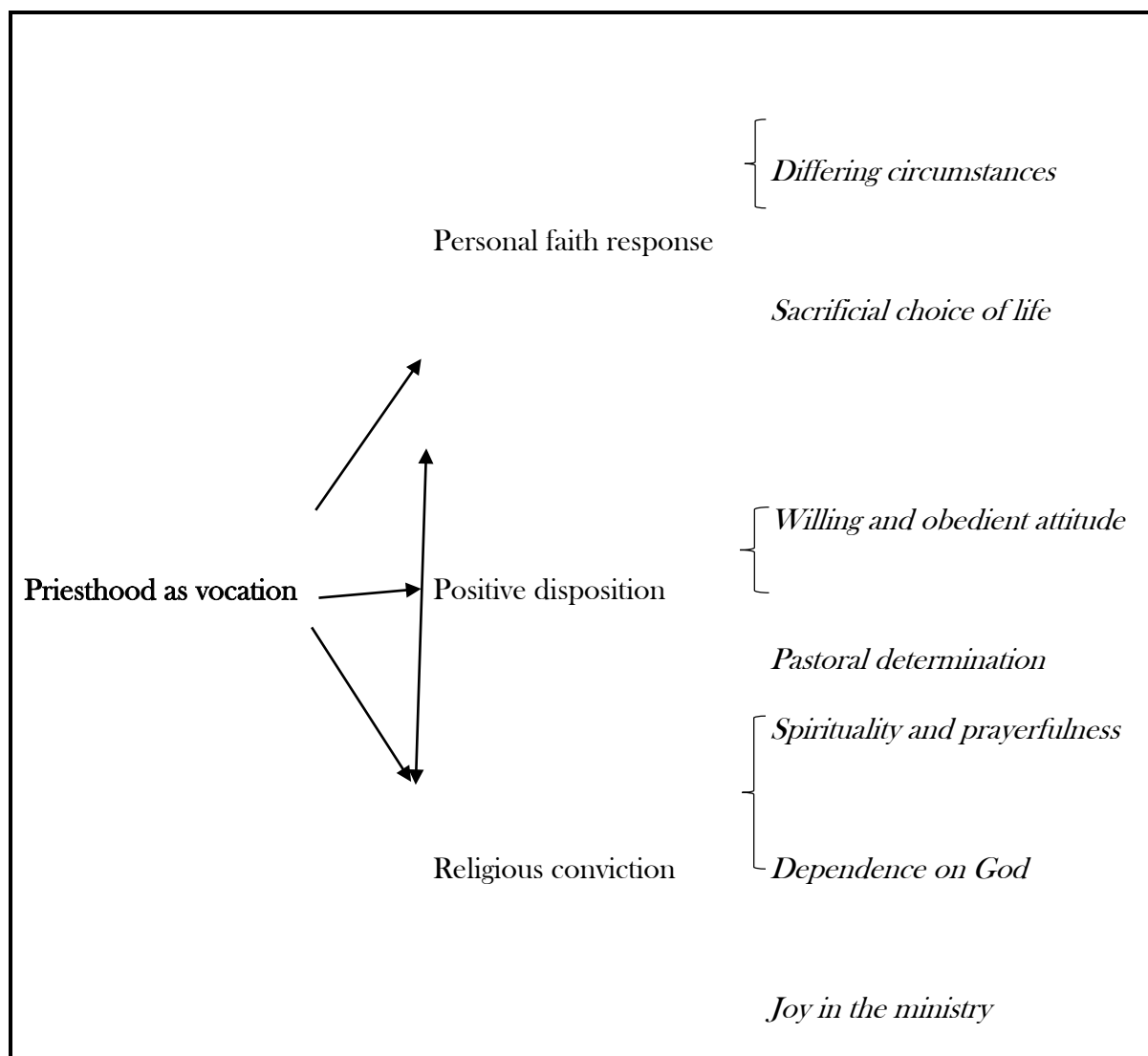


Figure 5. Flowchart of the theme of priesthood as vocation.

receives both secondary education and rudimentary formation for the priesthood. His mention of “minor seminarian” as a starting point indicates he started his priestly journey early. He “immediately continued without looking back” means he proceeded straight into formal priestly formation without obstacles. Consequently he was ordained a priest at the minimum canonical age of 25. This account shows Fr. Ambrose answered God’s call to the priesthood at a young age.

Other participants' stories about the beginning of their priestly vocation were different.

Fr. Domingo said,

When I was called to be a priest, I was already in the college and I specialized in air-condition engineering. And I had opportunities to go to Gulf countries from India to become a businessman and I made my passport ready and I got the visa.

By stating that he was "called to be a priest," he expressed the vocational characteristic of the priesthood as a response to a call. That he was already in college, specialized in air-conditioning engineering, had opportunities to become a businessman, and had procured his passport and visa to go to Gulf countries by the time he experienced the call shows his decision to pursue a secular career was already completed. These circumstances indicate he did not begin his priestly journey at a tender age like Fr. Ambrose. Rather, by stating that he was "venturing into the real world" after his education, he made it clear that he was an adult by the time he embraced the priestly vocation. This account of his personal faith response shows he had to give up earlier career plans to become a priest.

Fr. Hector's story about his priestly vocation reveals similar experience of embracing the priestly vocation at a mature age and giving up an earlier plan. He said,

When I was at A&M, I switched from computer science to psychology because I had an interest in helping bringing people healing in an emotional sense, but I finally felt a strong call of the priesthood. It was God inviting me to bring people healing in the spiritual sense, but also seeing the spiritual healing has effects in the physical and in emotional as well.

A&M is a college. By saying "when I was at A&M," he indicated he was already in college, like Fr. Domingo, when he received the call. The story of his journey to the priesthood reveals a gradual shift from secular programs of study to the priestly vocation. He switched from computer science to psychology because of his interest in the emotional wellbeing of people. He then moved from psychology to the priesthood because he felt a strong call, which he understood as

God inviting him “to bring people healing in the spiritual sense.” Therefore, his response to the priestly vocation was driven by the need to minister to the spiritual needs of the people. Fr. Camillus’ story revealed similar experience of giving up previous career plan for the priestly vocation based on his interest in serving the people.

The story of Fr. Gerald’s faith response was different from Fr. Ambrose’s “one straight life” and other participants’ college experiences. He said, “It took me two years to arrive at that decision.” Two years refer to the length of time he spent in discernment before deciding to accept the priestly vocation. The uniqueness of his situation is evident in his statement that within the two-year period, “I was basically doing nothing”. This indicates he had no other engagement the entire time except reflecting on the priestly vocation. He spent two years reflecting on what he felt as a priestly call before making his personal faith response.

The differing circumstances surrounding each participant’s story express the uniqueness of their journey and present the personal dimension involved in their decisions. In certain cases, they indicate that becoming a priest entailed conflict of values and opportunity cost. Participants were faced with competing values before letting go of other career plans in favor of the priestly life, based on their personal conviction that it was God calling them to service in the Church.

Sacrificial choice of life. Participants described their priestly vocation as a sacrificial choice they were aware of before embracing it. When Fr. Domingo’s mother encouraged him to be a priest, he told her, “Mom, if I become a priest, I may not be able to give anything to you. I give only a blessing, not money or riches.” The first sentence indicates he was aware of the sacrificial choices involved in accepting the priestly vocation. In the second sentence, he distinguished between supporting his mother spiritually and supporting her materially. Within the distinction, he acknowledged that in giving a personal faith response to the priestly vocation,

he was only going to give his mother a spiritual blessing instead of providing her with “money and riches”. This shows he was aware of the sacrificial demands in the priestly vocation before responding to the call.

Similarly, Fr. Gerald’s story shows he was aware of the material deprivation he would experience by this choice of life before deciding to embrace the priestly vocation. He said,

I knew the options that are there. The option I was going to be poor being a missionary and I was not going to be able to provide basic material needs. And I knew how painful and how frustrating it was going to be.

This statement expresses his awareness of the sacrificial choices involved in being a missionary priest. It went from his awareness of the choices to the consequence of choosing the priestly vocation. In the first sentence, “the options that are there” refers to various choices. In the second sentence, he associated the option of being a missionary priest with being poor. By that choice, he “was not going to be able to provide basic material needs.” This refers to not fulfilling expected responsibilities for his family. The “painful” and “frustrating” consequences describe the sacrificial aspects of the choice. This shows he was aware that his decision to become a priest was a sacrificial choice that would deny him material comforts.

Fr. Camillus’ story presented another dimension of the sacrificial choices involved in the personal response to the priestly vocation. When his bishop asked why he chose to be a priest in the central Texas diocese he belonged he said,

I told him personally, personally, you know, my personal level, I want to go back to South Korea. But I know, if I go back to South Korea, I wouldn’t be able to become a priest. You know, because in a different culture, another culture, the style, my style will not fit into South Korea. But in the divine level, you know, in the spiritual level, I know this is the place God called me. I mean personally I don’t like it but spiritually speaking I know this is the place.

His repeated use of “personally” and “my personal level” shows his wish was to be a priest in South Korea. However, he realized that his personal preference was not God’s will. His

understanding was that God's will for him was to be a priest in another culture. The reason he provided was what he described as "my style" or his pastoral *modus operandi* which would not fit into the Korean culture. He presented his decision to respond to the priestly vocation in America as an outcome of a spiritual insight about where God needed him. He did not personally like that choice, but he accepted it as God's will for him. Embracing God's will by joining the priesthood in the place he felt called to serve instead of being where he would personally prefer was a sacrificial choice.

These various stories illustrate that in deciding to become priests, participants were making choices that involved inconveniences and deprivations. With their understanding of the priesthood as a response to God's call, they personally and freely made sacrificial choices by letting go of their preferred options to accept God's call to the priesthood. Having made the choice, they disposed themselves positively for active pastoral engagements.

Positive dispositions. Another significant feature I noticed in the theme of priesthood as vocation was the attitude with which participants embraced their assignments. This feature was visible in two ways, namely: their willing and obedient attitude, and pastoral determination.

Willing and obedient attitude. Participants spoke of their assignments as pastoral tasks entrusted to them rather than the choices they made. Their stories indicate they were not assigned to places they preferred and they were not always prepared to move when they were asked to go. However, they always complied willingly and obediently. The expressions I identified in the interview data that showed participants were not involved in the decisions affecting their assignments include: "asked to", "sent to", "assigned to", "called back", and "I got".

Fr. Ambrose started his priestly life in Rome and was later assigned to the Philippines before being sent to the United States. He described his various assignments with an attitude of

willingness and obedience in accepting orders from his superiors. After his ordination in Rome he said, “My community asked me to work for the Curia, for the Generalate.” The “community” refers to the constituted authority in his religious congregation, and “asked me to work” denotes a mandate to go where the community assigned him. He described the Curia assignment as

The center of the daily transactions and important transactions in our community. You know we deal with the Vatican, we deal with the bishops, we deal with the problems of my own confreres in the community. We would determine and study where to assign people to and cater to their problems and their needs. And all these are administrative work I would say.

In the first sentence, he described the place he was assigned to work as a center or department in his community where they carry out important transactions on a daily basis. In the second sentence, he listed the transactions as dealing with the Vatican, the bishops, and their community issues. In the third sentence, he explained the community issues as assignment and catering for people’s problems and responding to their needs. The significance of the last sentence became obvious when he added, “But nonetheless, after about two years working in the Curia in the Generalate, I was still looking for a pastoral experience.” The phrase, “still looking for pastoral experience” indicates his personal interest was the pastoral ministry. He willingly accepted the administrative assignment out of obedience while he wanted to be involved in the pastoral ministry. His next assignment was in the formation house instead of the pastoral ministry he would have preferred. He said, “Anyway, I continued working in the Generalate until there was a greater need in the Philippines to be the rector of my seminary . . . so they sent me back to my country.” His assignment to the Philippines was neither his choice nor in the pastoral ministry he was interested in. Rather, “they sent” him in response to “a greater need” for a seminary rector. This indicates his religious congregation sent him to his country, the assignment was determined by a need for academic leadership, and he willingly obeyed.

In the Philippines, his superior asked him, “Why don’t you go to the U.S. and do mission appeal?” Mission appeal refers to visiting churches for the purpose of requesting financial assistance to help a needy community. The framing of the question shows it was a request he could have accepted or rejected. However, he accepted to go and solicit for money “so we can build our own house and our own seminary.” After the appeal, one of the bishops invited him back to the United States to work in his diocese. Fr. Ambrose said, “I presented the letter to the superior, and they discussed it for three or four months, and all I knew, you know, April of 2000, I came to the U.S.” Presenting the letter of invitation to his superior and waiting for a period of three to four months until he was given approval shows his submissiveness.

On his arrival in the United States, Fr. Ambrose said, “I was sent to (name of parish – rural area).” In his story, it was the bishop who decided and “sent” him to the rural parish. When he was reassigned to another parish after 14 years he said, “I cannot complain, I didn’t want to leave; but the Lord has called me somewhere else.” The first part of this statement indicates he would have preferred to stay at the parish he had been for 14 years. However, he obeyed what he understood as the Lord’s call to serve somewhere else. His willing and obedient attitude was evident in his acceptance of his assignments – administrative, educational, and pastoral, even though he did not choose where he went.

I observed a similar attitude in Fr. Domingo’s story. After his ordination, he said, “I worked in south India, in my first year of priesthood, 1992-93. And I was sent to . . . Northern India to work . . . in the jungles for the tribals.” His story indicated that South India was his home diocese where he worked in the first year of his priestly life. “I was sent” shows he was obeying a command to go outside his home diocese and minister to the tribal people in the jungles of northern India. He exhibited obedience and willingness by his positive disposition to give up the

comfort of his home diocese, where he said priests had “cars”, “motorbike”, and “modern technology”; and go to work in the jungle where he was “pedaling the bicycles” in an environment that had “no proper roads”.

From the jungle, he said he “was called back to south India” and “was assigned in a parish helping a pastor, one who met with an accident.” By stating that he “was called back to South India”, he indicated that returning to his home diocese was not his decision but that of the constituted authority. Furthermore, his assignment to help a pastor that had an accident shows he was assigned the position of a surrogate. The job entailed “taking care of the parish where there is an orphanage, the boarding school.” It also involved “taking care of the kids too there and the Catholic kids.” By accepting these assignments willingly and obediently, he demonstrated positive disposition in his priestly vocation. While he was on his surrogate assignment he said,

Later my bishop called me and he said from India, there is another place I’m planning to send you. So, I listened to my bishop. Then he was proposing that the bishop in East Texas wanted some help to serve in his diocese, and I was selected, and I was sent to east Texas for three years contract.

Considering this statement from the perspective of distance, this assignment took him from his diocese much farther than northern India, where he was sent in the first instance. He obeyed and went where he was sent. While in East Texas he said, “I was sent to do Trinitarian theology” in Rome. The various assignments in his home diocese, the jungle of Northern India, East Texas, and Rome indicate his positive disposition in his vocational life by willingly complying with the decisions of respective ecclesiastical authorities and going where they sent him.

Fr. Gerald also revealed positive disposition in his assignments that began in his home country and took him to the United States. He said, “So when I was assigned to a rural place, I was overexcited, and I went in with so much zeal and it was very very exciting.” In the first part of the statement, “I was assigned” refers to the decision that was made for him. He was

overexcited because the decision coincided with the type of apostolate which was “to be in a rural place”. With his interest in a rural place, he “went in with so much zeal.” This points to his disposition and commitment to duty. However, he was removed from the place he liked after “just one year” and sent to an administrative duty at his society headquarters, which he described as “a difficult one.” This comment shows he did not like the new assignment. Furthermore, he said, “My stay in the parish was to end in like three – four months.” This means he was transferred prematurely, yet he moved in obedience.

From his society’s headquarters in Nigeria, he was reassigned to work in the United States. He said, “I remember, when they told me you are going to the U.S., I’m like, to go and do what? Honestly, I wasn’t, I have never been excited about going to the U.S.” The question, “to go and do what?” made it clear he had no personal desire to go to United States. He emphasized his lack of interest in that mission with the expression, “honestly”. His story showed that his lack of excitement was because he “was scared of the American culture”. While on administrative job at their Nigerian headquarters, he said he “got to know that U.S. is one of the most challenging environments to work in because of the legal system and all that is demanded of the priest.” This statement provides the two reasons for his lack of interest in the U.S. mission. Despite the negative impressions, he still accepted his assignment to the United States.

After being assigned in the United States as “director in the mission development office” and traveling to various churches to raise funds for his missionary society, Fr. Gerald was sent to a parish in Central Texas. He recalled his feelings about the assignment and said,

When I googled (name of parish) and saw the story about the place and how it’s going down, I was kind of almost sad and I wasn’t enthusiastic about coming here. I was just like ok, I’ve no choice, I have to go. It’s just the simple disposition.

The expressions “kind of almost sad” and “wasn’t enthusiastic” describe his negative feelings about the assignment. The second sentence describes his acceptance of the assignment as an act of obedience. The obedience shows his positive disposition in living out his priestly vocation.

The five remaining participants were ordained primarily for the American Church. Their stories also revealed a disposition of willingness and obedience in their priestly vocation. Fr. Camillus said, “So, first assignment to (name of parish). It was surprised to me. I mean I thought I was going to be in some rural parish. That was my expectation. But somehow, bishop . . . sent me to (name of parish).” His surprise was because he was not assigned to a rural parish as he expected. Nevertheless, he accepted his assignment to an urban parish. When there was need for reassignment he said, “Then I got an assignment, second assignment to (name of parish) . . . so I went there.” “Got” and “went” signify he was obeying an order. He described this as “a really different environment”. The differences he pointed out were about the varying pastoral realities between the first and the second places of assignment.

Recalling his third assignment he said,

And then two years I was there. I didn’t expect to, to leave so soon, I kind of hoped I will stay one more year but . . . then, then I got a call from the diocese and said, I was appointed, I mean the Bishop appointed me to become the parish administrator here at (name of parish).

His reference to not expecting “to leave so soon” and hoping to “stay one more year” points to his personal preference, which was not the case. The bishop appointed him to where the bishop wanted him to be. Being appointed a parish administrator generally refers to assigning a priest to a parish as first time pastor. When he received the news of this appointment he said,

I was surprised, I mean, I mean number one, I kind of hoped that I was going to a small parish. Number two, I thought I was going to stay in the south area. Yet I had to go all the way up to (name of city in the north). So, and then, number three, you know, as I, you know, Fr. (name of priest) was excellent priest. So, following him would not be, I mean, he, I mean I, I, I am not as charismatic, charismatic as Fr. (name of priest).

The three surprises he expressed in this reflection indicate things were not the way he expected. Despite the contrary reality of not “going to a small parish”, not “staying in the south area”, and being assigned to take over a parish from an excellent and charismatic priest, he was positively disposed and he accepted the assignment with a willing and obedient attitude.

Fr. Hector was equally surprised about his first place of assignment. According to him,

I found out about my first assignment at (name of parish) when I was ordained. We are, bishop gave us a letter. In fact I remember when bishop gave us that letter and I opened it and saw it was (name of parish), I was a little surprised.

He was surprised for two reasons. First, this place of assignment was “a heavily Hispanic parish.” That is, a parish with many people of Spanish linguistic and cultural background. Secondly, at that time his Spanish “wasn’t as good as it is now”. He was not fluent in the Spanish language at the time as he eventually became. Nonetheless, he accepted the assignment.

Not long after the first assignment, Fr. Hector was transferred to another parish. He said, “So, I was moved after Christmas, after basically completing about a year and a half.” That he was “moved” indicates he acted on an order. His reference to “after basically completing about a year and a half” suggests his first assignment should not have ended by the time it did. He was asked to move because there was need to replace a priest in a parish whose home bishop pulled out “without much notice.” He described the reassignment as being “a little hard because the transition was quick.” This indicates his obedient compliance by adjusting to the needs of the situation even when he “basically had two weeks” to report at the new parish.

Fr. Hector spoke about being unexpectedly transferred to another parish a third time. He said, “It was again another quick transition. This time, I was moved right before Easter.” The point about “another quick transition” that happened “right before Easter” points to the serious need that led to the transfer and the inconveniences entailed in the transition. Easter being the

busiest period in the Church when priests prepare for the celebrations made it demanding and inconveniencing for him to be transferred at that time. Despite the difficulties, he accepted the assignment and went in obedience.

These various instances demonstrate participants' positive disposition in their willingness and obedience to accept their priestly assignments despite the inconveniences. The dispositions in turn enhanced their determination in the pursuance of their pastoral objectives.

Pastoral determination. This refers to participants' doggedness despite difficulties. It came through in the way participants reacted to the realities they encountered in the ministry. They embraced the challenging situations they met in their places of assignment with resilience and determination. Fr. Gerald said "When I googled (name of parish) and saw the story about the place and how it's going down, I was kind of almost sad." In the first part of the sentence, he used the expression "going down" to describe the dilapidating condition of the parish he was assigned to. His kind of sad disposition expresses a tendency towards discouragement and despondency. However, he assumed duty and determinedly devoted himself to structural and spiritual improvement of the parish. Visiting that parish six months after the research interview, I noticed he had finished building a new elegant Church structure.

Fr. Hector's story pointed to pastoral determination when he spoke about the deplorable pastoral condition of the parish he was assigned to as first time pastor. He mentioned a "kind of an absent father mentality" he observed in the community when he arrived. By this, he was referring to parishioners not enjoying adequate pastoral care because previous priests were "near retirement or had poor health". The elderly or sickly pastors could not provide adequate pastoral care for parishioners. He also mentioned "financial irregularities" referring to mismanagement of parish funds. He further stated that "the parish had a very large debt for the size of the parish and

the facilities” which pointed to an overwhelming financial burden he inherited. As a result he said, “Several parishioners were pretty angry” and “I found myself also being frustrated.” These instances describe the toxic pastoral environment he moved into as a first time pastor.

In the light of the complex pastoral situation he was facing, Fr. Hector said, “I didn’t think I had that answer right off the bat.” By making this statement, he recognized his limitations. To resolve the issues he said, “I listened first to the people, listen to the staff, and kind of seeing what, and seeing what were their feedback.” This story shows that instead of allowing himself to be overwhelmed by the pastoral issues he encountered, Fr. Hector embraced the situation with determination by devising ways to proffer solutions to the problem.

On another pastoral dimension, Fr. Brendan, an African priest, and Fr. Camillus, a Korean priest, showed determination despite perceived disapprovals they experienced from certain individuals in their parishes. Fr. Brendan said, “Some people accused me of not speaking very well or screaming at them, you know, or they are not able to understand me.” In the same way Fr. Camillus said, “When I got here, there is one lady who came to me and said, you know, I don’t like you, I’m leaving.” Although both participants had distinct experiences, their stories express feelings of rejection from individuals in their parishes. Fr. Camillus spoke about “prejudices in this society based on language, accent, and color” and Fr. Brendan made reference to “people who told me specifically that they don’t want me, they want an Anglo priest.” These indicate they interpreted the encounters as culturally-based rejections. Despite these perceptions, they upheld their vocations and continued determinedly in their various places of assignment.

Religious conviction. Participants’ description of their religious engagements expressed their personal closeness to God and their devotedness to enhancing the spiritual wellbeing of their members. I noted these in their stories about their prayer life and their encouragement of

members. Analyzing their stories about their religious commitments and prayer programs, my findings showed they made spirituality the center of their pastoral ministry. Similarly, their projects and programs were possible by their trust and dependence on God.

Spirituality and Prayerfulness. In the interviews, participants spoke about the time they spent in prayers and other spiritual exercises, and how these activities drew them closer to God. By staying close to God, they were able to minister meaningfully to the spiritual needs of members and to overcome the challenges they encountered in the ministry. Fr. Fintan said,

Of all the classes I took in seminary, probably my spirituality class has been the class that has been the most importable into people's lives. Not Christology although I've given talks on Christology, and not you know, soteriology, or not even Mariology or ecclesiology. It's really been spirituality.

In this statement, Fr. Fintan graded the classes he took in the seminary. The “most importable into people's lives” refers to the subject he found most useful in ministering to the pastoral needs of the people. By using a possessive pronoun and referring to his most important class as “my spirituality class”, he made an estimable assessment about the class. Reaffirming spirituality at the end of the statement as the most importable class underscores the significant role spirituality has played in his priestly vocation and ministry.

Fr. Emmanuel's story revealed the operational significance of spirituality in his life as a priest and pastoral leader. He said, “My primary principle is a reliance on prayer. So, if we rely on prayer, then we are receiving the mission from the Lord.” The first sentence illustrates the primacy of spirituality in his priestly vocation. “My primary principle” refers to his pastoral foundation. By stating that his pastoral foundation was “reliance on prayer,” he made it clear that spirituality was the foundation of his priestly vocation. Buttressing this point, he said, “I have noticed that I really love taking to prayer, Father what is your will for this parish community?”

What he loved taking to prayer were his prospective pastoral decisions and actions asking for divine insight and guidance.

Apart from his personal spirituality, Fr. Emmanuel also expressed interest in the spiritual wellbeing of his staff members. He encouraged them to spend time in prayer every morning before office. Recalling his discussion with his potential youth director at job interview, he said,

I said, you know, we are parish of the new evangelization. You have to be willing to begin your workday in a holy half hour in a Eucharistic adoration. That is what I ask of my staff, to do that with me. I do, I do a full holy hour but I ask the staff to come there at 9 O'clock and that is how we begin our work day.

A “parish of the new evangelization” refers to a parish committed to spiritual enlightenment of members. As part of his requirements, he made it clear that the prospective youth director would have to accept and observe “a holy half hour in a Eucharistic adoration,” as expected of every staff member. Eucharistic adoration refers to spending time in prayer before the exposed consecrated Host that Catholics believe to be the true body of Jesus. While Fr. Emmanuel was doing “a full holy hour” for spiritual strength in his priestly vocation, he asked his staff members to do a half hour as a prayerful way of being strengthened spiritually for the work.

Fr. Brendan’s story also revealed the importance of spirituality and prayer in his priestly life and ministry. Like Fr. Emmanuel, he engaged other members in his spiritual and pastoral program. He said, “I set up a group of people, a team, I called them a spiritual renewal team.” He expressed two ideas in this statement. First, by forming a group of people into a team, he indicated his readiness to work collaboratively, share common goals, and coordinate activities with members in order to accomplish set goals (Northouse, 2010). Secondly, qualifying the team as “a spiritual renewal team” points to the religious orientation of his priestly vocation. Based on his religious conviction, he planned to work with his spiritual renewal team to revive the parish through prayers and religious activities. The account of his pastoral experience showed he prayed

and worked with the spiritual renewal team, and was able to overcome pastoral challenges such as mounted oppositions against his Church renovation project.

Spirituality and prayerfulness equally helped in sustaining Fr. Gerald's priestly vocation.

He credited his ability to overcome enticements to concupiscence to his prayerfulness. He said,

The same with a woman you know . . . sometimes body passion goes up. But if I spend one hour in prayer and, it's not like it is automatic healing, no, it is not. But the reason gives me the strength.

The link between "a woman" and "body passion goes up" in the opening sentence refers to his desire for sexual intimacy which is prohibited in Catholic priesthood. In the second sentence, he mentioned prayer as the source of his victory over sexual temptations. Though it did not happen automatically, prayer gave him the strength to struggle through those temptations. This shows the role spirituality played in his priestly vocation.

Spirituality aided Fr. Hector in overcoming personal and pastoral challenges in the ministry. When he suffered depression and realized he was turning "to food and movies" as an escape route, he "shifted more to prayer" and "tried to find more continuing formation programs." By shifting from food and movies to prayer, he was taking spiritual steps to deal with his personal issues. He further registered "in a three year spiritual director continuing education program." The spiritual actions he took in addressing his problems indicate the seriousness with which he embraced his priestly vocation. The various examples reveal the importance of spirituality to participants in dealing with the demands of their priestly vocation.

Dependence on God. In connection with spirituality, my analysis of participants' stories showed they depended on God in fulfilling the demands of their priestly vocation. I found in Fr. Brendan's story that he undertook and completed the renovation project in his parish based on his dependence on God. He said, "We tackled it very squarely. By God's grace, by God's divine

grace because we prayed a whole lot and I allowed God's will to prevail. And God did prevail."

His repeated reference to God in the expressions "God's grace," "God's divine grace," and

"God's will" in describing how he succeeded in his project attests to his dependence on God.

Equally, Fr. Hector's story showed dependence on God was his saving grace in handling pastoral situations while his failure came from not surrendering to God. He said,

Every time I found I've gotten myself in trouble has been when I jumped into something and I didn't ask for God's guidance and input on it. Every time I found that even if it took me a little while to get to the right place, it was when I took it to God first.

In the first statement, he stated the cause of his failure as operating without God. This refers to undertaking a project without turning to God for direction. In the second statement, he made it clear that he succeeded by taking his plans to God first. This shows he depended on God for success in his pastoral plans. The various instances indicate that participants understood their priestly vocation as a response to God's call. Therefore, they allowed God to lead the way by taking their pastoral plans to him in prayer, asking for his guidance, and surrendering to his will.

Joy in the ministry. Participants spoke about the joy they experienced in the ministry. When Fr. Fintan was talking about the things that gave him joy in the priesthood, he said he enjoyed "helping people wrap their hands around the mystery of God." Here, "helping people" refers to assisting members in their difficulties, while "wrapping their hands around the mystery of God" refers to finding answers to religious questions. This indicates that his joy was supporting the people in their religious yearnings. Fr. Emmanuel said his joy was in "being a shepherd that guides the flock along the paths that I believe God wants." The image of the shepherd that guides the flock suggests a leadership role. Guiding them along the path that God wants refers to fulfilling God's will. This shows that he found joy in providing godly leadership to the people in his care. In a related sense, Fr. Ambrose said his joy was being with the people

whatever it is, “party or death in the family or baptism.” He found fulfillment in sharing existential and salvific moments with his parishioners. On the other hand, Fr. Domingo did not mention a specific thing in the ministry that gave him joy. Instead he said, “So far, I am very joyful and happy.” This expresses a feeling of fulfillment in his priestly life. He reiterated his joy in the ministry throughout the interview.

The expressions participants used in describing their joy in the ministry, such as helping people, being shepherd, and being with the people indicate that their joy in the ministry came from their service to and care for others. Self-giving in the form of service and presence to others expressed their religious conviction. This shows they understood the priestly vocation as a life that brings fulfillment through dedicated service to God and the people.

The different ideas in the theme of priesthood as vocation show that participants viewed their priestly life and pastoral engagements as a response to God’s call. By their spirituality and prayerfulness, they entered into a good relationship with God. On the basis of that relationship, they operated on the deeper level of willingness, obedience, and determination; and they stayed joyful despite the challenges. The outcomes were various projects and programs in the areas of structural, spiritual, economic, social, and human developments.

A Ministry of Commitment and Service

Evidence in the data revealed that participants were engaged in various areas of human and spiritual developments. The ways they told their stories expressed their commitment in serving the needs of the people and the community. I based my conclusion on ideas from the interview data. These include: participants’ personal commitment and development-oriented dispositions; their availability, strategic planning, and collaborative relationship; and their

intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity. The flowchart of this analysis is shown in Figure 6.

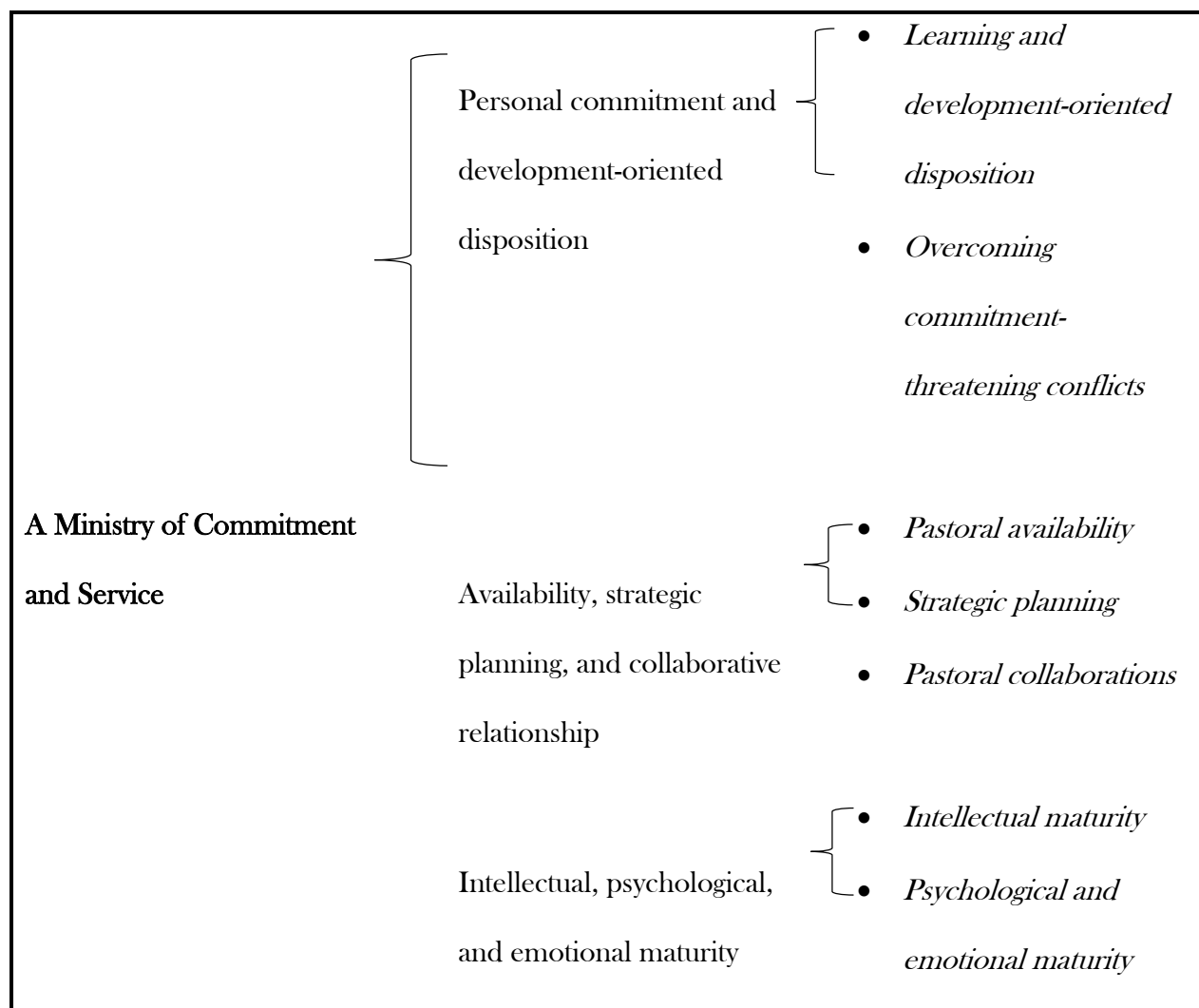


Figure 6. Breakdown of the theme of priesthood as a ministry of commitment and service.

Personal commitment and development-oriented dispositions. Personal commitment refers to participants' conviction and dedication to service. Development-oriented disposition refers to their attentiveness to the need for positive changes and improvements in their pastoral situations. Participants' stories about the rigors of planning and executing development projects and faith formation programs in their parishes revealed their commitment to service. They started by familiarizing themselves with the reality on ground. Paying attention to the pastoral realities

in their parishes, they became aware of the areas of need. Knowing the areas of need, they designed strategies to address the problems and disposed themselves for the task ahead. With proper disposition, they devoted themselves to the task of building their faith communities and responding to the needs of the people. I classified the findings in this analysis under: learning and development-oriented dispositions; and overcoming pastoral obstacles and oppositions.

Learning and development-oriented dispositions. My analysis of participants' responses led to the finding that upon assuming pastoral leadership positions, participants first learned, identified the needs, and positioned themselves for action before initiating developmental projects and programs. A cross section of participants pointed out that the first thing they did on assuming duty as pastoral leaders was to be familiar with the situation in their places of assignment. Responding to a follow-up question about his pastoral strategy Fr. Camillus said, "Without knowing the current situation in the parish, having any kind of strategy cannot be correct." In this statement, the dependent clause is, "having any kind of strategy." The independent clause is, "knowing the situation in the parish." This indicates that having pastoral strategy depends on knowing the situation in the parish. Knowing entails openness to learn and understand. Fr. Camillus considered this as the first step and an important aspect of commitment to service and developmental efforts.

Fr. Brendan's story revealed that he also made learning and understanding the pastoral situation the first step in his commitment to service. He said, "I came here and I paid . . . adequate attention to know what is happening in the parish." The phrase, "I came here" refers to assuming his duty in the parish as first time pastor. Paying "adequate attention" refers to being observant and learning. The concluding part of the statement "to know what is happening" provides the reason for his adequate attention. This indicates that Fr. Brendan started by paying

attention in order to learn. As part of the learning process, he said, “I started inviting people, listening to them, asking them questions. What do you think is going on in the parish? What are the strengths of the parish, the weaknesses? And also with the pastoral council.” Inviting people, listening to them, and asking questions on various levels constituted the different ways he made efforts at learning and understanding the situation in the parish.

Fr. Gerald expressed the same view as Fr. Camillus and Fr. Brendan about the need to learn and understand the situation before taking action. Responding to my question about his pastoral strategy Fr. Gerald said, “My strategy number one, you get into a place, have a structure. Or, if there is no structure you cannot operate.” In the first part of this statement, “strategy number one” denotes the fundamental action in responding to the needs of the community. The first step on getting into a place which refers to assuming pastoral leadership role is to “have a structure.” Explaining further he said, “And by structure I mean, when you go into the office, the office tells you how things are in the place.” He used the term “office” to describe the pastoral leadership position. In that position, having a “structure” underscores the need to learn and understand “how things are in the place” in order to organize the system and serve the people efficiently. By adding that “if there no structure you cannot operate”, he suggested like Fr. Camillus, that it was impossible to act properly without first learning and understanding the situation in the parish. His statement, “being able to categorize those issues gives you a clear picture,” articulates the positive outcome in first taking the time to learn and understand the pastoral situation. From learning and understanding the situation in their parishes, participants disposed themselves to make improvements. Their stories about the programs and projects they initiated revealed creativity, vision, and initiative, which indicated their personal disposition and commitment to enhance the wellbeing of their parishes and members.

Fr. Brendan described the condition of the Church structure when he arrived in his parish to assume duty as first time pastor. He said,

So the Church itself was 44 years old, you know. No major renovations had taken place. You know the floor, the carpet was stinky, dark, you know. The pews were frail, broken, you know. The Church itself was a dark Church because it had the solid walls. There is no way to experience some beautiful light inside it.

In this account, Fr. Brendan described the condition of the Church structure on his arrival. The age of the Church, lack of major renovations, the floor, the stinky and dark carpet, the frail and broken pews, a dark Church, and lack of light, indicated that the structure was worn-out and in need of repairs. Perceiving the need for the improvement of the Church facility, he disposed himself for action and began a massive renovation project.

Fr. Brendan described the various areas of improvement in his renovation project. He “opened the roof above the sanctuary to create a natural light which many people love today.” He relocated the chapel to the back of the sanctuary and connected it to the Church using plain glass “so that when we do have overflow mass like we do, you know, Christmas, you know, Easter, ash Wednesday and such days, we do need, you know, places for people to sit.” He relocated and installed a dual-purpose tabernacle to serve “both the chapel as well as the main Church” at the same time. He “built a new gathering place, new narthex which is huge and beautiful.” He installed a TV screen in the narthex “with the new technology so that masses can be recorded, and relayed on the screen for overflow masses” and for “recycling announcements.” Additionally, he “converted the space where the chapel used to be before to become the sacristy for altar servers, priests, and deacons.” He turned part of the chapel into the reconciliation room. These descriptions provide a mental tour of the Church renovation project which resulted from Fr. Brendan’s learning disposition and commitment to serve the needs of his parish.

I noted similar commitment and development-oriented disposition in Fr. Gerald's story. When he was given a rural assignment with the tribal people in Nigeria, he first observed the situation. From observing the situation, he learned that "the people were poor . . . but their poverty was more of the poverty of the mind, the lack of ideas not really materially poor." In the first part of the statement, he reported his material observation as poverty. In the second part, he interpreted his observation as "poverty of the mind" or "lack of ideas" as opposed to being "really materially poor" which refers to helpless economic deprivation. He provided two premises that led to his conclusion. First he said, "I see truckloads leaving the place almost all through the year, and I said, this is, you basically feed the country and you are poor. You shouldn't be." He added, "I started asking questions about their lifestyle and I realized, part of why they are poor is the culture and the lifestyle." The truckloads "leaving the place almost all through the year" and "you basically feed the country" which he mentioned in the first premise suggest that the people were productive. By reflecting on the situation, he learned that the people's poverty was an outcome of a cultural mindset and their personal lifestyle.

Fr. Gerald followed up his learning and realizations by disposing himself to help the people overcome their culturally induced poverty. He told the people, "You know what? Instead of simply selling and squandering that, you can begin to plan with the cash you have to have something that carries you through the year." By this advice, he led them to start implementing financial planning. To help them strategize the financial planning, he told them, "You know you sell them (the produce) in batches, get storage and store your produce and sell them through the year and that sustains you through the year." This was a piecemeal strategy for financial control since they could not regulate their spending. Commenting on the outcome of his advice he said,

“I realized that that idea started working with them.” Through his commitment and service, he helped in changing the mindset of the people that enabled them overcome their poverty.

Fr. Hector’s account of his experience in resolving the financial crisis in the parish he was posted to as first time pastor shows learning and development-oriented disposition. He started off by listening and consulting members who understood the situation, especially finance council members and the business manager. He said, “I listened first to the people, listened to the staff, and kind of seeing what, and seeing what were their feedback because I didn’t think I had that answer right off the bat.” Listening to the people for their feedbacks is a learning disposition. Listening to members who were informationally and professionally empowered enabled him to know how to go about resolving the crisis. As a result he said,

My answer to financial crisis was, we did reductions and expenditure. There was a lot of wastes. In particular a lot of wastes in priestly expenses like subscriptions that didn’t need to be. We had internet services going to every building which didn’t need to be. So I basically looked at the financial crisis and said, where can we trim up where we’ve been wasteful? Where can we be better stewards?

The “answer” he gave expresses his understanding and response to the problem based on what he learned by listening. The problem was “a lot of wasteful spending.” He responded by reducing expenditure and trimmed up waste. This indicates a disposition to serve the people together with a strategy to improve the financial condition of the parish.

Participants’ stories also showed learning and development-oriented dispositions in spiritual and pastoral matters. Fr. Camillus’ story described the faith formation programs and the strategies he set up to address the spiritual and pastoral needs of people. On his arrival as an associate, he had a discussion with the pastor of the parish. Based on the discussion he said, “Immediately, I sensed there is a need for the pastoral ministry there which is good.” This

statement shows his learning disposition. He was able to sense the pastoral need immediately. He showed openness to the need he identified by describing it as good.

As Fr. Camillus started work in the parish, he “found out that there are three types of Catholics there in the parish” and labeled them “first level Catholics”, “second level Catholics,” and “third level Catholics”. This observation and action validate his earlier view about “knowing the current situation in the parish” before any strategy. He described “first level Catholics” as “enthusiastic, faith-filled, you know, fire in their hearts”. This shows his dedication to studying the situation. For this type of Catholics he said, “I focus on connecting them with some proper programs such as CRHP – Christ Renews His Parish. Or the first layers, we try to train them as apostles to be sent.” By these actions, he created opportunities for further religious improvement and commitment of members, and engaged them in the parish on a deeper level as “apostles”.

About the “second level Catholics” Fr. Camillus said, “They are okay generally coming to Church, you know what I am saying. Not the mass, they are coming to mass every Sunday but not necessarily committing to that.” In this statement, he reported his observation that the second level Catholics were less committed than those on the first level. Apart from attending mass, they helped out “if the Church needs to be cleaned” but they were “not necessarily enthusiastic about other aspects.” For this group he said, “We provide some deep insight retreat-based programs to them” and “they come to the monthly lecture.” As he did with first level Catholics, he learned, realized the need, and designed a program to help his second level Catholics improve spiritually and be more involved than before.

Fr. Camillus described “third level Catholics” as “lukewarm Catholics” and “people who are coming to mass probably once a month or twice a month. If there is golf game, then they will skip the mass, then they will go to golf.” These descriptions portrayed those on this level as the

least involved in the Church. For them he said, “We launched the program called the monthly CD program.” In this program they chose a three dollars CD each month and sold them. “While they are driving they’re listening. Not necessarily very theological, just something simple, something very easily understandable, people can listen while they are driving.” This explanation shows he designed basic faith formation program for third level Catholics to help them grow and move from “third level to the second level which means, you know, every Sunday comer.” These various programs and approaches point to his commitment and disposition to serve the people.

Fr. Emmanuel, Fr. Brendan, and Fr. Hector’s stories about their faith formation programs expressed similar learning and development-oriented disposition. Fr. Emmanuel spoke about his evangelization program. He said, “We are also using a theme right now, hospitality. Because as part of the new evangelization, we are speaking around the Sunday experience.” The theme of “hospitality” indicates the pastoral need he identified in the parish. His description of his parish “as part of the new evangelization” refers to his adaptation of the innovative strategy the Church has introduced for spreading the gospel message. Stating that they were “speaking around the Sunday experience” shows the importance he attached to Sunday masses.

In his pastoral development agenda, he spoke about having “an exterior expression of hospitality but also interior expression that’s welcoming to other people.” This refers to going beyond practicing hospitality as “an exterior expression” which is a physical activity to making it “an interior expression that is welcoming to people” which is an enlivening engagement. In this plan of action, he wanted the parish to become “a more welcoming place where they can come and have a good Sunday experience, encounter Jesus Christ, and want to come back and make this their home.” His story showed he had learned and identified the areas of need and he was

committed to making his parish a “home” by training members to be welcoming in their respective functions.

Fr. Brendan’s story described his commitment to adult faith formation. He stated that “one of the best ways to get your parishioners to be great followers of Christ is have them to be educated in the faith.” The dependent and independent clauses in this statement show that for him, being “educated in the faith” was prerequisite to being “great followers of Christ.” To enhance followership, he committed himself to educating the members in the faith. Fr. Hector’s story focused on leadership development. His intention was to get his “members of ministries involved in different programs that help to form them as leaders.” Similar to Fr. Brendan, the dependent and independent clauses in his statement point to the prerequisite of formation programs in building good leadership. The various instances cited show that participants observed and learned from the situation, became aware of the needs, designed suitable programs, and committed themselves to improve the state of affairs in their parishes.

Overcoming commitment-threatening conflicts. Interview responses showed that despite participants’ disposition and commitment to improve pastoral conditions in their parishes, they had to overcome conflicts that were threatening their service. Fr. Emmanuel recalled the personal conflict of “reaching my limit but not knowing how to balance my schedule yet.” The expression, “reaching my limit” refers to getting to the saturation point in his pastoral commitment, while “Not knowing how to balance my schedule yet” describes his inability to stop when he should. This statement reveals an inner conflict in balancing his desire against his ability. However, he learned to overcome saying, “Every time I’ve made a transition, it’s taken me a couple of years before I can really begin to see, ok, what’s too much, what’s too little.” It

took him time to balance his commitments against his ability but he was able to resolve the problem. Reaching his limits and not stopping shows his passion and commitment to service.

Fr. Gerald's account equally revealed inner conflicts which he described as the "big struggle". He said,

It's exciting you have all the ideas, then again you come down I'm still the man. All my human needs are there both materially, spiritually, psychologically, sexually they are there, and for me, that has been the big struggle.

By "all the ideas," he was referring to his pastoral plans and actions, such as helping people become "spiritually nourished," "get their lives back," renew "relationship with God after they wonder away," and "come to Church to listen to a message and they are so inspired." It includes: leading people "through preparation and get them married," and "seeing people struggle with their lives and being able to guide them and seeing them reconciled with God." Despite these achievements, he acknowledged he was human with all the needs he had to struggle with.

The two personal conflicts he mentioned were family issues and sexual needs. About his family issues he said, "We need a house in my family and I cannot. So, it weighs me down and sometimes it affects my mood, it affects my disposition to the ministry." Here, "my family" refers to his parents and siblings. "I cannot" denotes his inability to fulfil his responsibility of building a house for his family. This conflict was affecting his mood and disposition in the ministry. He also spoke about his struggle with the desire for intimate relationship. He said,

Then I see people get married, I see very good relationship, I see people who talk about their love relationship during my ministry, I'm like wow! How nice would it be to have one! And I begin to have some sense of you know, I hope I'm not losing it out in life.

What he observed in the course of his ministry with people getting married and talking about good love relationship raised his thoughts to marital engagement. "I hope that I'm not losing out in life" expresses his concern about his choice of the celibate life. It degenerated to where he

said, “And sometimes, honestly, and sometimes I contemplated, you know, I think I can abandon this life and go and live fulfilled like the other people.” This shows the extent to which personal conflict was threatening his priestly commitment. However, he had a way of overcoming it. He said, “The most important thing for me is, each time I get to pray, they basically disappear.” To pray is a spiritual exercise. This indicates he was using spiritual exercises to overcome the personal conflicts that were threatening his commitment to service in the ministry.

Fr. Hector also mentioned his personal conflicts. He said, “I came to realize actually, part of the reason why I did struggle so much with depression at (name of parish) was due to my pride in the sense of trying to do too much myself.” This was an acknowledgement of a personal conflict that was threatening his commitment to service. His “trying to do too much myself” signals a tendency to be self-sufficient. Realizing this problem, he joined a support group as a means of renewing himself and overcoming the conflict. He said, “That was the group that probably helped me the most through my first two years of priesthood in particular when I was having some of the struggles.” This shows he found a way to overcome his personal conflict and remain committed in his service.

Fr. Domingo recounted a health situation that was threatening his commitment to service. He said,

First time in my life in the year 2014, 2013, I had flu and it developed into pneumonia. I really suffered. I was bedridden for 15 days with pneumonia and that was real test for me. Couldn't breathe, couldn't walk, couldn't eat, losing all my weight.

“First time in my life” indicates this problem was unprecedented for him. The difficulties he described shows the debilitating impacts of the sickness on him and his pastoral responsibilities. In response he said, “I called my brother priests, retired priests, and those who were chaplains in hospitals, those who did not have parish assignments, and for two weekends, the priests, brother

priests came and helped me to take up weekend masses.” This was the measure he took in dealing with the health situation that threatened his commitment to service. He assigned the priests to perform the most important pastoral duties which were weekend masses. This effort shows the extent of his commitment to his pastoral responsibilities.

One of conflicts that threatened Fr. Brendan’s commitment was the attitude of some members concerning the renovation project he intended to initiate. He said,

About 30 something percent of parishioners that time were resistant to the idea of change of anything, I am sorry to say this, including few people in my staff. They thought we don’t need to do that. They thought it will be a waste of money. We could use the money for other things, the poor as they usually say. And they, some of, some people have the fear that this is an aging community, so, that we will not be able to raise any money for that.

The 30 something percent reflects the extent of the opposition with diverse reasons for not supporting the project. This situation exemplifies the pastoral conflicts he recounted that were threatening his commitment to service. In his response he said, “I am somebody who really loves the parish and wanted the parish to grow. And then we all prayed, we prayed and people prayed, you know my friends everywhere, you know, get me in prayers.” The first part of the statement expresses his commitment and good intention. The second part presents praying as the course of action he adopted in overcoming the conflicts and opposition that threatened his commitment to service. These various instances indicate the diverse conflicts participants experienced in the ministry and the actions they took to overcome them. The resilience they showed in the different situations demonstrates their understanding of the priesthood as a ministry of commitment and service.

Availability, strategic planning, and collaborative relationship. Based on participants’ commitment to service, they were focused on performing their duties. They manifested this in

their availability to people, their strategic planning, and the collaborative relationships on both personal and professional levels.

Pastoral availability. Interview responses indicated that participants were available to people. This aspect of their commitment to service came through in the stories they told about their ministry to the sick and the homebound. They considered care of the sick, the homebound, and the bereaved as an integral part of their ministry. They visited the sick in hospitals, in nursing homes, and in personal homes. They prayed for them, anointed them, counseled them, and made follow up visits. Fr. Ambrose said, “I will go there if they are sick, you know, they are about to be operated, or after the operation, I check with them, you know, and I visit them at home afterwards.” This outlines the various moments of need that Fr. Ambrose made himself available to members. It shows the continuity of his service – before, during, and after treatment. Apart from visiting sick members he said, “I even announce in Church, you know, please if you know someone who is homebound or sick in nursing home that needs to be visited, please let us know.” By making the announcement in the Church, he did not just wait to be called for visits, he also reached out in search of those who might need his services.

Similar to Fr. Ambrose, Fr. Domingo’s story expressed his availability to the sick. He said, “I was always available to those elderly people and they liked that It was my joy to be available to all those people, sick people, homebound people.” Moreover he said, “I always stress on the point, when you need me, I am always available to you, you know. Wherever I am, through the means of technology, if I am away from the parish and they can reach me.” Using the means of technology to keep in contact with members indicates his seriousness in serving the needs of his members. He made himself available by enabling them to contact him at all times. Fr. Hector’s story also showed he was involved in pastoral care of the sick. He said, “Every time

I do hospital call, I enjoyed it greatly being with people, with funerals.” The statement reflects his availability to the sick and the bereaved, and his positive disposition in doing that ministry.

Participants’ accounts of their availability to members showed they understood the priesthood as a ministry of commitment and service. Fr. Fintan said,

If you are going to deal with those people, you need to know what you are going to give, you’re gonna have no choice but to know what they are going through. So that is what I mean by standing on the ground. You gotta, you can’t float above them in some sort of ethereal speculative theological ground. No, you gotta have your feet on the ground and be down in the ground.

In these four sentences, Fr. Fintan described what availability entails as an act of commitment to service. He started by establishing an “if” relationship between knowing “what you are going to give” and “what the people are going through.” The conditionality indicates that being available to people depends on knowing their existential conditions through “standing on the ground,” rather than floating above them. His subsequent statements stressed the need to understand what the people are dealing with in their lives. In his personal example, he was “down in the ground” with a mother who was “very upset” that her son “suffering from Asperger’s disease . . . was not going to be allowed to have his first Holy Communion.” He used pastoral discretion to test the son’s level of understanding and made it possible for him to receive the sacrament. He took time to understand the existential reality the mother was living due to her son’s condition and was able to be available for her as an act of his commitment to service.

Fr. Domingo’s reference to his availability expressed a similar perspective as Fr. Fintan. He said, “In reality that has strengthened my pastoral work, relating myself with the people, and learning from their experiences and leading them to God by being available to them at all times whenever they need me.” The different ways he spoke about being present for the people shows he identified with them in their existential realities in the manner Fr. Fintan advocated.

Fr. Brendan's story expressed another dimension of availability that was reminiscent of Fr. Ambrose's action. He said, "You know, the Church is about reaching out to the people, going out for the people." The expression "the church is about" suggests the primary mission of the Church. By relating "the Church is about" to "reaching out to people" or "going out for people" he expressed his opinion that the Church's primary mission is to reach out, as opposed to waiting for people to come to Church. These examples reflect participants' commitment to service in being available to the people and attending to their needs.

Strategic planning. Analyzing participants' stories, I observed that participants had strategies for implementing their pastoral plans. They first established the need, set the goal, and drew up plans they intended to use in achieving set goals.

In the area of pastoral and spiritual development, evidence from the data showed that participants' actions were based on strategic planning. Fr. Fintan's story indicated that preaching was his overarching strategy for religious growth and community building. He used analogies of the oak tree and the hub of a bicycle wheel to illustrate the importance of preaching as a strategy in building a dynamic Church community. He said,

Churches are like a big oak tree, and you have the trunk of the oak tree. And then going up that oak tree, it branches out into all the different branches, and there is the knights of Columbus branch, there is the women's ministry branch, there is the youth ministry branch, there is the religious education branch, there is the Guadalupanas' branch, there is the choir branch, all these different branches, all the different ministries. And if you will, in the trunk is the Eucharist, mass.

The idea he was expressing in this analogy was that pastoral dynamism and community spirit are generated to the various branches, which are ministries, through the trunk, which is the Eucharistic celebration. For this reason, he said, it begins from "the Sunday Eucharist and from the preaching of the gospel, and that goes out in all of the ministries." His illustration with the hub of a bicycle wheel conveyed a similar message. With these examples, he insisted that

preaching at Eucharistic celebrations is a teaching moment in the task of community building. He said, “My preaching style is teaching. I’m a teacher when I preach but not necessarily from an academic standpoint.” Teaching or being a teacher, connotes instructing the people. This indicates that instructing the people within the mass was his strategic design in fulfilling his pastoral leadership commitment.

Fr. Emmanuel presented another dimension of strategic planning for community building within the context of liturgical celebrations. When he arrived in his new parish, he observed that liturgical ministers were “accustomed to kind of more mechanical. What are we supposed to do?” This observation refers to perfunctory execution of ministerial functions. To change this mindset, he spoke about introducing “an interiority formation as to why we do what we do and to invite people to be more prayerful in the exercise of their ministries.” He considered forming the people as the strategy that will enable them to reflect and understand the “why” behind their actions. Inviting “people to be more prayerful” indicates the reflective aspect of service. His plan was to lead people from “exterior expressions” or mechanical actions in their hospitality, to “interior expressions that’s welcoming to other people.” The interiority formation points to the transformational learning process he envisioned as a strategic plan in his commitment to service.

Fr. Brendan’s account of his faith formation program also revealed the strategic steps he took to implement it. Describing the *status quo ante* he said,

When I came here, they didn’t have a formalized adult faith formation. They had, one of the deacons does classes on Church history. Few people do attend. Then one, there was one other man that does bible study too on Fridays, you know, and even though it is called bible study but it was all about studying the scriptures for the weekend, you know, the readings of the weekend.

This scenario presents an outlook of an uncoordinated program for adult faith formation at his arrival in the parish. Based on his observations, his first step was, “I did seek assistance from one

of my staff and then one of the deacons to tell me those who they think in this parish could do adult faith formation. So they suggested some names.” He started by a strategic efforts to recruit resource persons for the program. Apart from seeking assistance from his staff and the deacon, he also mentioned consulting informed members of the parish for names of resource persons.

His second step was, “I got all those names together, about eight people. I summoned them to a meeting, and gave them my goal and desire that I want to have a solid adult faith formation program.” This was about communicating his intention. Thirdly, he gave them one month assignment “to go home and come up with an idea of a program.” This strategic action involved intellectual engagement of members. Lastly, “after three weeks they came back with a program. And from there we appointed a director among them and an assistant.” He empowered members for action. The outcome was, “They went and they have excelled.” The success story began with strategic planning and systematic implementation. Fr. Camillus also implemented strategic planning in his adult faith formation program as presented under *learning and development-oriented disposition*. The various instances indicate that participants displayed commitment to service by strategically planning and implementing their programs and projects in their parishes.

Pastoral collaborations. This refers to working with other people to achieve pastoral goals. It operated in tandem with availability and strategic planning. In order to be available to needy members and strategize to meet set goals, participants’ stories showed they worked with other people. They intentionally engaged other individuals within and outside the communities to implement their programs and realize their goals. Fr. Brendan’s story about his pastoral care of the sick shows he intentionally collaborated with others. He said,

So that area of pastoral ministry, I have one of my deacons who assist me in that area. So, he would go to the places I could not go because of time. And he will come back to me if those people need me to be present to do anointing or confessions and I will do that.

The area of the ministry he was referring to was pastoral care of the sick. He collaborated with one of his deacons to ensure adequate and incessant provision of service for those in need.

Fr. Brendan also collaborated with lay people in this area of apostolate. He said, “I require that for you to be a communion minister you have to agree to, at least once a month to go to the nursing homes or the homebound to give communion.” Communion ministers are lay members of the Church who assist priests in administering the Holy Communion to people during mass. The expression “I require” suggests an imperative demand for commitment. “For you to be . . . you have to agree to” expresses prerequisite for joining the communion ministry. This action points to the seriousness with which he regarded collaborative relationship as a necessary strategy in his chain of efforts to achieve his purpose in the pastoral ministry.

Fr. Emmanuel’s collaborative relationship was visible in his story about reliance on prayer. He said,

So what I call it is a real leadership team. So, when I talk about relying on prayer that this is a group that I can actually pray with, that will pray with me to discern the vision, the focus, and the implementation of a lot of our initiatives.

The real leadership team was his team of pastoral collaborators. He collaborated with them in conceiving, designing, and implementing his pastoral plans and programs.

Fr. Ambrose spoke about his collaboration with the diocese. He said, “We are working together so that we can get things done, you know, through the guidelines, and we follow them.” Working together indicates a collaborative relationship. The expressions “through the guidelines” and “we follow them” describe the rule that guided the collaboration for both parties which they followed to get things done.

A common expression in the data which supports the finding that participants worked collaboratively with other individuals and groups in furthering their pastoral objectives was the frequent use of the personal pronoun “we” instead of “I”. In describing their parish projects and programs, they spoke about their efforts in the first person plural which points to collaboration with other individuals or groups. It also shows they acknowledged and appreciated collaborative relationship as a viable means of achieving their pastoral goals.

Fr. Ambrose used the first person plural when he spoke about his parish donation to a charitable organization. He said, “We were having the vacation bible school, you know. And we asked during this period of time that the kids bring nonperishable food to be given to Caritas at the end of the Vacation Bible School.” Fr. Brendan referred to the spiritual renewal program he initiated saying, “We did, you know, embark upon a spiritual transformation journey. We got a priest from the National Purview.” Fr. Camillus spoke about his activities in the youth ministry saying, “We launched the youth ministry program in conjunction with confirmation preparation.” The “we” expresses participants’ collaborative actions with their members.

Furthermore, Fr. Domingo used the first person plural to talk about the property he wanted to purchase for his parish saying, “I called the diocese and told them to, so we are planning to buy it, asking them to give us loan, and I was told, oh it’s not necessary, your parish is poor.” He also told the diocese, “we are planning to buy” which suggests a collaborative plan of action. Fr. Emmanuel also used “we” in describing his pastoral decisions. He said,

So I always invite people into prayer around the decisions that we are making as a parish. So whether it is pastoral council, parish staff, different groups. So for example, right now we are talking about mass times. There are slight adjustments that we are making to meet.

This describes his conscious efforts at collaborating with members in his pastoral decisions.

Fr. Fintan used “we” to speak about the ministry of care in his parish. He said,

We have, you know, 97 ministries here at the parish. And so every ministry is dicing for their space. Where can they have their meeting and getting on the schedule. And so, one of the challenges for immigrant peoples is that they are almost always the last to get space in the Church, in the meeting rooms or in the parish hall or whatever. So one of the ways that we can ensure that we are, that we are seeing them, recognizing them, is to give them space.

The repeated use of “we” in resolving the issues among the various ministries indicates that he approached the situation collaboratively in order to meet the needs and unite the community.

Fr. Gerald spoke about the challenges he faced in his Church building project saying, “That’s the impression I get, in the sense that we start, we wanted to build this Church and it was all discouraging, you won’t be able to raise the fund and all of that.” In the statement, “I” refers to his interpretation of the situation and “we” underscores the collective decision about the project they wanted to undertake which the diocese was not willing to support. The collaborative aspect of the project is seen in his use of “we”. Similarly, Fr. Hector spoke about the formulation of his pastoral council using the pronoun “we”. He said, “I just recently have a, again being here one year, we rotated some members of the pastoral council.” He described the rotation of some pastoral council members as a collaborative decision they took together. These instances point to participants’ sense of collaborative relationship in fulfilling their commitment to service.

In summary, participants’ accounts of their service in the pastoral ministry demonstrated the importance they attached to availability for the people in their needs. In responding to these needs, they strategically planned their projects and programs. To implement the programs and projects, they collaborated with people at different levels, such as parishioners, staff members, council members, and the diocese. This pastoral approach testifies to their understanding of the pastoral ministry and leadership as an office that is about commitment to service.

Intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity. For this research study, maturity refers to a sense of right judgment in handling pastoral issues and situations. Interview responses indicated that participants exhibited maturity at different levels in their commitment to service.

Intellectual maturity. This element of commitment to service denotes an individual's intelligence and development quotient. In their pastoral leadership positions, participants displayed "cognitive ability to remember, collect and integrate information, analyze problems, develop solutions, and evaluate alternatives" (Nahavandi, 2012, p. 112). They exhibited intellectual maturity in their judgments as pastoral leaders. On assuming duty as a priest after ordination, Fr. Fintan first observed and articulated the difference between the ideal "high academic setting" of the seminary life and the practical situation in the field of pastoral ministry "where people are really just working hard to get through each day." His ability to enter into a pastoral situation, make observations, and evaluate his observations judiciously is indicative of his lofty intellectual aptitude. Reflecting on his observations he said,

My first parish was very much a blue-collar parish, not an affluent parish. And so, and so there's some challenges in that. So, it very quickly brought me out of a sort of an idealistic environment and placed me into a much more realistic real situation of the human experience which is an experience that is very much trying to deal with brokenness, trying to deal with a bit of anxiety about their future, trying to create a sense of order in a world that is a bit chaotic but also at the same time finding a certain solace in the community itself.

This reflection reveals a mindset of an analytic person. He observed the prevailing situation in his parish, and articulated the difference between the idealistic seminary environment and the realistic environment of the daily human struggles. The subtleties expressed in this account suggest his commitment to service that was driven by a mature intellectual engagement.

Fr. Ambrose's description of the socio-cultural conflict in his parish and the bridge he built between the two opposing groups also revealed intellectual maturity. He had noticed a

division between the Hispanic and Anglo blocs. After studying the situation, he concluded that “communication gap is the one that divides them . . . it is just because they cannot express themselves in a language that they can understand.” After identifying the problem he said, “The first thing I had in mind was that this people be able to communicate.” This story presents a systematic account of his pastoral experience and an action plan that began with observing the friction among the diverse cultural groups, identifying the major antagonistic blocs, pinpointing the problem as communication gap, and ended with initiating a program to resolve the conflict. The systematic undertone in this process indicates an intellectual exertion that entailed reflecting and acting conscientiously to resolve a contentious issue in his parish.

Fr. Brendan and Fr. Emmanuel’s intellectual commitments were visible in their plans to attend pastoral leadership conferences. Fr. Brendan said,

We are going to attend a conference in Denver, Colorado next week. It is called an Amazing Parish Conference. So we are going there to, you know, listen to other parishes who have gone through the journey of transforming their parishes to see what they did and then we come back and look at our parish, in the context of our parish and see how we need to improve our parish.

He came across in this story as someone who was setting himself on an intellectual path for a fruitful ministry. Attending the Amazing Parish Conference and listening to other parishes were his plan for intellectual engagement and growth. By going to listen “to other parishes that have gone through the journey of transforming their parishes,” he intended to raise his intellectual quotient in order to improve his quality of service in the pastoral ministry.

Fr. Emmanuel mentioned he had attended the same conference where he learned from “great thinkers on the new evangelization.” Similar to attending the conference and listening to other parishes in Fr. Brendan’s case, Fr. Emmanuel’s desire to learn from great thinkers indicates intellectual development. Accordingly he said, “So we’ve been using that paradigm, we’ve been

looking at some books such as *Rebuilt* or *Forming Intentional Disciples* is another one by Sherry Weddell. And that kind of help to do that.” Using the paradigm from great thinkers shows he learned and developed intellectually from the conference he attended. These instances demonstrate the intellectual maturity participants exemplified in their response to pastoral issues and situations. They processed the challenging realities in their parishes and proffered solutions expressive of their commitment to service.

Psychological and emotional maturity. In dealing with the situations and challenges they encountered in the ministry, participants exhibited psychological and emotional maturity in their behaviors and attitudes. Being psychologically and emotionally mature, they worked and related cordially with people (Northouse, 2010). They equally entered into pastoral situations pleasantly, handled challenges calmly, and achieved their set goals based on their emotional maturity (Goleman, 2006). Fr. Brendan recalled potentially overwhelming and upsetting encounters he experienced in his parish. Instead of being weighed down by those challenges, he approached the situations with a positive attitude and equanimity. He said,

We did a pew survey, a survey. And you know, the result of that survey, you know, showed, kind of made open, expressed in a vivid way the anger, the heavy anger that many people had about this parish and also about me.

His reference to the survey shows the anger against the parish and against him was empirically verified. His perceived reasons for the anger against him were his racial background and cultural mannerisms. For instance he said, “I remember one man telling me that I don’t even know how to do a handshake.” He was also accused of “screaming” at them when he speaks. This statement suggests he lacked basic social etiquette. His reference to these accusations underscore the extent of the resentment he perceived in his pastoral assignment. Despite his perceived resentment by people, he continued discharging his pastoral duties with psychological and emotional maturity.

The resentment became more compounded with Fr. Brendan's introduction of a massive renovation project that a cross-section of parishioners did not support. They wanted him to continue with the minimal renovation the former pastor had planned, which was "to just make the bathroom to be ADA compliant." Fr. Brendan's decision to implement a broad-based Church renovation project caused ripple effects in the parish community. He said, "Some people were angry, some didn't like it, you know. It affected the parish in many ways. Some people left the parish in anger. Some decided just to watch and never contributed." Leaving the parish and watching without contributing describe the debilitating effects of people's resentment of the change he was initiating. Despite these negative reactions, he carried on and completed the project. Reminiscing on that experience he considered it "a beautiful experience filled with different strands and different shades of life in it." This positive comment about his stressful experiences reflects his psychological and emotional maturity.

Fr. Camillus related similar experiences and talked about "prejudice in this society based on language, accent, and color." This describes his perceived resentment by a member. He said,

I mean good example was when I got here, there is one lady who came to me and said, you know, I don't like you, I'm leaving. Obviously, you know, she was perhaps, she was fond of you know, Fr. (the former priest in the parish) I think.

Referring to this encounter as a "good example" of prejudice reveals a feeling of being rejected on account of his cultural difference. Instead of a negative reaction, he told the lady, "Look give me six months, give me one year and after one year if you do not like me then, I'm more than happy to find a good parish for you." This plea is reminiscent of his psychological and emotional maturity as a leader who is focused on the wellbeing of members in his commitment to service.

I also observed psychological and emotional maturity in Fr. Domingo's description of his pastoral duties in the jungle of northern India. Five points described the challenges and provided

an insight into his maturity. First he said, “The people were far away in the jungles, there were no proper roads.” Secondly, “There were 15 different missions from the main parish. We two priests used to go from Monday to different locations. Monday one mission, Tuesday another mission, and Wednesday another mission, like Monday through Friday.” Thirdly, “We used to go there in the evenings around 5 to 6 O’clock pm.” Fourthly, “It used to be 10 pm or 11 pm, and we used to go back to our main parish like 10 miles each way, 10 to 15 miles.” Lastly, “The young priests were given pedal bicycles, since we were young and had a lot of energy.”

The five points in Fr. Domingo’s account describe the distance, geographic location, road condition, weekly responsibility, timeframe, and means of transport relative to his pastoral duty in the jungle. These variables point to the stress that the jungle ministry entailed. In spite of these realities he said, “We truly enjoyed by pedaling the bicycles and very, very happy moments we had by looking at all those wild birds and the creatures in the jungles.” Asserting that they truly enjoyed the ministry despite the stressful conditions signals his mature psychological and emotional disposition in fulfilling the demands of his priestly commitment.

In analyzing this theme, I have demonstrated how participants understood their priestly life as a ministry of commitment to service. In presenting my evidence, I explored the various aspects of the pastoral ministry concerned with services. These addressed participants’ personal commitment and development-oriented disposition; their availability, strategic planning, and collaborative relationship; and their intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity. The outcomes present participants as pastoral leaders who were interiorly motivated in their duties, and were focused on the wellbeing of their members and parish communities despite the odds.

A Ministry with Complex Realities

In this analysis, complex realities refer to the diverse needs and multifaceted demands that participants had to provide in the ministry. Evidence from interview data indicated that they worked in different socio-economic and cultural environments. Their concerns and engagements extended beyond spiritual and religious matters to existential responsibilities. Their pastoral obligations brought them in contact with various demographics of people. They were also involved in different areas of human, social, and technological services. Furthermore, their duties and responsibilities entailed collaborating with other individuals and groups to achieve set goals. To discharge their functions properly, they needed to take care of themselves. These various functions and demands demonstrate the complexity in the pastoral ministry. I am analyzing this theme under: diverse pastoral environments and people, demands in multiple areas of human services, pastoral networking and empowerment of members, and self-care and personal development. The flowchart of analysis of pastoral leadership as a ministry with complex realities is illustrated in Figure 7.

Diverse pastoral environments and peoples. Pastoral environments refer to places where participants carried out their pastoral responsibilities, while peoples refer to those whom they ministered to or worked with. Participants' stories about their pastoral experiences showed that the needs in the ministry took them to diverse socio-economic and cultural environments where they equally served people of diverse racial, social, cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds and existential conditions. The complexity I am focusing on in this analysis are the diverse pastoral environments and diverse demographics of people.

Diverse pastoral environments. This refers to variety of locations where participants served as pastoral leaders. Participants' stories revealed they worked at various socio-cultural

settings. Based on their stories, these different settings had peculiar characteristics that required particular competencies and dispositions to function properly within the context. Fr. Domingo's

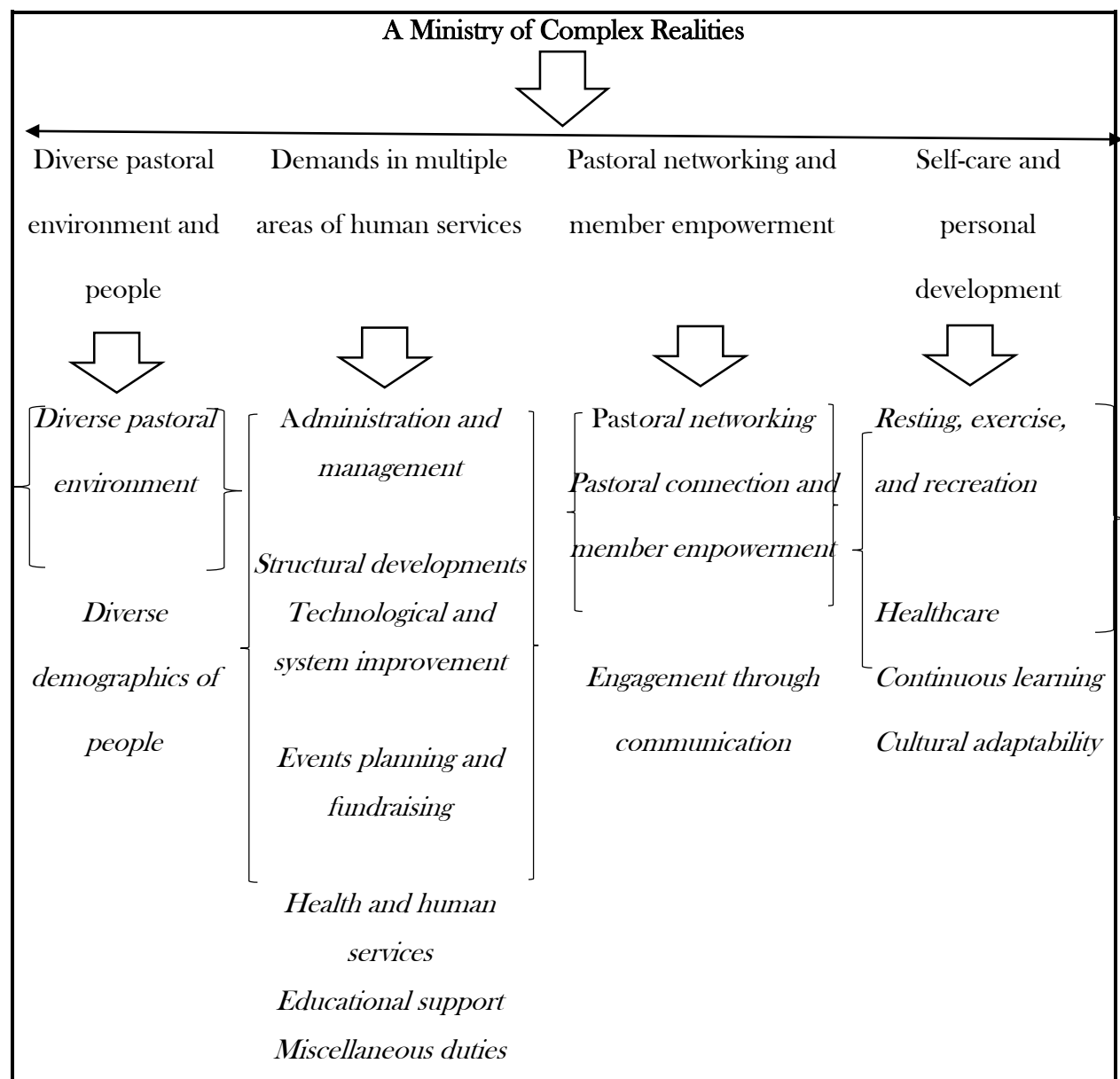


Figure 7. Flowchart of the priesthood as a ministry of complex realities.

description of the various places he has worked as a priest points to the complex reality in the ministry in terms of geographical locations. He said,

in India, I worked in south India, in my first year of priesthood, 1992-93. And I was sent to Calcutta, to Northern India to work with Mother Theresa's sisters. And in the jungles for the tribals . . . Then I was called back to south India. I continued one more year. Altogether three years I worked in India and 20 years in USA.

As a priest, he has served in two national cultures, namely, Indian and American. There were subcultures within these national cultures with their distinct existential realities. The pastoral demands in the jungle of northern India, where the people worked the entire day in the tea gardens "fetching the tea leaves," where he performed night-time ministry were different from those in the parish in south India where he was sent to help a pastor who had an accident while also "taking care of the kids" in the orphanage. Similarly, the demands in the two Indian socio-cultural settings were different from the demands in the various parishes in America where he has served for 20 years. The different national and socio-cultural environments constituted part of the complex realities he was dealing with in fulfilling his pastoral obligations.

Fr. Gerald's story revealed similar experiences. He said,

after my ordination I worked one year in a rural parish in Nigeria, and then three years in an administrative headquarters in Nigeria also. And then four years in another administrative headquarters in Houston, Texas. That is the mission development office. And I've been here now for three years.

He worked in Nigeria and in the United States, which are two different national cultures. From evidence in his interview response, the existential realities he experienced in the rural location in Nigeria, where he helped the local people manage their agricultural resources, were different from the ones in the urban location in the same country where he worked at the administrative headquarters. These Nigerian experiences were different from those in American culture, namely: Houston, Texas where he worked as director in the mission development office and the country parish in central Texas where he had to settle "a big fight in the parish" and build a new church. Recalling the diverse pastoral environments he has served, he said, "I've been to rural

areas, I've been to urban areas, I've been to parishes that have ethnic diversities and I've been to parishes that are very homogeneous in terms of one culture and one race."

Fr. Ambrose also mentioned the various cultural environments he has worked in. After his ordination, he worked at the Curia in Rome for the Generalate of his congregation where he said, "We deal with the Vatican, we deal with the bishops, we deal with the problems of my own confreres in the community." From Rome, he was posted out when "there was a greater need in the Philippines to be the rector of my seminary." From the Philippines, he was invited to work in the United States, where he has been serving in central Texas since 2000. In the United States, he was first assigned to a rural parish "in a little bitty town in the north east" corner of central Texas. After fourteen years in the rural environment, he was assigned to an urban parish. This account points out the three national cultures he has served as a priest. Occupying an administrative position with the curia in Rome was different from serving as a rector in the Philippines. These two were different from serving "in a little bitty town in the north east" corner of central Texas. The varying pastoral conditions in the different environments participants served point to the complex realities in the pastoral ministry.

Diverse demographics of people. This refers to the composition of people in the various locations of the pastoral ministry. In the different places of assignment, the data showed that participants were serving the needs of various individuals and groups. These included people of different age groups, gender, social status, employment status, health conditions as well as educational and cultural backgrounds. Instances from participants' stories illustrate the complexity of the ministry in terms of the diverse demographics of people they served. Fr. Hector mentioned his involvement with children ministry in the parochial school within the parish he served as associate pastor. He said,

at (name of parish), I did ministry to the Catholic elementary and middle school as well. So this is actually the first parish I haven't had a Catholic school associated with and done ministry with Catholic school.

The inclusion of “as well” in the first sentence indicates an additional responsibility. The scope of his ministry extended to involvement with children's education in the parish school. The last sentence about being in the parish for the first time without Catholic school being associated with his parish ministry shows that pastoral responsibilities vary from one place of assignment to another. The additional responsibility of ministering to school children in the parish existed as another dimension of the complex realities.

Fr. Emmanuel narrated a similar story about ministering to children. He created a space for children in the “Augustine Institute YDisciple program” he adapted for his parish youth. He said, “There is a part in there where they are talking about children's program.” His mention of “a part in there” indicates a distinction between the youth and children programs. In his explanation he said, “The idea here is, you know, let's start earlier, let's not wait till they're in high school that you're youth ministry.” The idea was about separating children from the youths and focusing on children as a distinct pastoral demographic in the parish. This pastoral diversification increased his pastoral responsibilities, thereby making his ministry more complex.

In the same vein, when Fr. Ambrose talked about his faith formation program, he referred to children as a distinct demographic of parishioners. He said,

the youth ministry I think plays a very important section in the life of a parish, especially the parishes I have been to which are parishes that are young. I say young because the families are young, and they have children and their children are ranging you know, from baby until fifteen, sixteen. You know, and it's very important.

He started by making a generic reference to the youth ministry as “a very important section” he identified with young families. At the end of his statement, he defined the demographics of

people in that group as ranging “from baby until fifteen, sixteen.” This spectrum designates babies, children, and youths as separate groups of members he needed to minister to.

Another demographic of members participants were involved with was high school students. Fr. Gerald said,

I had retreat when I was in school. Once they finished exams, the week while they are waiting for the results to be computed, sometimes it's two weeks, was the father's week. They gave it to me. School assigns it. Father, it's up to you, whatever you do, the kids are free. So I scheduled my own programs, I had videos, I had physical activities, that take them out. We go dance, we go do exercises. We come to the hall and we do questions and answers, bring up topics, things that people will ordinarily not talk to, I mean not talk about, bring them up.

This story describes the various activities he conducted with students. The retreat was a spiritual program. Watching videos, going dancing, and doing exercises were social and recreational programs. Equally, the question and answer sessions he organized on different topics were educational and formative programs. He was involved in various aspects of the students' life.

Fr. Hector mentioned the student ministry he was engaged in. He said, “At (name of parish), I was also the chaplain for the students there. So, I did do that ministry as well. So I was a high school chaplain.” His pastoral duties extended to students in the high school located in his parish. Describing his ministry in this context he said, “I had to teach a lot of them morality because a lot of them just weren't very aware of it in particular when it comes to kind of sexual morality.” Teaching the students morality was about helping in their character formation. He also said, “I actually taught, I taught theology for one, for the spring semester there because one of the theology teachers became pregnant and so they needed someone to sub.” Apart from the moral guidance he provided, he was also involved in academic development of the students. These instances indicate that student ministry was also part of participants' responsibilities.

While participants spoke about their involvement with the demographics of children, youths, and students in religious education, youth ministry, and high school, they also recalled their involvement with adult members. Describing the demographic constitution of his parish, Fr. Brendan said it was comprised of “predominantly elderly people.” He said, “At least about two-third of the parishioners are what we consider as elderly people in their 70s and in you know, late 60s.” The 70s and 60s point to the presence of a significant number of seniors he had to cater for as a distinct demographic of members in his parish. In providing for their spiritual needs, he revived adult faith formation program in the parish. This refers to an educational program aimed at helping adult members understand their faith, deepen their relationship with God, and be more committed in the Church. Fr. Brendan said, “Since I came here, our adult faith formation has been strengthened.” This statement points to the efforts he made in catering for the pastoral and spiritual needs of his adult members. It also highlights the positive changes and the impacts that resulted from this pastoral initiative. About the impacts he said,

even the one that surprises me, people in their 80s, you know, early 90s go to these classes. And they are coming back and telling me Father, if we had known these things before, if we had a privilege of doing these things when we were younger, we would have loved the faith more.

People in their 80s and early 90s further broadens the demographic of seniors in his parish. It also shows the age range of adults who participated in the formation program. The comment, “if we had known these things before . . . we would have loved the faith more” encapsulates the transformative impacts adult members experienced through the program.

Fr. Camillus also spoke about adult faith formation program in his parish. He said,

the first thing I did was I had adult formation, continuous formation program. So, once a month I brought some lectures, you know, I brought some good speakers and then, almost every month, the faithful were invited to come to the lecture series.

The first sentence expresses the priority he accorded the program. The “adult formation” he mentioned indicates the program was intended for adult members of the parish. In the second sentence, he explained how he implemented the program. Fr. Domingo’s story showed he ministered to the needs of adult members as well. He described his parish at the time of this research as a “retired community” with “retired families”. He said,

right now, right now this is a small parish with 180 families. Mostly the retired community here, retired families. We don’t have many youth here, not many young people. And a few, like 15 to 20 young people. Because of the small town, they all want to go to bigger cities, and bigger locations.

The mostly retired community and families he pointed out without many youths suggests the greater part of his ministry was dedicated to adult members. In the course of his story, he contrasted this experience with his former places of assignment saying, “Wherever I worked in the past, different parishes like the size of 500 families, it was a very vibrant and bigger youth communities and bigger campuses, and it was a variety of pastoral activities.” This contrast indicates that in his other parishes, he was actively involved in the youth ministry. The youths he served in the former parishes and adults in the new parish testify to the complex nature of the pastoral ministry which entails meeting the various needs of diverse demographics of members.

Another demographic of people in the interview data was the sick and the elderly who were hospitalized or homebound. Participants spoke about their ministry to this group of members. Fr. Domingo said, “I was associated with elderly people, visiting the hospitals, the nursing homes, and mainly the parish life, the pastoral activities.” Associating with elderly people shows he served this demographic of people. Moreover he served them in diverse environments and provided various types of pastoral service. The list of pastoral services he provided include, “caring for the sick, and counselling, offering masses for them.” These services point to the various pastoral needs of the elderly members he provided for.

Fr. Ambrose recalled his ministry to the sick and the bereaved. About the sick he said,

I will go there if they are sick, you know, they are about to be operated or after the operation, I check with them, you know, and I visit them at home afterwards And then I call every now and then. So that is the way I do in visiting the people.

This statement describes the various ways he was present for members at the different stages of their sickness. About his ministry to the bereaved he said, “And to the bereaved families, I will visit with them if I know especially the family, I will visit with them because that is a sort of a comfort level.” Visiting the bereaved family as “a sort of a comfort level” points to his type of ministry to the bereaved. He provided comfort for them in their grief. Four other participants spoke about their involvement with the sick, the elderly, and the homebound. The various forms of attention and service they provided for this demographic of members added to the complex realities in the ministry.

The experiences cited provide insights into the complex reality in the pastoral ministry in terms of the pastoral environments and demographics of people participants were involved with. The experiences also show how participants intentionally targeted diverse age range of members with specific programs according to respective pastoral conditions and needs of each group. The complexity is evident in the sense that participants were providing diverse pastoral services to various demographics of people within the same assignment period.

Demands in multiple areas of human services. Another feature that indicated complexity in the ministry was participants’ involvement in numerous areas of human services. Their interview responses indicated they were involved in administration and management, structural development, and system improvement. They also undertook events planning and fundraising, healthcare and social services, educational support, and miscellaneous duties.

Administration and management. In the area of administrative and managerial responsibilities, the reality of pastoral complexity dawned on Fr. Camillus when he assumed office as first time pastor. Recalling his experience he said,

The first time I got here, like the city called me that they are expanding the main street project And then the people are asking me, like you know the, you know, the baptismal, you know registration forms, you know religious education, you know, vacation bible school, and, all these little things they are coming to me, all those decisions should be done by me. So, that was overwhelming.

This statement enumerates the various administrative and managerial issues Fr. Camillus had to deal with as pastoral leader. The road expansion project the city called him about was a civic responsibility outside the Church. The various questions on baptismal registration forms, religious education, vacation bible school, and other sundry matters were diverse administrative and managerial concerns in the Church. By asserting that “all those decisions should be done by me,” he acknowledged and accepted the complex responsibilities of the pastoral ministry. Fr. Fintan articulated his experiences about the complexity in the ministry analogously. He said,

As a priest we are sort of part spiritual leader but also part businessman. You got to run the organization. Canonically speaking we are sort of the CEO of this institution. And so we have to make sure the money is balanced in that, you know, in my current situation, I have, you know, between the school and the parish I have 80 employees. And so, really you know there is a lot of responsibility in just managing the employees.

In this analogy, he pointed out the spiritual and temporal aspects of pastoral leadership. In the spiritual order of the priestly service, he described the priest as a spiritual leader. In the temporal order, he compared the priest to a businessman. In his general consideration of the priestly ministry, he compared the priest to a CEO and described the parish as an “institution” which is comparable to an organization or establishment. By referring to Church and school with the 80 employees he was managing, he pointed to the diverse areas of service in the pastoral ministry.

The area of administration and management that weighed on Fr. Hector was finances. He said, “The thing too that was a little different here was unfortunately there was mismanagement in certain ways and I had to come in and deal with.” This statement alludes to the financial crisis in the parish he was sent as first time pastor. In dealing with the situation he said,

So my answer to financial crisis was we did reductions and expenditure there was a lot of wastes, in particular a lot of wastes in priestly expenses like subscriptions that didn’t need to be. We had internet services going to every building which didn’t need to be. So I basically looked at the financial crisis and said, where can we trim up where we’ve been wasteful? Where can we be better stewards?

The financial problem he encountered entailed studying the situation and proffering solutions.

The instances exemplified show how participants were saddled with diverse administrative and managerial responsibilities in their pastoral leadership positions.

Findings from the interview responses showed that apart from pastoral, administrative, and managerial responsibilities in the Church that entailed controlling running costs, maintaining the institution, and managing employees, participants also undertook structural developments, technological and system improvement, as well as events planning and fundraising.

Structural development. In the area of structural development, Fr. Brendan’s renovation and Fr. Gerald’s Church building projects serve as examples. Fr. Brendan said,

So, it was for me as a priest you know, for the first time to be a pastor, that was not what I bargained. You know, I never bargained that I would be running this program. I thought I am coming to be a pastor, you know, doing the pastoral ministry, you know, taking care of the sick, you know, healing those who are wounded, celebrating the sacrament, you know. You know, preaching the word of God, and probably managing the staff to some extent. But all these things became something I had to do.

In the first two sentences, he presented the pastoral leadership as a ministry with unanticipated responsibilities. In the third and fourth sentences, he listed out the standard pastoral duties he expected to engage in as pastor. In the last statement, he acknowledged that both the expected and unexpected realities were his responsibilities as pastoral leader.

Fr. Gerald also spoke of his Church building project as a responsibility he did not anticipate. He said,

and we identified, our ministries? We can't afford ministries, we can't even afford to run the place administratively. Why? We don't have the population. So how do we get the population? I told them we need to build a Church and they're like, we can't afford it because we don't have the people. I said yea, sometimes it works the other way round. You know, you need to let people know that you are interested in growing the place.

This account of his experience presents the Church building project as an essential need in his chain of pastoral priorities. In order to grow the place, he needed people to lead the ministries and do administration. To get the people he needed, he considered it necessary to build a Church in order to increase the population. The structural development in the two cases exemplify the extra demands arising from pastoral needs according to participants' judgments and discretions.

Technological and system improvement. Participants' references to their work on parish websites and system upgrade showed another dimension of pastoral demands they had to address out of necessity. Fr. Camillus mentioned the system upgrade he undertook in two of the parishes he served. Referring to one of those experiences, he said,

also I took care of a lot of things like parish needs like, for computer system . . . I kind of installed automatic AV systems with the facility manager, care person, and he and I kind of organized the things.

As a priest, Fr. Camillus undertook technological improvements in his parish. The conjunction "also" at the beginning of the sentence shows that the system upgrade was an additional duty. His reason for carrying out the task was because "when they asked a company to have a better computer systems, the quote was 15 thousand dollars." This shows the cost of upgrading the computer system was high. By undertaking the project himself, he "finished everything under six thousand dollars." The 9 thousand dollars difference between 15 thousand that was quoted and 6

thousand he spent shows how much he saved the parish by undertaking a function that was not a necessary part of his pastoral duties.

Fr. Hector also made reference to working on the parish website. He said, “When I was at A & M, before I studied psychology, I was computer science. So, I ended up actually doing a lot of website work at the parish.” He used his computer science background to help out in the area of need. His reference to the parish website he ended up doing shows he was rendering a service that was outside his standard priestly duties. The experiences from Fr. Camillus and Fr. Hector are indicative of the services participants extended to various areas of pastoral needs.

Events planning and fundraising. Participants’ stories showed they were involved in events planning and fundraising. Fr. Gerald recalled the reception he planned for a priest that was ordained in his rural parish in Nigeria. When he brought up the idea, the people told him, “There is no way! We can’t do that.” This expression reveals the people’s pessimism about the project. After convincing them about the need for the reception, Fr. Gerald said,

I formed the ordination team and I told them what we would do. It was the same thing, bring your food crops. It was easy for them to do than to bring money. So we tasked each parish, each station what they will pay, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000. We calculated that, we wanted to raise 400,000 naira but we ended up raising 600,000 naira. And it was just food crops. Don’t give me cash, bring your yams. We took the yams and sold them. And when we sold the yams, we had 600,000 naira. We bought him a car and we had 200,000 to do the reception, and everybody was like we couldn’t believe this is possible.

This account describes the strategy Fr. Gerald designed in planning the ordination reception.

“Each station” refers to individual faith communities that made up the parish. The 10,000, 15,000, and 20,000 in the story refers to the number of yam tubers he asked each station to donate, which they sold to raise 600,000 naira for the reception.

Fr. Ambrose’s story about raising funds for his congregation’s building project in the Philippines provided another perspective about the multiple demands in the pastoral ministry.

While he was serving as rector of the seminary, his superior sent him to the United for mission appeal. He said,

and I was getting ready for the next semestral session or cycle and I was asked to look for financial assistance for my community. And so, it was summer holidays and my superior told me, why don't you go to the U.S. and do mission appeal.

The first part of the first sentence indicates he had to give up his summer vacation to go for fundraising. His superiors sent him "to state our cause, our mission, and then ask people to help you that you can come back with money so we can build our own house and our own seminary eventually because we would just rent an apartment." The need to build their own house and seminary necessitated his engagement in the extra pastoral function of fundraising.

Healthcare and social services. Participants' interview responses showed they considered the wellbeing of their members as an essential aspect of their pastoral leadership. For this reason they were present for the sick, the elderly, the homebound, the bereaved, those with marital problems, the homeless, and the poor members of the community in their various situations. Fr. Ambrose spoke about visiting his sick and homebound members. Responding to a question about pastoral ministry to the sick he said, "Sure, sure. For example those that are homebound or in the hospital or in the nursing home, I visit them. I visit them as often as I could." The various sets of people he talked about visiting in different homes and facilities show the extent of his involvement in pastoral care of the sick. He also extended his services to the bereaved by comforting them in their losses.

Fr. Camillus spoke about his hospital ministry saying, "Funeral, anointing of the sick, there is one hospital in our parish boundary . . . we are the ones who took care of it." They had one medical institution within the geographical boundary of their parish where priests in the parish went to attend to the need of the sick. Serving in the parish, Fr. Camillus took part in the

care for the sick in the hospital and conducted funerals for the dead. These and similar comments from four other participants who spoke about their care of the sick and homebound suggest that healthcare was another area where participants rendered their services in the ministry.

Apart from healthcare, participants' stories showed they also embarked on social services. Fr. Fintan dwelt lengthily on the need to give helpless people a sense of dignity and self-worth. He reflected on the pastoral situations he encountered and emphasized the importance of hearing people's stories. He said, "If somebody isn't having his story heard, well then it's almost as if part of them has not yet been accepted." Hearing people's story serves as the starting point of care and acceptance. The trend of his discussion indicated he was interested and engaged in this aspect of the ministry.

Fr. Gerald's description of his work with the tribal people of Nigeria showed his involvement in social services. When he observed that the poverty of the people was due to "the culture and the lifestyle", he actively engaged himself in leading them out of their poverty by providing guidance and suggestions. He said, "When I saw, I said, you know what? Instead of simply selling and squandering that, you can begin to plan with the cash. You have to have something that carries you through the year." His advice to them was, "you sell them in batches, get storage and store your produce and sell them through the year and that sustains you through the year." The two sets of statement reveal his interest in the economic wellbeing of the rural people. They also reflect the action he took. He advised and guided them to store and sell their agricultural products in batches in order to sustain themselves financially throughout the year.

In another area of social services, Fr. Domingo took part in marriage encounters. He joined other priests in providing counseling to people in troubled marriages. He said, "I used to go and participate in those counseling sessions, listening to their ups and downs and their

marriage problems, misunderstandings, all the errors, human errors, all the fallacies.” Spending time at the counseling sessions and helping the people were the social services he rendered. Fr. Hector had similar experience. He said,

I did a lot of kind of marriage counseling. Most of it, a lot of it was in Spanish for the marriage counseling, just because a lot of Hispanics, there wasn’t a lot of counselors so they could go to.”

The first part of this account shows he was involved in marriage counseling. The second part defines the demographics of people he focused on and the reason behind his decision. Perceived need for Spanish counselors led to his greater focus on the Hispanics in his social services.

Educational support. Fr. Ambrose, Fr. Hector, and Fr. Fintan mentioned their services in schools on different levels. Fr. Ambrose was rector of the seminary in the Philippines. He said, “I headed up our theological section. So I had theologians with me. And you know I had to take care both of their physical and spiritual and academical needs.” This statement shows he was engaged on the tertiary level of education as head of department and taking care of seminarians’ needs. As earlier discussed under diverse demographics of people, Fr. Hector was involved on the high school level of education as chaplain and substitute teacher.

Fr. Fintan made reference to his involvement in the school system when he said, “In my current situation, I have, you know, between the school and the parish I have 80 employees.” His current situation with 80 employees refers to his pastoral responsibilities in the Church and academic responsibilities in the school. The various instances demonstrate participants’ involvement in the educational system as additional demands in their pastoral ministry.

Miscellaneous duties. Participants’ accounts of their miscellaneous duties go further to highlight the complex realities in the pastoral ministry. Fr. Hector recalled sundry duties he performed in other places in addition to his proper assignment. He said,

in fact, I probably ended up helping out at maybe 30, 35 different parishes during my year and a half at (name of parish) including six months where every other weekend I went to a country parish at (names of two parish locations).

This statement indicates the multitasking demands in his pastoral experience. Apart from helping out in other parishes, he also said,

I've always been very involved with the youth ministry component and young adult ministry of the diocese. So, as an associate, those were the ones I interacted with the most. Also pro-life. I was the MC for the pro-life mass, kind of a diocesan thing. So I, the diocese has asked me to help also with that kind of project Rachel, because of kind of some of my psychology background. So that was kind of more of my involvement a little liturgy, and emceeing stuff.

This account reveals other areas of his pastoral responsibilities especially on the diocesan level.

He was involved in these different places and areas while still serving in the parish as associate pastor. Similarly, Fr. Ambrose recalled helping out in other parishes despite his busy schedule.

He said, "I know I am busy but if they ask me, can you help for confession? Can you do this and that? Can you replace me because I am on holiday? I always say yes." The busyness describes the enormous responsibilities he had in his parish. Despite being busy at his duty post, he also helped out in other places according to need. However, he refused to assist in the prison ministry.

He said,

they have asked me to help in jail but I declined because I felt that I cannot be in all places at all times, you know, and jail ministry is not my main concern at the moment, you know, because I have a lot of work to do.

Though he refused to assist in the prison ministry, this statement suggests that prison is another area of pastoral engagement for priests. The demands in multiple areas of human services as exemplified by participants' stories demonstrate the complex reality in the pastoral ministry.

Pastoral networking and member empowerment. Interview responses indicated that participants were networking and connecting with people to achieve their pastoral goals. In the context of this research, "networking" refers to working with individuals and groups outside the

organization, while “connecting” refers to working with people within the organization to achieve set goals. One of the ways they connected with people within was by empowering members to assume responsibilities in the parish community.

Pastoral networking. After his renovation project, Fr. Brendan said, “And then, we did, you know, embark upon a spiritual transformation journey.” The spiritual transformation journey he spoke about was a new impetus in his pastoral leadership that focused on spiritual growth. To implement this plan he said,

We got a priest, a priest from the National Purview, you know. A deacon, not a priest sorry, a deacon . . . who came here and did some kind of, what I may consider to be you know, a surgical analysis of the parish, with my support and the support of the team.

National Purview is an organization outside his parish. He networked with this organization and got a deacon who came to minister in his parish for spiritual transformation. Based on his comments, the outcome of the networking “really changed the parish to some degree. It was like jogging people up from their sleeping slumber.” By networking with an outside organization, he brought about considerable change in his parish. Fr. Camillus described similar experience in his adult faith formation program. He said, “So, once a month I brought some lecturers, you know, I brought some good speakers and then, almost every month the faithful were invited to come to the lecture series.” The lecturers were people outside of his parish. He networked with these outsiders to implement the faith formation program and stimulate the spiritual growth of members.

Responding to a question about his relationship with the diocese, Fr. Ambrose recounted his collaborative efforts with diocesan officials in parochial matters. He said,

We are working together so that we can get things done, you know through the guidelines, and we follow them. You know, and I try to stick with what they tell us, you know with what they tell me to do basically.

The expressions “we are working together” and “I try to stick with what they tell us” suggests a networking partnership with the diocese to get things done in his parish.

Fr. Fintan addressed the issue of networking based on his experience and concern for the poor and homeless. He said, “It’s a very interesting and a very daunting situation because of course if somehow we can just call up the city and say, hey! Let’s set up a psychological center where we can help people.” By mentioning the city in connection with the “very daunting situation” of caring for the poor and the homeless, he suggested networking between the Church and the state as a viable option for a comprehensive psychosomatic care of people in need. The intricacies of networking constitute part of the complex realities in the ministry that participants were contending with in ministering to the needs of people under their pastoral care.

Pastoral connection and member empowerment. Participants’ accounts of their pastoral experiences indicated they were connecting and empowering their members according to needs. When Fr. Brendan identified pastoral needs in the area of adult faith formation, he appointed members and empowered them to undertake that ministry. He said,

I got a team of, you know, eight people, met with them, you know, told them my goal was to establish a solid, you know, adult faith formation here in the parish. Because I know if I can get people well educated in their faith, you know, then they will be able to work with me and they’ll be able to love the parish, you know, and also use their talent.

The process he described in this account relates to connecting with and empowering his members for pastoral intentions. This was his *modus operandi* with the different ministries. He mentioned appointing coordinators for all the ministries and said, “Their duty is to give me feedback of what is happening.” Far from micromanaging, he allowed ministry heads and coordinators to play their roles and exercise judicious authority while they reported to him accordingly.

In Fr. Emmanuel’s vision “to build a parish of the new evangelization,” he involved his members in the process. He said, “So, I’ve got them reading different books, and doing book

studies and we are talking about somethings that we can do to enhance our parish.” Getting his parishioners to read, do book studies, and enter into a discussion with him expresses active engagement and intellectual empowerment. This enabled the people to connect with his pastoral “vision” about new evangelization and “bring on that vision” by being intentionally involved.

As I pointed out in the section on *health and social services*, Fr. Gerald connected with and empowered his rural parishioners in the area of economic wellbeing. When he realized that the poverty of the people was a created problem, he empowered them to overcome it. He gave them ideas on how to preserve and sell their products piecemeal in order to be financially buoyant throughout the year. His comment, “then I realized that that idea started working with them” shows his efforts empowered the people and brought them out of their poverty.

Engagement through communication. Findings from the interview data revealed that communication was an expedient tool for participants in handling the complex realities of the pastoral ministry. Seven of the participants mentioned the significant role communication played in their pastoral leadership functions. Fr. Emmanuel said,

If we are going to make a change, I know that one, one of the things I think of what, who does it affect? And have we consulted with that person first? So I think that’s an important question that I’m always trying to remind our staff, when they want to do something, who does it affect, have we talked with them?

By consulting or talking with the people that would be affected by potential change, he engaged them through communication. He considered this to be important saying, “Most people if you talk to them, even if they disagree with your decisions, if you talk to them, then they’re going to be behind you, they’ll be supportive.” He perceived and used communication as a tool for buy-in and engagement of members in his pastoral programs.

On another level, Fr. Camillus used communication to coordinate functions in his parish and engage members. He said, “And then the communication now we have a better, the bulletin

design and website, and then telephone systems, and the now we have an app, communication person, and then we have religious education department.” The various communication channels he pointed out in this account, which he described as now better, were his system upgrade which he used for engaging members in the community life.

Similarly, Fr. Brendan installed a TV screen in the narthex of his Church for pastoral communication purpose. He said,

We installed a TV screen, you know, with the new technology so that, you know, masses can be recorded, and relayed on the screen for overflow masses like we had, you know, this whole Easter season. And also it can be used for recycling announcements so that people when they get out of mass, they can stand there and see some of the announcement we have for the week.

His description of the various functions he intended the TV screen to serve indicates he wanted to engage members within the hour of worship according to need. These different efforts by participants suggest that they understood and used communication as an effective means of engaging members in the complex pastoral situations they encountered.

As I have demonstrated with the various instances, participants’ stories present the pastoral ministry as a field of complex realities. Fr. Camillus’ and Fr. Gerald’s comments succinctly enunciated this observation. Fr. Camillus said,

Like when we work really hard, unto the spiral, you know, work really hard to serve the Lord, and all of a sudden wrong accusation happens to us, me at least and say, well Fr. Camillus didn’t show up. I mean, come on, I was at the other meeting there. Or Fr. Camillus didn’t care much about me. Come on we have 1,700 families, how do I know that you are sick? And then how would I know? Oh, Fr. Camillus must be, you know, this and that and that.

His emphasis on working “really hard” points to the enormous work in the ministry. His reference to wrong accusation shows people’s ignorance about the workload in the ministry. His conclusion pointed to the complexity of the ministry by the difficulty of fulfilling everybody’s

expectation at the same time. Fr. Gerald's comment validated Fr. Camillus' experience. Fr. Gerald said,

Seriously, I, sometimes I just think it is not right. I just don't know, I am, I want to believe that priest shouldn't be doing all of that. Maybe it's my own limitation but I, I don't think it is right. Maybe, there should be people handling everything. That's what I believe.

By stating that it is not right, he made a judgment call on the pastoral workload of priests as overwhelming. By asserting that "there should be people handling everything," he proposed decentralization of pastoral responsibilities. These various statements underscore the complex realities participants observed and experienced in the ministry.

Self-care. This refers to participants' need to take care of themselves and stay healthy in order to fulfil their pastoral responsibilities. The seven participants who addressed this issue expressed their awareness of the need for personal care and development, and described the various ways they handled their health issues. The different areas they mentioned include: resting, exercise, and recreation; healthcare; continuous learning; and cultural adaptability.

Resting, exercise, and recreation. In his story, Fr. Ambrose underscored the importance of listening to the body as a foundational aspect of self-care. Responding to a follow-up question about the way he was taking care of himself he said,

In order for me to keep my sanity intact, you know, I have to make sure I listen to my body. When I'm tired, you know, I leave and kind of do what I need to do. And if I feel asleep I go and sleep . . . When I'm tired I have to rest and I do.

He considered listening to his body as a prerequisite to keeping his sanity intact. Keeping sanity intact refers to staying mentally and psychologically healthy. By listening to his body, he knew what his system needed such as sleep and rest, and acted accordingly. He addressed this aspect of self-care as a necessary action that enabled him function well in the ministry. Fr. Gerald also pointed out the need for rest. He said, "I sleep. I learned a lot from being in the office. Like I

said, I almost had a medical issue being in Nigeria. So that experience taught me a lot.” The reference he made to sleeping and learning a lot from being in the office shows he was initially working without resting. With the threat to his health, he learned it was necessary to address the personal need for break and rest.

Apart from resting, Fr. Gerald mentioned exercising. He said, “I signed up in the gym and I go to the gym as much as I can.” This action demonstrates his commitment to self-care. Additionally, he mentioned going on vacation and taking days off. He said, “I take vacation here. I don’t joke with it. I take my day off. I don’t joke with it. Everything stays. My desk could be as messy as it could be, I don’t care. That is my day off.” The emphasis he placed on rest and recreation with “I don’t joke with it” and “I don’t care” shows the seriousness with which he addressed the issue of self-care. His reference to the messy table vis-à-vis the need to go on vacation reveals the ambivalent situations and the complex realities he experienced in the field of pastoral leadership.

Fr. Fintan echoed Fr. Gerald’s view on exercising, resting, and recreating. He said, “Exercise is very very important. Sleep is very important.” About exercise he said, “I’m a cyclist, I ride a bicycle. And I generally ride anywhere from 18 to 25 miles each time I ride. And I try to do that three to four times a week when the weather is permitting.” This statement expresses his serious commitment to healthy living. About rest he said,

I work long days but I go to bed relatively early. I try to get at least eight hours of sleep every day, at least because I think what can happen is, if you work too hard, then you don’t get enough sleep, and that’s part of the problem.

Working long days, going to bed early, and trying to get eight hours of sleep everyday indicate his efforts at balancing the complexity of pastoral leadership. About his recreation he said,

I try to make sure that I have social engagements that I go to. I probably go out to dinner with families three and four times a week or ministries. Like for example if I have a

pastoral council meeting, I'll grab a couple of them and say hey! Let's go have something to eat after this. So I try, I really try to make my life social so that I'm not a professional priest. I don't want to be a professional priest, I want to be a vocational priest.

This account reiterates the notion of balancing the complex realities of the ministry and ensuring efficiency. Social engagements, such as dinner with families and eating out with council members, were his measures against being “a professional priest” instead of “a vocational priest.” His view of a professional priest is that of a task-oriented priestly life that only focuses on work, while being a vocational priest means creating time to relax and socialize. These actions were his measures against getting overwhelmed by the complex realities in the ministry.

Fr. Emmanuel also spoke about the exercise he was carrying out in order to avoid stress in the ministry. He said,

If it is really stressful, I know I have to exercise, just go running. I've got to go running because if I do too much crisis management, then my head starts to hurt. You know, I just feel this kind of tightness, and it's like, huh! I don't have any, there is nothing up here. And so, exercise kind of gets all that loosen up a little bit for me.

This statement is reminiscent of Fr. Ambrose's view about listening to the body and keeping his sanity intact. The reason Fr. Emmanuel gave for running is a response to the same issues Fr. Ambrose raised. Fr. Emmanuel's hurting head and tightness are indicative of mental exhaustion. Exercising helped him loosen up and be able to face his many responsibilities in the ministry.

Healthcare. This refers to the measures participants took to ensure healthy living. Fr.

Domingo shared his experience about his recent health challenges. He said,

Last two years, I began to experience some kind of discomfort. First time in my life in the year 2014, 2013, I had flu and it developed to, into pneumonia, I really suffered. I was bedridden for 15 days with pneumonia and that was real test for me. Couldn't breathe, couldn't walk, couldn't eat, losing all my weight.

The second sentence shows the sickness was a novel experience for him. Being bedridden for 15 days and not being able to breathe, walk, or eat points to the gravity of his condition. By that

experience, he made a resolution to stay healthy. He said, “This year after pneumonia, I spoke to myself I want to be strong for many, many, many, many years in the priestly ministry and I began to take herbal medicines and real vegetables, green juice.” This resolution and action indicates he had become more conscious of his health needs than before. Fr. Ambrose also expressed the need for good diet. He said, “I need to eat better though, you know. People are very good here, they bring me food all the time, you know. But I kind of, I want to eat well.” By saying, “I need to eat better,” he acknowledged the deficiency in his eating habit and intended to correct it. These show they considered their health as an important aspect of pastoral leadership.

Continuous learning. In this analysis, continuous learning refers to participants’ personal efforts at acquiring new knowledge in order to minister adequately in the ever expanding field of pastoral leadership. Interview responses revealed this as an aspect of self-care that was necessary for active engagement in the ministry. Fr. Fintan said, “So very quickly in my ministry, I was coming out of a high academic setting, and very much I came into a setting where people are really just working hard to get through each day.” He noticed a distinction between the realities of his academic environment and those of ordinary life he observed in the ministry. This distinction showed that understanding existential realities that were impacting the daily lives of the people was necessary for his pastoral wellbeing and functionality.

Three participants talked about conferences and courses they attended in order to develop themselves intellectually for the ministry. Fr. Emmanuel said, “So, I was very blessed to go with Fr. Paschal in August when I was newly assigned to this conference called the Amazing Parish Conference.” His objective was “to build a parish of the new evangelization.” The New Evangelization refers to the Church’s innovative strategy for spreading the gospel message. Fr. Emmanuel attended the conference to empower himself intellectually for evangelization.

Similarly, Fr. Brendan mentioned his plans to attend the same Conference with his members in order to learn the dynamics of a transformational pastoral ministry from other pastoral officials.

Fr. Hector attended courses and enrolled in a program of learning as a positive action against the depression he suffered in the early years of his priesthood. Aware of this condition he asked himself, “What’s causing you to feel depressed?” In his search for solution he said,

So I made the initiative to say ok, I’m going to go and help with this parish, I’m going to do this program, or I’m going to go, I did some of the theology of the body institute classes in Pennsylvania, to just do continuing education, try to get into the institute of priestly formation, spiritual director program. In fact in (name of parish), I ended up getting into some of those programs which I’m in now.

The learning he undertook both in the theology of the body classes and the spiritual director program were continuous learning opportunities he found to be necessary for his intellectual wellbeing and effectiveness in his pastoral leadership role. These examples indicate that continuous learning was an aspect of self-care that added to the complex realities in the ministry.

Cultural adaptability. The data showed that participants from other cultural backgrounds had additional work in adapting to their host culture. Fr. Domingo said, “For me, as I came from India, little bit cultural shock for me beginning with accent, the English, the food, and interaction with the people, little bit new for me.” This statement outlines the various cultural ethos and practices he needed to adapt to. In addressing these needs he said, “In three months I prepared my mind by watching TV, observing the accent, the way they talk, and I have no problem I could eat any food, no stomach upset.” Watching TV and learning the various lessons were additional self-care tasks he undertook for cultural adaptation and competency.

Fr. Gerald described a similar experience. He said, “Coming over here, I had a little bit of struggle because the culture is different. I didn’t grow up here, I didn’t go to high school here,

and how, working with the young people, a little bit difficult.” This account differentiates between his African culture and the foreign culture he moved into. He addressed this issue by,

Listening to TV which was one of the biggest ways for me to really understand the mindset and the culture of this people, watch things on TV, listen to how they speak, listen to how they think, and how they do things was helpful.

Like Fr. Domingo, the measures he outlined were his ways of developing himself which enabled him to adjust to the *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* of the American culture.

The various areas of engagement I have pointed out in this analysis indicate the wide range of needs and responsibilities that exist in the pastoral ministry. Participants did not limit themselves to one area of service with a specific demographic of people or focus only on the pastoral responsibilities in their parishes. Their services extended to different groups of people and entailed various types of functions. They were not only ministering to the needs of other people. They were ministering to themselves as well. These broad-based involvements at various levels both within and outside their proper jurisdictions testify to pastoral leadership as a ministry with complex realities.

A Ministry with Diverse Challenges

Diverse challenges refer to factors in different areas of the ministry that constituted issues of concern for participants. The interview data showed participants experienced various forms of challenges in their role as pastoral leaders. I categorized and analyzed the challenges under the following headings: Personal issues, stress in the ministry, and pastoral disappointments. The flowchart of the analysis is represented in Figure 8.

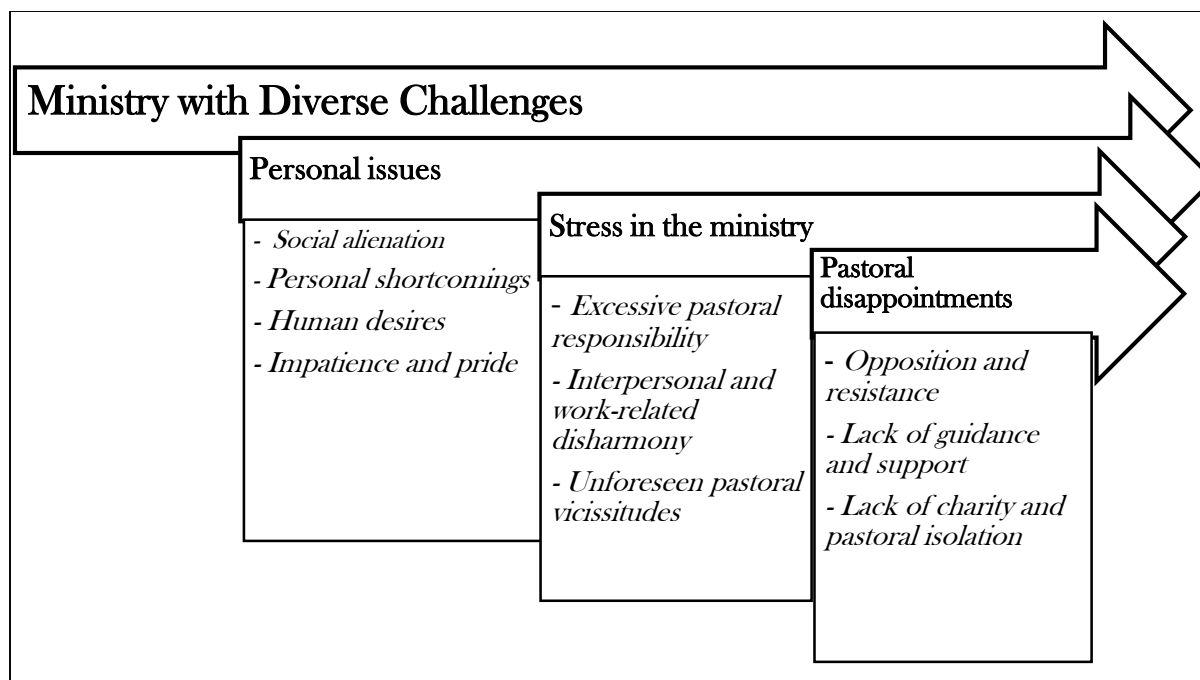


Figure 8. Flowchart of ministry with diverse challenges showing the challenging factors.

Personal issues. The discussion on the complex realities in the ministry showed that participants had many responsibilities in their pastoral leadership positions. Considering the enormous amount of work in the ministry, Fr. Gerald described the field as “chaotic.” Based on data evidence, participants experienced various challenges on a personal level in fulfilling their duties. These challenges include social alienation, personal shortcomings, and physiological demands.

Social alienation. This subject addresses the feeling of being away from family and dear ones. Fr. Camillus recalled his experience of feeling socially alienated and said, “And then I would say, it’s not loneliness, you know. Solitude in my case because I don’t have any family members here.” Google search engine and Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus describe loneliness as sadness that results from being alone. On the other hand, they describe solitude unequivocally as “the state of being alone.” By substituting loneliness for solitude, Fr. Camillus

made it clear he was not sad. However, making reference to his family members that were not with him suggests he was socially challenged by living alone and being away from his family.

Similarly, Fr. Domingo recounted his experience during the time of his illness. He said, “No immediate family to take care of my needs.” He would have appreciated the presence of his family to render him necessary help in his difficulties but none of them was around. These situations point to the challenges of living alone in a different cultural environment without family members to socialize with or to render necessary assistance in time of need.

Personal shortcomings. Participants acknowledged their shortcomings and limitations in their leadership positions. Their stories revealed uncomplimentary attitudes and behaviors they considered necessary to overcome in their position as pastoral leaders. In Fr. Fintan’s response to a follow-up question about his ups and downs in the ministry he said,

But it’s part of the human condition, and part that you know, that we as priest are flawed individuals too. And how do you grapple with being a flawed person and live out a life where you are expected to be perfect? That is a very difficult tight rope to walk.

This response expresses the ambivalence of pastoral leadership expectations. On the one hand, he presented the priest as a human being with his own flawedness. On the other hand, he described the priesthood as a call to perfection. “The difficult tight rope to walk” points to the challenge of meeting the Christ-like expectations against the human weakness of the priest.

One flawedness I noticed in the data was lack of cultural competency by foreign born participants. These shortcomings resulted in cultural shocks and embarrassing outcomes. Fr. Ambrose appealed to ignorance about American traffic regulations when he broke the traffic rule. He was over-speeding and the police went after him with the flashing lights on, but he did not stop because he was not familiar with American police signals. In his explanation, he said,

In my country, if you are over speeding, the police wants to talk to you, either the police go by your side or goes in front of you. But this police car was always behind me. So, what would I know?

In the encounter, he was applying Philippino practice to American traffic regulations. This ignorance led to an embarrassing encounter with the police when he finally stopped. He said,

As soon as I opened the door, the policeman got his gun and pointed it at me and said, you turn around, and I was you know, I was pale. And so I turned around and, raise your hands, and so I raised my hands and they all do the search.

This account expresses lack of cultural competency that resulted in a frightening encounter with the police. Turning pale indicates surprise and fear due to his lack of awareness about traffic regulations in America. Fr. Gerald mentioned a similar embarrassing encounter with a young altar server. He said,

I remember walking into the sacristy and a little boy saying to me, hey! What's your name? I said in my mind, if you were in Nigeria, you would have received a huge knock for daring to look at me and say, what's your name?

This was a case of cultural differences between Nigerian and American practices concerning respect for adults. Fr. Gerald's dismay shows that in the Nigerian culture, it is disrespectful for a younger person to look at an adult and say, "what's your name?" while it is conventional in American culture. Speaking about a huge knock on the head indicates his shock and disapproval of the boy's behavior. This experience shows the challenge of assimilating into the new culture.

Another counter-cultural practice for Fr. Gerald which he described as embarrassing was somebody telling him, "I love you." He said, "Somebody says, hey, 'I love you'. I'm like ok, thank you. I didn't know what to respond. And it was too heavy for me to say, 'I love you,' because it meant something else for us." The various expressions, "I didn't know what to respond," "it was too heavy for me to say," and "it meant something else for us" underscore the

cultural challenges he experienced in dealing with American cultural practices that were different from his.

In a related issue, Fr. Camillus, a Korean priest, mentioned his challenge with the English language in American culture. He said,

Here I am, I feel like I am trapped in the language, you know. I have the idea but because of the English language, I feel always trapped inside that, that burden in a sense, the fear in a sense. Do I speak correctly or do I, do I speak something making sense?

Being trapped in the language and being trapped inside both refer to his struggles to express himself adequately in English language. Restating this feeling of being trapped twice indicates the seriousness of the challenge. His worries about speaking correctly or speaking something that makes sense shows his lack of confidence in speaking English language. These shortcomings point to the challenges participants needed to overcome as pastoral leaders.

Human desires. This refers to participants' urges to satisfy their social and physiological desires against the restrictions of celibate priesthood. Fr. Gerald opened up about his struggles with sexual desires. He said,

Yes! And sometimes as a young man, you see some beautiful women you know, and you know sorry, this is not your side. And then I see people get married, I see very good relationship, I see people who talk about their love relationship during my ministry, I'm like wow! How nice would it be to have one. And I begin to have some sense of you know, I hope I'm not losing it out in life.

The comment he made about seeing beautiful women, seeing people get married, seeing very good relationships, and seeing people talk about their love relationship with the reaction that followed constitute indicators of his struggle with sexuality and priestly celibacy. Considering what it would be like to have one and hoping he was not losing out in life indicate his inner struggles with living out the celibacy against his urges.

Fr. Camillus spoke about his struggle with human desire as that of solitude. He said,

I mean last four years I was always with a priest. So, I was with two priests all the time. So, I really had a community there. Now here I am in the rectory, huge rectory by myself. That one also, the solitude was a little bit difficult especially holiday season.

By associating the years he lived with other priests with community and the years he lived alone in the rectory with solitude, he indicated he would prefer to live with other priests. Living alone was therefore a challenge he was dealing with as a pastoral leader. These examples illustrate the challenges of human desire that participants experienced in their personal lives.

Impatience and pride. These are other sets of shortcomings I found in the research interview. Fr. Domingo's story expressed his agitation about the critical disposition of the diocese concerning the property he intended to purchase for his parish. He said, "I was really discouraged and I was disappointed." Recalling the final outcome of that process he said,

And later when I look back, I'm glad that I waited, I'm glad that I listened to the authorities, and I'm glad that I reflected, I took my own time. Now I really appreciate all those, when I look back, all those experiences.

His series of "I'm glad" express appreciation for the diocesan advice against his earlier intention to act in haste. It also shows his impatience with the diocese in their advice to slow down.

Fr. Emmanuel described similar impatience with his pastors in his years as associate. He spoke about his inclination to move "more quickly in decisions." He said, "I wanted to do more and I wanted to move quicker, more quickly in decisions. And so sometimes maybe I was impatient with the pace in which the pastor might make a decision." This description of his earlier pastoral attitude presents impatience as a behavior he was not aware of at the time. This interpretation is based on two subsequent statements against his impatience. First he said, "I may not have completely understood the intensity of his role as a leader and how that could cause a mental fatigue." Not completely understanding the pastors' burdens and their implications led him to be impatient with them. He added, "I look back now and I'm thinking, wow! How I wish

I would have been more patient as an associate.” By benefit of hindsight, he became aware of how much he was challenged by impatience as an associate.

Fr. Hector identified pride as a challenging factor in his pastoral ministry. Eight times in the course of the interview, he referred to his struggles with pride which hindered him from experiencing joy in the ministry especially in his earlier years as a priest. At one moment he said,

One thing that I learned about myself at (second parish of assignment) was how I could be, I always knew I could be a little stubborn. But I realized just how stubborn and prideful I could be. And partially because that pastor called me on it ... I came to realize actually part of the reason why I did struggle so much with depression at (first parish of assignment) was due to my pride in the sense of trying to do too much myself.

By recalling the thing he learned about himself, he acknowledged the shortcoming he was not initially aware of in his life. This was stubbornness and pride and it took his pastor to make him aware of it. The thing he learned led him to realize that pride was the root of his struggle with depression in his first assignment by trying to do too much himself. These shortcomings and similar vices which I found in participants’ stories constitute challenges they needed to overcome in order to serve properly as pastoral leaders.

Stress in the ministry. Six of the eight participants mentioned pastoral stress in their stories. The factors that gave rise to the stress include: excessive pastoral responsibilities, interpersonal and workplace relationships, and unforeseen pastoral vicissitudes.

Excessive pastoral responsibilities. Participants spoke about being stressed by excessive workload in their leadership positions. They were also stressed by related pastoral circumstances such as resistance to change. Fr. Fintan’s story about his excessive pastoral responsibilities that I analyzed under the theme of ministry with complex realities also has its challenging perspective. In response to my question about being stressed in the ministry he said, “Other downtimes that I have would be like you know, as a priest, we are sort of, part spiritual leader but also part

businessman.” By describing the priest as a spiritual leader and a businessman at the same time, he highlighted the challenges of dealing with complex situations concurrently in the ministry. Using the example of CEO, he illustrated the challenges he experienced dealing with finances and employees in school and in the Church. The analogy indicates that the various top level roles he was playing as a pastoral leader were stressful experiences.

Fr. Gerald’s experience with performing concurrent administrative and pastoral duties in two distant places corroborates Fr. Fintan’s story. According to Fr. Gerald,

I found myself driving back and forth from the place which was five, was it five hours, three hours’ drive every week back and forth. Going on Monday to the office and going back on Friday to the Church. It was very stressful.

Driving back and forth, five or three hours every week, and going to office on Monday and Church on Friday are descriptive of his excessive responsibilities and the stress it entailed.

Summarizing his experience in that situation he said, “For me it was really a very tough time, and I had too much work to do. And I was stressed out, I almost had physical, medical issues.”

Similarly, Fr. Ambrose encapsulated the challenge of excessive pastoral responsibilities when he said, “The work is much, too much, yes.” This statement refers to excessive responsibilities he was saddled with in the pastoral ministry.

Relating his experience Fr. Brendan said, “I have no assistant, I have to be here by myself alone, doing four masses every weekend, and one mass every day. Then on Fridays I do three masses sometimes or more depending on the circumstance.” Speaking about not having any assistance, being by himself, doing four masses every weekend and one mass every day, as well as doing three masses or more on Fridays was his way of telling his story about the stress that came with excessive responsibilities in his parish. Fr. Camillus used “unimaginable expectations” to describe the challenging pastoral demands in his parish. This was with reference

to everyone expecting him to meet their various pastoral needs simultaneously. These excessive responsibilities were stressful as part of the challenges participants related in their stories.

Interpersonal and work-related disharmony. The interpersonal issues that constituted stress factors in the ministry were evident in the story of tensed relationships between participants and their pastoral superiors. Fr. Hector disclosed his experience with his first pastor with whom he was supposed to work as an assistant and a close collaborator. He said, “It was a little tough my first few months.” The expression “tough” describes the stressful situation with their personal and pastoral relationship. The reason he gave for the difficulty was because “as a new priest, I didn’t have as much direct supervision from the pastor at the time.” The pastor was not present to help him learn the dynamics of pastoral leadership. Instead, “the pastor’s style was a little more hands off”. This connotes a laissez-faire style of pastoral leadership by the pastor, which did not favor him.

Relating similar experience, Fr. Camillus mentioned his difficulty with the pastor he was sent to assist in his first place of assignment. He said, “The pastor seems to be very introvert. He doesn’t really, he doesn’t, not communicate with me well.” By using introversion to describe the demeanor of his pastor, he was pointing out aberration in their relationship. The aberration was lack of communication. Explaining the state of affairs in this regard he said, “He did not give me any proper direction. And then also he is complaining that I didn’t do it right.” The proper direction he was referring to was the pastoral guidance he expected from the pastor for proper discharge of duties. That the pastor was complaining without providing the guidance shows they were not having a cordial working relationship. These experiences indicate that working with incompatible persons or people with different pastoral orientation created a disharmony that was stressful to participants.

Unforeseen pastoral vicissitudes. Participants' stories about unforeseen pastoral vicissitudes constituted challenges in their leadership roles. One of such vicissitudes is that they sometimes operated with good intentions without being cognizant of their limitations. These poor judgments were visible in their overzealousness, feeling compelled to meet expectations, and being at the receiving end of higher power decisions. An example of overzealousness was Fr. Emmanuel's zeal which he said often ended with "exhaustion or fatigue". This expression describes his lack of proper self-evaluation concerning his personal capabilities. He said,

I may begin with certain sense of confidence and zeal, and you know, I love getting ideas. I could say, this is good, let's go for it. And I can begin to do a lot, not knowing that in doing so, those things require follow up, they require supervision, and it takes mental energy to be able to see all these things through.

Beginning with a certain sense of confidence and zeal expresses his good intentions. However, going for it without planning a follow up process, ensuring supervision, and calculating the mental energy he needed to complete the projects indicates lack of proper judgment about his logistical abilities. This situation shows he had the challenge of planning his programs and projects methodically. Fr. Gerald's story expressed a related tendency. He mentioned his inclination to accept responsibilities he later realized he could not accomplish. He said,

One lesson I learned was, to be able to, you know, not just say yes to everything. At the end of the day I realized that there are too many things that I wasn't able to accomplish, almost half of them. I was just like, yes, yes, yes, and I realized that many of them were unrealistic.

The lesson he learned refers to the challenge of balancing his good intentions against his capabilities. His specific challenge was about saying yes to everything without completing them. In his good intentions, he did not calculate the limit of his strength in accomplishing the tasks he committed himself to. These cases express the challenge of weighing good intentions against project requirements before making a commitment.

Another unforeseen pastoral vicissitude was having to meet set goals or expectations. Fr. Emmanuel mentioned the challenge of having to meet and greet the people after each mass. He said, “Sundays were not tiring just because I said three masses. It was because I was also greeting people and smiling and listening and all during between masses too.” The expression “not tiring just because I said three masses” suggests that celebrating three masses on Sundays was not the only reason he was tired. He was also tired from greeting the people, smiling, and listening in between masses. This scenario indicates that the extra-pastoral function of greeting the people in between masses was an unforeseen responsibility that was challenging.

Another unforeseen vicissitude was higher power decisions that weighed on participants. Fr. Hector’s story about all his pastoral assignments showed surprise and lack of preparedness because he had neither the voice nor the choice in the decisions. About his first assignment he said, “In fact, I remember when bishop gave us that letter and I opened it and saw it was (name of parish), I was a little surprised.” This reality suggests his assignment was an obligation that was imposed on him. The surprise shows he was given an assignment he did not anticipate. On his second assignment he said, “It was a little hard because the transition was quick.” The quick transition equally shows he was at the receiving end of a higher power decision. The hardship he mentioned indicates things did not happen as he would have intended.

Concerning his third assignment, he said, “It was especially tough, the transition because again it was a quick, it was a quick transition, and I get in, I had about two weeks from when it was announced to when I was coming here.” This story shows a repeated pattern as in the second assignment. By describing the third assignment as especially tough in having to move within two weeks, he emphasized the challenge of being at the receiving end of impromptu pastoral decisions. Fr. Camillus related synonymous experiences in terms of being surprised about all his

assignments. These instances denote the challenges participants were dealing with in their experience of unforeseen pastoral vicissitudes.

Pastoral disappointments. Participants recalled disappointing experiences in their pastoral ministry. I classified the disappointing experiences under opposition and resistance, lack of guidance and support, as well as lack of charity and isolation.

Opposition and resistance. Participants spoke about the difficulties they experienced on the parish and diocesan levels in implementing projects and programs. Fr. Domingo said,

Disappointments in the pastoral ministry, for example, when you take up some projects in the parish, you have your own dreams to develop either a building or a particular project, thinking that everybody will be on my side, good support, and sooner you realize that some people are not liking your project.

This statement shows Fr. Domingo's challenge of being blindsided when he thought everything was going well while that was not the case. It reflects Fr. Brendan's experience with members who opposed his plan for an extensive renovation of the Church building. Fr. Brendan said,

Some of the people that had money we talked to, some of them said they are not going to give. Some of them don't support the project, some of them will like the Church to be the way it is. Some just want, a minimal you know, repairs, not a renovation.

This account conveys a sense of frustration over parishioners that refused to share Fr. Brendan's vision. In dealing with this situation he said, "It makes me have headache, you know. Sometimes I'm depressed because this people are rejecting this." The headache and depression he suffered are consequences of his disappointments and frustrations.

Fr. Brendan also recalled his disappointments with extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who opposed his pastoral plan. He said, "I required that for you to be a communion minister you have to agree to, at least once a month to go to the nursing homes or the homebound to give communion." This requirement "made many people angry, some decided to leave, they never come back again. Some never became communion ministers again." His pastoral plan was

to ensure that the Church is available for the sick and elderly members who could not attend mass in Church. To achieve this purpose, he decided to co-opt the services of all Eucharistic ministers. Getting angry and leaving the ministry were disappointing reactions for Fr. Brendan.

Participants also narrated their disappointing experiences with diocesan officials. The diocese did not support their projects and programs as they expected. When the diocese asked Fr. Domingo to stop the project of buying a property for the Church he said, “I was disappointed.” His reason for being disappointed was because he considered it advantageous to buy the property for the future needs of the parish.

Relating his experience with the diocese, Fr. Brendan said it has been “a little difficult also, you know, working with the diocese.” The difficulty points to disappointment. The reason he gave for the difficulty was the bureaucratic process of having to wait for diocesan approval before beginning a project, which took a long time to obtain. Similarly, Fr. Emmanuel said “the diocese can be burdensome.” Fr. Gerald’s view of diocesan officials was that “they literally like stand against you, it’s like they are trying to save the diocese from you.” These different views express participants’ disappointing experiences with the diocese in executing their pastoral plans.

Lack of guidance and support. Participants had to grapple with lack of proper guidance and support by authority figures, both on parish and diocesan levels. Fr. Camillus and Fr. Hector pointed out disappointing experiences with their pastors in the parishes they served as associates. Fr. Camillus said, “My pastor didn’t give me much opportunity to know how to administer the school.” The opportunity refers to pastoral guidance and involvement. This view suggests a sense of disappointment at not being given the opportunity to learn school administration in order to enrich his ministry. He mentioned a similar setback in the area of financial management. He said,

I didn't have much, much experience, you know, in financial councils. You know, we didn't, I didn't get much out of it. I don't know why but somehow financial council members, financial council I was not involved, I've never been invited, and I never learned how to sign a check or something. So they did not, you know, he did not teach me those things.

He had expected to be given an opportunity to learn financial administration but did not have it.

"He did not teach me those things" refers to his pastor's lack of guidance in financial matters.

This happened again with the second pastor he served as associate. He said, "Still I did not know how to do the financial council matter." The use of "still" expresses double disappointment at not being given expected guidance and support to learn financial management.

Fr. Hector expressed similar disappointment and further pointed out the pastoral benefits associates would derive from being given administrative opportunities. He said,

I really wish some pastors would give their associates little areas to give them some of that. Say like oversee the faith formation area, they report to you, you report to me. I wish I had that because I think it would have helped me develop that skill and because of how I was brought in here, I was kind of thrown into crisis.

The expression, "I really wish" points to his disappointment over a significant pastoral concern he thought pastors failed to address. "Some of that" refers to opportunities for pastoral leadership development, such as overseeing faith formation programs, which pastors did not give to their associates. His reference to being "thrown into crisis" when he became a pastor points to his not being prepared for pastoral challenges because the pastors he served with as an associate did not involve him in parish administration and important decision making processes. In his view, his pastors' guidance and support would have provided him with the necessary skillset to deal with the crisis situation in his new parish.

Participants who came from other cultures to serve in American Church also pointed out their disappointments with the diocese. Their dissatisfaction was about the lack of enculturation programs for priests of other cultures. Such programs would enhance cultural competency and

pastoral efficiency. Coming from India, Fr. Domingo expected an orientation program on enculturation. He said,

When I came to the United States, the first month, I thought bishop will give us some kind of training or the pastoral training and I was expecting they would teach me and guide me to fit into the pastoral work here in the new culture in the United States. Because of lack of priest in the particular place where I worked, there was no time for us to be introduced.

This account describes Fr. Domingo's expectation and disappointment. The opening statement, "I thought bishop will give us some kind of training" expresses his expectation while the concluding statement, "there was no time to be introduced" shows the expectation was not met. Fr. Ambrose recalled having a month orientation with his confreres on arrival in America from the Philippines before being assigned as pastors to parishes. However, the orientation was not for pastoral and cultural adaptation. Rather, it was to "get your social security number, get your license, all these little stuff." Referring to his initial pastoral contact with the American culture he said, "I did not know anything. So I have to learn from the very start, from the zero point, you know, and be able to enter into their world and into their system." These statements enunciate disappointing situations of not being culturally prepared for pastoral duties.

Fr. Gerald also spoke about similar challenges and disappointments. He said, "Coming over here, I had a little bit of struggle because the culture is different. I didn't grow up here, I didn't go to high school here, and how, working with the young people, a little bit difficult." This statement highlights the challenges he encountered upon entering American society as a cultural outsider. He familiarized himself with the practices of the new culture by "listening to TV . . . to really understand the mindset and the culture of this people, watch things on TV, listen to how they speak, listen to how they think, and how they do things." He made personal efforts to

acquaint himself with American cultural ethos and practices instead of the diocese organizing an enculturation program to help him integrate.

In Fr. Emmanuel's account of his disappointing experience with the diocese, he stated that, "They may not be as much in touch with the parish reality as what I think they are." This remark expresses his opinion about lack of efforts by the diocese to acquaint itself with pastoral struggles in the parish. Citing an example to back up the claim, he said,

The example of this would be, ok, a capital campaign coming, you know, that the diocese is going to plan. Then I can understand why the diocese wants to do that. But then I think about the effect that that can have on the individual parish where our case, say we want to be able to grow our school, and one of our school's main competitors is the diocesan school which won't be affected by the diocesan capital campaign because it is not attached to a parish.

In this example, he accused the diocese of being insensitive to parish needs by the manner they plan their capital campaign. His reason was because the diocesan capital campaign for diocesan schools will override parish efforts to raise funds for their parochial schools. Fr. Hector expressed similar sentiment about the insensitivity of the diocese. He said, "Sometimes I feel that the diocese doesn't understand some of the realities on the parish level as much as I would like." The expression, "as much as I would like" indicates the diocese did not meet his expectation in familiarizing itself with realities in the parish. The various instances I have cited encapsulate participants' disappointing experiences with their pastoral superiors and the diocese for not providing expected guidance and support. They also express participants' regrets over the inability of their superiors and the diocese to empower or encourage them in their pastoral leadership roles.

Lack of charity and pastoral isolation. Participants' stories showed lack of charity and pastoral isolation in the community life. Remembering a situation that showed lack of charity Fr. Fintan said, "I remember thinking to myself, how easy it is for people of means to be suspect of

head start programs or programs that help people out of poverty.” People of means refers to the affluent members of the society and head start programs are educational programs designed to give poor children a chance at a better future. Fr. Fintan’s comment about rich people being suspicious of head start programs is an expression of disappointment about lack of charity towards the less fortunate members of the society. Another lack of charity he pointed out was the discord and competitive spirit he observed among Church members. He said,

People become competitive with each other and they try to outdo each other and there’s arguments. Arguments are happening in the ministry... when they are acting in a dysfunctional way and not being nice to each other.

The competitiveness and trying to outdo each other were interpersonal and intra-ministry issues in his parish community. He expressed disappointment at the uncharitable manner members were relating with one another.

Fr. Hector expressed disappointed about a type of pastoral isolation he observed among priests in parishes. He spoke about priests’ lack of charity by not collaborating with one another. He said, “something that has been very disappointing to me in the priesthood is how we become kind of islands as parishes. We don’t work with other brother priests.” Becoming kind of islands and not working with other priests refer to priests focusing only on their parishes as pastoral leaders, without collaborating with priests in nearby parishes to enrich the ministry. He asked, “How can we have programs that not only address the needs of my parish but I try to be aware, how will this program impact other parishes?” Furthermore, “How can other parishes kind of participate in that program as well?” In these reflections, he expressed the need for priests to support one another through interparish pastoral collaboration. His suggestions went along the line of comparing notes, formation of personnel, and having interparish programs. The various

pastoral situations were disappointing to participants and constituted challenges for them in their capacity as pastoral leaders.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented an interpretive analysis of participants' responses. I based the analysis on the four themes I identified in the interview data. I explored these themes and found several commonalities in the experiences and views of participants. The theme of priesthood as vocation showed that participants understood and embraced the priestly ministry as a personal response to God's call to relationship and service. The theme of pastoral leadership as a ministry of commitment and service indicated that they engaged in the ministry with the understanding that sustainable pastoral leadership demands a spirit of total commitment to serve the needs of the people. The theme of pastoral leadership as a ministry with complex realities pointed out the multifaceted dimensions of the pastoral ministry. It showed how participants' services as pastoral leaders extended beyond spiritual and religious duties to involvements in different areas of educational, social, and technological concerns. They also served people of various cultural and social demographics. Furthermore, their field of service entailed collaborative efforts in terms of relating, networking, and connecting with different individuals and groups at various levels.

The theme of pastoral leadership as a ministry with diverse challenges showed the layers of difficulties that abound in the different areas of the apostolate. These challenges comprised biological and emotional issues, stress in the ministry, and pastoral disappointments. The content of this analysis reveals participants' perception of life and service in the pastoral ministry of the 21st century Catholic Church.

In the final chapter, I will draw on views in the literature and perspectives from leadership theories to interpret participants' experiences, in order to address the central

phenomenon of this research. In doing this, I will discuss how participants' experiences portray pastoral leadership in their parishes, based on the literature review and leadership theories. This discussion is necessary because opinions in the literature and leadership theories have addressed vital issues that are applicable to leadership in the Church's pastoral ministry. Discussing the findings in the light of available literature on pastoral leadership and leadership theories will help in delineating research implications for respective faith communities and the Church in general.

Chapter Five: Discussions and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore pastoral experiences of Catholic priests as leaders of faith communities in order to understand what those experiences mean for them and how their perspectives were impacting organizational outcomes in their respective faith communities. In the interviews, I collected participants' stories about their experiences as pastoral leaders. In chapter four, I analyzed the contents of participants' interview responses under the four themes I delineated from the data.

In this chapter, I propose discussions on the research findings. These findings are reflected in the four themes that encapsulate participants' understanding of the priestly ministry as pastoral leaders and their leadership approaches in the ministry. The discussions constitute a secondary interpretation of the findings based on the primary interpretation I undertook in the analysis. My objective is to articulate what participants' leadership perspectives portend for their respective parish communities and how they portray the Church's pastoral ministry in general. For this reason, I am using views in the literature on pastoral leadership and insights from leadership theories as the building blocks for these discussions. With these clarifications, I present discussions on participants' pastoral perspectives with reference to views in the literature and theoretical interpretation of their pastoral leadership experiences.

Research Findings vis-a-vis Views in the Literature

In the literature review, I presented contemporary leadership development efforts in the various sectors of the global economy, and dwelt on research findings and theoretical reflections about different aspects of pastoral leadership. These views described the realities in the Church's pastoral ministry and offered suggestions on how to improve the status quo. In this section, I focus on the research findings and reflect on those issues in the light of views in the literature.

Complex socio-cultural realities. Addressing issues on pastoral theology, care, and counseling, Parks (2007) pointed out that priests who occupy pastoral leadership positions in the 21st century are serving in postmodern, pluralistic, and interdisciplinary environments. This observation points to the complex realities in the pastoral ministry. Moreover, it entails a distinction between the socio-political and economic realities of the past and the emerging reality of the new age (Lau Chin, 2010). This points to the changes in various areas of the global polity which impact life in contemporary society and demand taking adequate steps to meet the needs of the changing times (McFarlane, 2011). Situations that expressed these views were visible in my research findings.

First, participants expressed awareness of the interdisciplinary and pluralistic nature of the contemporary society, and how this has impacted their ministry. I noted awareness of the complexity when Fr. Fintan compared the office of the pastoral leader to the role of a chief executive officer. I also noted it when Fr. Gerald described the overwhelming responsibilities he experienced in the pastoral ministry as “chaotic”. By stating that “there should be people handling everything,” he acknowledged the existence of multiple areas of service and the need to distribute functions, rather than leave it all to one person.

Secondly, participants were aware of the changing realities of the contemporary society and how they impact the pastoral ministry. One area of observation was changes in the socio-economic realities in their parishes which included poverty, homelessness, and search for jobs that made the youths drift away from the Church. From observing and being aware of these realities, the findings showed that in line with McFarlane’s (2011) proposal, participants took steps to address these issues. For instance, from observing the reality of homelessness and poverty in the new urban environment of his parish, Fr. Fintan spoke about a solution that would

go beyond meeting the physiological needs of the people affected, to solving the problem of mental illness that often results from homelessness and poverty. His suggestion entailed setting up a bigger infrastructure that would involve both Church and state instead of “just church groups going out and bringing people food.”

Another instance was participants’ strategic plans to meet the needs of youths and engage them actively in their parishes. To enhance youth presence and involvement in Church activities, Fr. Hector introduced contemporary music in the mass. He initiated a spiritual program he called “The Summit” which created an opportunity for the youths to have a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Additionally, he planned social events and programs through which they enjoyed the experiential components of their religious education classes. Through similar approaches, participants acted in accordance with views in the literature by initiating programs to meet emerging needs of members in the contemporary society.

With the evolving realities of the contemporary world, Friedman, (2006) observed that the paradigm shift from a “vertical—command and control—system for creating value to a more horizontal — connect and collaborate—value-creation model” (p. 233) does not only affect business transactions. It also affects “how individuals, communities, and companies organize themselves” (p. 233). Organizing themselves in this context refers to ways that individuals and systems coordinate their functions in order to maximize output or create impacting presence in the society. Friedman was raising awareness to the evolving leadership approach in which organizations were positioning themselves for impacting presence and success by abandoning the old-fashioned domineering, condescending, and exclusivist style of engagement to embrace an inclusive, egalitarian, and collaborative approach. The connect and collaborate model is

characterized by values such as respect, recognition, appreciation, bonding, and networking that result in efficiency and greater output for the good of interest groups.

Evidence from the data showed that participants were organizing their faith communities on the basis of Friedman's (2006) connect and collaborate principle. The story of their pastoral experiences showed they were not micromanagers. Fr. Emmanuel described his leadership style as a "delegative model" which meant sharing leadership functions, as suggested in Friedman's (2006) connect and collaborate approach to organizational life. Similarly, Fr. Hector spoke of how he was employing the help of parishioners, such as pastoral council and finance council members, in his pastoral leadership. Apart from applying a connect and collaborate model with competent personnel on ground, his story about forming ministry members for leadership roles in the parish shows an intentional leadership effort aimed at promoting Friedman's (2006) leadership model that enhances collaboration, organizational productivity, and wellbeing of members.

Equally, Fr. Brendan's systematic steps in recruiting leaders for the adult faith formation program he intended to initiate points to Friedman's (2006) connect and collaborate approach. The pastoral leadership practices Fr. Camillus spoke about implied an awareness and implementation of Friedman's connect and collaborate philosophy. Faced with many pastoral responsibilities in the parish against shortage of personnel, he trained members to assist with some functions. By training members to become the "core group for the Church," he covered the different areas of pastoral needs that would not be possible to do by one or two pastoral leaders alone. These instances show participants' pastoral engagement according to the standards suggested in the literature. Where necessary human resources and personnel were lacking or were insufficient, they invited members and trained them to lead or provide the services. They

assigned duties to members and worked with them to implement sustainable programs and projects for the wellbeing of the people and the parish community.

Competent pastoral leadership qualities. The complex socio-cultural realities of the new world characterized by postmodern, pluralistic, and interdisciplinary factors (Parks, 2007) present a variety of challenges for pastoral leadership. Towards the close of the last millennium, Greenleaf (1998) stated that “Unless churches become more effective, it is unlikely that people and institutions will do much better than at present” (p. 116). Effective Church implies competent leadership because followership depends on leadership (Brumm & Drury, 2013). Considering these views, the literature called for competent pastoral leadership in faith communities (The Code of Canon Law, nos. 524 – 529). In this context, competence consists of the ability to coordinate pastoral functions for the enhancement of members’ wellbeing and the furtherance of parish goals.

The nature of competence needed in pastoral leadership was expounded in the literature. Inspired by van den Berg, van Rensburg (2010) stated that “We need to prevent a kind of ‘spiritual’ pastoral care that fixates on comfort and compassion and that only offers relief by the provision of a kind of ‘pie in the sky when you die by and by’” (p. 6). This view proposes a pastoral leadership function that realistically addresses the spiritual and material needs of the people. Cohall and Cooper (2010) argued that competence in pastoral leadership entails envisioning personal growth and development of Church members. In my research findings, these concerns constituted the focus of participants’ engagements.

Participants’ concern about the spiritual and temporal wellbeing of their members were evident in their devotion to the word of God. They fed the people spiritually through preaching because “people want to have an encounter with God.” Moreover, they expressed their

commitment to service by identifying with the people in their existential conditions and ministered to their various needs, both temporal and spiritual. Their commitments to service were neither limited to achieving humanistic goals and meeting existential needs of the people, nor were they only promising “a pie in the sky when you die by and by” (van Rensburg, 2010, p. 6). Rather, they focused on enhancing the general wellbeing of members by catering for their existential and spiritual needs. They engaged in liberating individuals and communities from the shackles of poverty and dehumanization (Dames, 2010) as an integral component of their pastoral responsibilities. These were evident in donations to charitable organizations, helping the less privileged develop means of sustenance, and reflecting on how the diversified needs of the poor and homeless could be catered for clinically and adequately. They also strove to connect the people with God in a more profound spiritual relationship (Pratt, 2009), as exemplified by the faith formation programs they initiated.

Clark’s (cited in Barratt, 2009) eight characteristics of new evangelization which should constitute the focal point of pastoral leadership address the spiritual aspect of pastoral competence. These are: improving upon the old method of evangelization, establishing an intimate relationship with Christ, helping members in their faith journey, focusing on nominal members, bringing non-practicing believers to active involvement, re-evangelizing traditional Christian countries, employing new methods of communication, and involving everyone, especially the laity. The data evidence showed participants displayed competence in these areas. The Amazing Parish conference on new evangelization they attended attests to their efforts at improving upon the old method of evangelization. The adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – a solemn prayerful moment with the Lord Jesus in the exposed sacramental species of the Eucharist, was their way of engaging people spiritually and bringing them into intimate

relationship with the Lord Jesus. Initiating faith formation programs with competent team members to run the programs also showed they helped members in their faith journey.

Participants' accounts of their pastoral experiences showed they implemented Clark's (as cited in Barratt, 2009) suggestion to involve everyone, especially the laity. They effected it by collaborating with the laity in the pastoral care of the sick, training Eucharistic ministers, and going with them to visit the sick and homebound. However, participants made no reference to evangelizing traditional Christian countries as proposed by Clark.

One of the suggestions in the literature on competence was the willingness to embrace organizational challenges as learning moments in pastoral leadership (Bandura, as cited in Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Pastoral leadership comes with challenges and pastoral leaders demonstrate their capability by embracing the challenges, instead of avoiding them. Participants' approaches to the pastoral challenges they encountered indicate competence. Restoring concord in the community among antagonizing cultural groups whose linguistic differences were inhibiting harmony in the parish community, as in Fr. Ambrose's case, shows competence. Devising the means of overcoming opposition and resistance to change such as Fr. Brendan did during his renovation project shows competence. Generally, the data showed that participants embraced challenging situations and dealt with them maturely. This points to their effective pastoral qualities.

Performing multiple roles in the ministry. Participants' stories justified Park's (2007) view that the pastoral leadership environment of the 21st century is postmodern, pluralistic, and interdisciplinary. Beyond playing the role of spiritual leaders, each of them also assumed the role of "a professional man, a cultivated man, a theologian, and at times a sociologist or a business person" (Gilchrist, 2005, p. 18). They assumed multiple roles and performed various functions in

the socio-economic and pastoral setting they found themselves. The research data of participants also showed the three pastoral roles Kuhne and Donaldson (1995) identified from observing clergies' behaviors. These are: "mentor, care-giver, and, of course, preacher" (p. 158).

The mentoring role entails developing church leadership through disciple-building and staff training (Kuhne & Donaldson, 1995). Participants exemplified this quality by guiding their staff members and ministry leaders to a better understanding of the faith and active involvement in the pastoral ministry. They achieved disciple-building in various ways. They created visions and got the people behind those visions. They led members to discover their potentials and solidify their economic base through mentoring relationships. Furthermore, they empowered their members to direct faith formation programs that nourished their parish communities.

Participants also trained their staff members, ministry leaders, and parishioners for active participation in the pastoral ministry. As pointed out by Fr. Camillus, "Those people are the ones who helped me to organize the youth ministry, those who became a kind of core group for the Church." These engagements go to show participants' devotedness and generativity in their leadership roles. They also indicate participants' appreciation of leadership development as a key task in parish building (Kuhne & Donaldson, 1995). By engaging in leadership development, they brought a sense of self-worth to members and dynamism to their parochial communities.

On the care-giver role, participants showed interest in the wellbeing of their members in various ways. They acted "as people helpers-helpers through counseling, crisis intervention, hospital visitation, and other acts of mercy when emotional, spiritual or other forms of spiritual needs arise" (Kuhne & Donaldson, 1995, p. 159). They showed care by being present for members at different moments of need "party or death in the family or baptism," as Fr. Ambrose pointed out. Fr. Brendan showed he cared for the wellbeing of sick members in the hospital and

the homebound by making hospital and home visits a requirement for his Church members who wanted to be involved in the Eucharistic ministry. These stories about their involvement with anointing of the sick, hospital visits, and funerals revealed the care-giver roles they played. The positive attitude reflected in their stories and their expressions of excitement in this aspect of the ministry suggest they undertook this service with joy.

The third pastoral role from Kuhne and Donaldson's (1995) study was preaching, which is exercised in "worship leadership, baptizing, marrying, funerals and liturgical direction for the congregation as a whole" (p. 159). Participants' dedication to fulfilling this function was evident in their understanding and engagement in preaching as an important aspect of the pastoral ministry. The centrality of preaching that Fr. Fintan expressed in speaking about his leadership strategy showed his commitment to this apostolate. His homilies at liturgical celebrations were moments of teaching. They guided members in their faith journey and called them to action in exemplifying good Christian conducts. Equally, Fr. Emmanuel considered preaching as a teaching moment and an opportune moment to build the faith of members in accordance with the values of Christ. On their arrival in the United States, participants from other cultures made efforts to overcome obstacles that might hinder their effectiveness in preaching. An example is Fr. Domingo who prepared himself "by watching TV, observing the accent, the way they talk." Based on these instances, participants typified commendable pastoral leadership by performing the three pastoral leadership roles of mentoring, care-giving, and preaching that Kuhne and Donaldson (1995) identified in their study.

Apart from the three pastoral leadership roles, Carter's (2009) findings also showed that effective pastoral leaders are achievement-oriented, organized, and reliable. I observed these leadership qualities in my research participants. Their functionality in the faith communities

relate to Rowold's (2008) findings that "transformational leadership behaviors such as the representation and articulation of a value-based vision motivate and satisfy followers and members of the congregation" (p. 410). For instance, Fr. Gerald articulated the visions of sustainability for the rural people of Nigeria through a storage system, and of growth for his parish in the United States through building a new Church structure. Fr. Brendan envisioned an inviting Church facility through broad-based renovation, and the deepening of faith for members through a new adult faith formation program. Similarly, Fr. Emmanuel envisioned a dynamic parish community through the new evangelization program. Relating these experiences to Rowold's (2008) findings, their leadership decisions and actions encouraged "followers' extra effort, effectiveness, satisfaction with leader, and job satisfaction" (p. 407). They gave members a sense of belonging and fulfilment in their respective parish communities.

Another set of pastoral leadership qualities I also found in participants was self-giving and engendering the presence of Christ (Champlin, 2007; Gilchrist, 2005; Toups, 2008). In their self-giving as pastor of souls, they walked caringly with the faithful in their life situations and served as Christ's presence to the people in their existential struggles. This pastoral demeanor was perceptible in their attentiveness to and care of the infirmed, the elderly, and the homebound in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and family houses. Similar to Blasi, Husaini, and Drumwright's (1998) study which showed that pastors brought the needs of the elderly and homebound to the Church community, participants introduced and encouraged community involvement for the purpose of serving these demographics of members in their needs. Fr. Ambrose went as far as announcing in the Church that people should inform him of sick members that need to be visited. He also followed Meyerstein and Ruskin's (2007) call for

pastoral leader's sensitivity during sick visits. He was mindful of the tolerance level of the sick and kept his visits brief.

In participants' youth ministry activities and programs, they implemented the themes Nüesch-Olver (2005) identified in her study and proposed for the pastoral guidance of young ones in the youth ministry. These included a healthy spiritual relationship by way of mentoring and role modeling, broadminded faith guidance, proper education in faith and culture, proper interpretation of bible and Church teachings, coherent exemplification of the Christian faith, programs for religious and spiritual education of unchurched youths, and exposition to other people's living conditions. However, there was no indication in the research document that they were involved with the education of unchurched youths.

Singleton et al. (2010) pointed out ways of engaging the youths in order to implement Nüesch-Olver's (2005) seven themes and evidence from the data shows participants engaged in these activities. These were camps and retreats, youth worship services, mission activities, drop-in coffee shops, weekend youth clubs or groups, music group, performing in local events, sporting events, online communities, and participation in welfare programs. The non-perishable food they made kids donate to charitable organizations, the modern music and charismatic style of singing they introduced in their youth ministry, and the faith formation programs they introduced which engendered "authentic faith", attest to their commitment to the wellbeing of their youths. Similarly, leading their parish youths to diocesan activities and programs, to world youth day where they interacted with the pope and with other youths around the world, and the retreats and small group activities they organized which enabled the youths to "have a horizon open for them of understanding God's love for them in a personal way" testify to their active role in the youth ministry.

In line with recommendations in the literature, participants made conscious efforts to create conducive environments for various cultural groups of youths, especially the minorities, in order to give everyone a sense of belonging in the parish. They organized recreational events for the youths, and introduced spiritual programs through which they could enrich their spiritual life. By these programs and activities, participants promoted adolescent psychosocial development, family dynamics, multiculturalism, creative and innovative learning program, and collaboration (Powell, King, and Clark, 2005).

Grove's (2004) three R's of pastoral care and Manala's (2010) triad of pastoral leadership summarized the leadership qualities proposed in the literature. According to Grove (2004), pastoral care in school setting is about relationship, respect, and responsibility. Applying these qualities to pastoral setting in parishes, the data showed a functional and positive relationship between participants and the people. They recognized the dignity of every person as the basis of a positive and nurturing relationship, and implemented it by their attitudes and actions. Equally, they considered it their responsibility to take charge of the people entrusted to their care. From the point of view of Manala's (2010) triad of pastoral leadership, participants were facilitators playing the three-fold roles of leader, manager, and servant. Fr. Fintan used the metaphor of CEO to describe this triad of pastoral leadership.

The literature warned against the tendency to be seduced by power, prestige, and flattery in the ministry (Knott, 2011). My findings pointed to the contrary. It showed a predominant focus on serving the people and doing God's will. Participants' recurring statements were about being present for the people in every way, identifying with them in their situations, ministering to their needs, and acting in accordance with God's will for the community. Acknowledging the need for humility in the ministry, Fr. Emmanuel said it was important "to receive the mission

from Christ on a daily basis” By expressing their regrets over past unhealthy attitude and behavior, Fr. Hector and Fr. Fintan revealed the inner yearning to be faithful pastoral leaders as Christ’s representatives among the people. On this note, Rosica’s (2010) observation about resurgence of triumphalism among younger generation of priests was not substantiated in the data. There was no indication of authoritarianism and emerging clericalism (Doyle, 2006; Rosica, 2010). The authority shown by participants was based on their visions and aimed at meeting their goals when members tried to resist change, as evident in Fr. Brendan’s church expansion and renovation project. Contrary to any tendency toward authoritarianism and clericalism expressed in the literature, my research data indicated pastoral leadership behaviors that were characterized by consultation, collaboration, and delegation.

Community building, faith formation, and evangelization. Knott’s (2011) insinuation “that most Catholics want to be good and serve God, but many do not know how and many of us priests do not know how to lead them there” (p. 22) was not substantiated in my findings. Hoover’s (2010) findings in his Chicago study that task orientation and ministerial isolation have constituted adverse factors in the pastoral ministry were equally unfounded. In my findings, participants engaged parishioners actively in various areas of pastoral life. They built their parish communities through faith formation programs and evangelization. Instead of a task-oriented ministry which focuses on task accomplishment, they undertook the substantive task of developing members and building dynamic faith communities. It was a reflection of the 9,9 Team Management model of Blake and Mouton’s (1978) managerial grid, a team approach that is “goal-oriented and seeks to gain results of high quantity and quality through participation, involvement, commitment, and conflict-solving” (p. 12).

To realize their objectives, participants collaborated with people on various levels. They collaborated with their members and ministry heads, with their office staff, with pastoral and finance council members, with fellow priests, and with diocesan officials. This collaborative approach presented them as competent, informed, and caring pastors who were concerned about the wellbeing of individuals, families, faith groups, and the larger society (Lamothe, 2012). According to Lamothe, these qualities are necessary requirements for pastoral leadership. The pastoral vision and communication that were lacking in Knott's (2011) findings were prominent among participants. They had developmental visions for their communities and communication was a prominent feature in their leadership strategy.

Evidence in the data agreed with assertions in the literature that pastoral leadership should empower the people holistically by addressing their temporal and spiritual needs (van Rensburg, 2010). Participants exhibited "people skills" (Hillman, 2006, p. 142) which enabled them to manage themselves, establish interpersonal communication, manage people and situations, initiate innovations that brought changes, develop visions, encourage team work, and implement other strategic actions. The pastoral skills that were lacking in Hoover's (2010) Chicago study were present in my findings. Participants had the interpersonal skills of listening to people, facilitating groups, reading people's emotions, and communicating their visions. They implemented active listening (Senge et al., 2004) in their pastoral leadership roles by paying attention to members' needs and helping them resolve their issues. The pastoral skill in the literature that was lacking in participants was humor. The data did not show the playful pastoral education method proposed by Koppel (2007) which enlivens congregational life and enhances psychological health and wellbeing in the ministry.

Church documents by Paul VI (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963), John Paul II (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992), Benedict XVI (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2007), Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013), General Instructions of the Roman Missal (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), and Homiletic Directory (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 2015) give prominence to preaching as a primary function of pastors. John Paul II (1992) stated that

the priest is first of all a minister of the word of God. He is consecrated and sent forth to proclaim the good news of the kingdom to all, calling every person to the obedience of faith and leading believers to an ever increasing knowledge of and communion in the mystery of God, as revealed and communicated to us in Christ. (No. 26)

My findings showed that participants upheld preaching as an important pastoral function. Their expression of love for this apostolate; and their disposition to learn, explore opportunities, and improve exemplified the view that pastoral leaders who are teachers of the things that pertain to God need to be thoroughly rooted on sound theology (Britton, 2009). In general, participants were committed to enhancing the spiritual growth of members by preaching the gospel.

The literature also pointed to the sacrament of reconciliation as another means of supporting the people in their spiritual growth. Kettunen's (2002) finding showed that the focus at confession should be about helping people in their psychological, moral, and emotional difficulties. Participants spoke of their celebration of this sacrament as a sacred trust and an opportunity to serve the spiritual needs of the people. It was a sacramental moment through which they helped resolve the moral, psychological, and emotional quandaries of members.

Being able to minister to the various needs of the people efficiently requires sharing pastoral responsibilities and functions in the spirit of solidarity and unity of purpose (Tidd, 2009). Participants did not only share responsibilities with available personnel, they also looked for and trained people they needed in the ministries. The concern and apprehension about

collaborative ministry reducing the priesthood to a functional definition and creating a congregationalist type of church (Ranson, 2010) was not supported in my findings. On the contrary, participants were aware of the needs in the ministry and took steps to ensure shared pastoral responsibility. They established leadership teams with members which helped them facilitate pastoral functions in the various rural communities in the parish and implemented a collaborative ministry in terms of involving others in the decision process through consultations and feedbacks, as well as engaging them in pastoral responsibilities.

Learning on the job. The literature and the research findings presented learning as an ongoing experience. Findings from McKenna, Boyd, and Yost's (2007) study showed that learning on the job is characterized by situational and personal factors that result from "on the edge, high pressure, refining fire experiences that shape the leadership, character, and vocation of pastoral leaders" (p. 187). This means pastoral leaders learn from the challenging experiences in the ministry. Participants' experiences reflected this assertion.

The intense pastoral responsibilities and personal challenges they were experiencing in the ministry demanded on-the-job learning. Fr. Fintan's description of the difference between the "controlled," "scheduled," and "extremely predictable" seminary life versus the reality in the parish where people's lives are "unpredictable", "complicated", and "practical" shows participants had to learn on the job. The seminary training did not provide them with proper leverage for pastoral leadership (McKenna, Boyd, and Yost, 2007). Situational and personal factors demanded on-the-job learning. Situationally, participants learned as pastoral leaders to assimilate into the new culture, negotiate contract terms in construction projects, and improve on their pastoral leadership skills and liturgical proficiency when there was no one to guide them.

In their personal affairs, they learned from the disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2009) they experienced in their health conditions. Similarly, they learned to contain their idiosyncrasies and shortcomings such as Fr. Hector's pride, stubbornness, and self-reliance, which robbed him of joy in the priesthood and a fruitful relationship with the people. Another example was Fr. Emmanuel, who learned to regulate his pastoral zeal and stay within the limits of his ability. They learned from their pastoral experiences and improved in the course of their ministry as suggested in the literature.

Ecumenical engagement. The literature commented on proselytism as a problem which hinders ecumenical collaborations (Haughey, 1998, Karkkainen, 2001). This problem is characterized by self-containment, self-righteousness, and self-perpetuation (Collins, 1995). Evangelization which is a selfless proclamation of the gospel (Haughey, 1998) is the proposed way forward. In their discussion on ecumenical engagement, participants hinted at the need to guard against religious conceitedness that would hinder cordiality with peoples of other faith orientations.

Participants' warning against "a power-over mentality" as Fr. Fintan described religious conceit which results in uncompromising attitudes and prejudices against others (Collins, 1995) indicate they were conscious of the challenges facing ecumenism. Their emphases on "welcoming" indicate they were open to others irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, existential conditions, or religious affiliation.

Diversity and cultural competency. Cultural diversity is the new experience in modern societies and it affects the religious life in a profound way (McFarlane, 2011). Research evidence shows that participants worked with people of divergent cultural, social, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. Aware of the socio-cultural reality of the time, they adjusted to the diverse pastoral

environments they were assigned to and led the people from an emic perspective (Dean, 2009). They watched television programs that pertained to the cultural groups they were ministering to, learned the mindset of the culturally others, and served their members adequately.

The cross-cultural tensions Ranson (2010) noted in Australian Church was also present in my findings. These were evident in the experience of two participants of other national cultures in the study. They felt marginalized by people who could not embrace their cultural and racial differences in the areas of accents and mannerisms. It appears that the cross-cultural tensions the two participants experienced resulted from their lack of cultural competency (Wyer, Chiu, & Hong, 2009). Contrary to the experience of these two participants, three other non-American participants recounted their cultural difficulties. However, they took positive steps and integrated into the host culture with fruitful outcomes. The outcome of the two participants might have been favorable if they were culturally competent (Park 2007) by adapting to their host culture through intelligent, creative, and strategic measures (Ranson, 2011), as demonstrated by the three other non-American participants. The culturally-based rejection the two participants associated with their pastoral difficulties suggests the need for emotional and social intelligence (Goleman, 2006) in pastoral leadership. Additionally, prior familiarity with global cultures (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2008) would have helped them adapt to their new cultural situations.

The challenge of diversity that was found in a multicultural class in New Zealand was replicated in my findings. Culbertson (1997) noted that different values and understanding were attached to the same practice by different cultural groups. Both in the New Zealand case and in my study, the same practice carried different interpretations and values for different people. One example from the New Zealand class situation was that western culture prohibited a visitor sitting on a patient's bed. On the other hand, Samoan culture encouraged it as a way of showing

the patient solidarity and acceptance in their sickness. A western visitor visiting a Samoan patient or vice versa, without cultural competence, may cause an embarrassment or scandal by practicing his or her cultural ethos in a culturally different situation. Having been acculturated in the American culture, a participant recalled acting adversely when he visited his native land by touching an elderly priest. Touching an elderly person in the egalitarian culture of America is permissible. Doing same in the participant's hierarchical culture is prohibited (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2008; Nahavandi, 2012). He committed a cultural taboo by acting egalitarian in his hierarchical culture. Acknowledging and respecting cultural variations enhance acceptance and collaboration that will lead to the wellbeing of the organization and individuals (McIlwain, 2009). It starts from being culturally competent (Park 2007).

Self-care and support system. The idea in this section is that the wellbeing of pastors is a prerequisite for their members' wellbeing, since it enables pastors to be actively present, and offer enriched and fruitful service to members. For this reason, it is imperative that pastors maintain their physical, mental, and spiritual health (Espelage, 2009). Participants' stories showed they were aware of the need for self-care and made efforts to ensure it. In their study, Chandler (2009) and Shinhwan (2006) stated that what generally affect pastors' health are stress and burnout which are outcomes of various factors. Shinhwan (2006) identified these factors as: eco-biological, vocational, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and personal factors. Chandler (2009) considered spiritual dryness as the primary cause and found its remedy in self-care practices such as spiritual activities, resting, and support system. These practices enhance resilience, vitality, and general wellbeing of pastors.

Participants' stories about their depressive experiences and being stressed out point to experiences of stress. However, there was no indication of situations that resulted in burnout or

breakdown. Though they spoke of stress in the ministry, none of them used the word burnout in their discussions. In accordance with Chandler's (2009) recommendations, they sustained themselves through spiritual activities, rest, and support groups. Their reference to prayer as their source of invigoration attests to spiritual self-care. Holy Hour or adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was the spiritual self-care by which they replenished their energy.

In the case of taking rest, participants understood and adopted it as a means of avoiding stress and breakdown. Listening to their bodies, they knew when to rest. Their forms of rest included having sufficient sleep every night, going on vacation, and taking a day off. By these means they rejuvenated themselves and remained active in the ministry. Participants equally used support systems as self-care measures. One of these was their religious community member with whom they bonded and were able to avoid problems. Another was colleagues who came together to form a support group by which they encouraged one another and stayed strong in the ministry. Beyond spiritual activities, rest, and support system, participants adopted other means of self-care as suggested in the literature. These include: recreation, working out, and eating well (Shinhwan, 2006).

Other factors listed in the literature as situations that create setbacks to pastoral effectiveness were vocational factors such as: "career uncertainty, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, lack of opportunities to 'derole', be yourself, loneliness, and time management frustrations" (Shinhwan, 2006, p. 243). I identified career uncertainty in participants' stories. One participant struggled to the point of asking, "Did I make mistake?" I also noted role ambiguity and role conflict from the point of view of playing the proper role in a particular office. Examples were associate versus pastor in the parish, and priests versus officials in the diocese. The problem was about knowing and playing their respective roles accordingly.

Spiritual growth and development. Stressing the importance of spiritual growth and development, Barton (2009) argued that the most valuable need that the pastor supplies in a faith community is not intelligence, talent, or skill but a transforming self. This statement points to the centrality of spirituality in the pastoral ministry and the responsibility of pastors in ensuring the spiritual growth of members. It means that pastors have to be spiritual people by being present to God and leading the people from inside (Barton, 2009; Culbertson, 1997). It is from the riches of their personal spirituality that they will be able to supply the spiritual needs of the people.

My findings showed that spiritual development was prominent in participants' scale of priorities. From their stories, it was the nexus of their pastoral ministry with spiritual development of members constituting their sublime responsibility. They implemented their spiritual programs by developing themselves spiritually through prayers and attentiveness to God. From the spiritual enrichment of their persons, they initiated profound faith formation programs that enhanced the spiritual growth of their parishioners. By their prayerful lifestyle, they served as spiritual agents in their members' response to God's call to holiness and to fulfill God's purpose in the ministry (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48). Their faith formation programs were spiritual development plans that were tied to service within the grand design of the new evangelization. They served the needs of their parish communities on the basis of the spiritual growth of their members.

The analysis showed that participants were pastoral leaders who saw themselves as called to lead the people from their existential struggles to a deeper relationship with Christ. They began by entering into an enriched personal relationship with God from whom pastoral leadership derives authority (Barton, 2009). Founded on a strong spiritual relationship with God,

they implemented their plans through “invitation, persuasion, example and the skillful use of the Church’s rites, rituals and rules” (Knott, 2011, p. 20).

Presencing. The overarching pastoral leadership ideal for participants was being present for their members. This point was recurrent in participants’ stories as the paramount issue of pastoral focus. Fr. Ambrose described his ways of being available for the people in their needs. They operated from emic perspective by building a relationship that enabled them assist the people efficiently in their various human situations. Through the relationships, they were present for the people by identifying with them and forming “a bond and trust,” as Fr. Domingo described it.

“Welcoming” was a prominent term participants used in expressing their idea of being present for the people. This meant keeping an open door and being available for everyone who needed help. It also meant providing opportunities for the people to experience God’s love, because for them everyone was valuable and needed to be attended to with the love of God.

Participants’ emphasis on the need to be present for the people was reminiscent of the theory of presencing within the context of the “seven capacities of the U movement” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005, p. 219). These capacities include: suspending, redirecting, letting go, letting come, crystallizing, prototyping, and institutionalizing. It demands “a profound opening of the heart carried into action,” or “waking up to who we really are by linking with and acting from our highest future self – and by using the self as a vehicle for bringing forth new worlds” (p. 234). Participants were present to their members by active and altruistic attentiveness to their struggles and needs.

Pastoral outcomes. There were positive pastoral outcomes in various areas of participants’ ministry. These were visible in the areas of building and maintaining relationships,

faith formation, fulfilling pastoral obligations, and spiritual nurturing and growth of members (Manala, 2010). Concerning relationship, participants stayed close to the people, interacted with them, and enjoyed mutual love and support. Their efforts in faith formation enabled members to participate more actively in parish life. The formation programs prepared, disposed, and empowered members to assume various responsibilities. Members were able to provide services and assistance in different areas of the parish life. Participants fulfilled their pastoral obligations through the projects and programs they initiated. Prominent among these projects and programs were constructions, renovations, and payment of debts. Others were social services and spiritual upliftment of members.

Participants' projects and programs brought positive outcomes to individual members and the community. Similar to John Paul II whose leadership style ensured a fruitful pontificate, participants' dedication in the ministry yielded fruitful results. Like the pope, they were future-oriented in their personal values, pastoral attitude, and interpersonal relationship (Udomah, 2014; Weigel, 2011). These brought new impetus to participants' parish communities as they brought renewal to the Church under John Paul II.

Evidence in the data indicates that participants' engagement in the pastoral ministry largely reflected the views expressed in the literature on how to develop and sustain Church leadership for the wellbeing of members and organizational advancement. In the next section, I reflect on the findings to identify the theoretical perspective that defined participants' pastoral leadership styles.

Theoretical Insights Into Participants' Experiences

The second objective in this chapter was to identify the leadership theory associated with participants' pastoral perspectives as expressed in their stories. The leadership characteristics that

were emerging from the initial stage of data collection were those of transformational leadership. To authenticate these perceptions, I adapted Sosik, Zhu, and Blair's (2011) model for verifying Christian transformational leadership behaviors.

Using this model, I created a three-column table with four rows. The first column contained the constructs. The second column contained brief definitions of the constructs. The third column contained transformational leadership manifestation. The constructs comprised the four components of transformational leadership. Namely: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The definitions were short explanations of the constructs. The manifestation examples were ideas from the interview datasets that fit the constructs as expressed in the definitions. Using this method, my findings indicated that participants were transformational in their leadership roles. This adapted model is illustrated in Table 8. The contents of Construct and Brief Definitions are elements of Sosik et al.'s (2011) model. The Manifestation Examples are ideas from my research findings.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership structure in which the leader forms a personal connection with followers and inspires them to higher goals (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Nahavandi, 2012)). "Transformational leaders attend to the individual needs of followers and offer inspiration and motivation to organizations and their constituents by providing meaning to their work rather than just rewards" (A world anew: latest theories of leadership, 2006, p. 40). These views underscore a relationship of influence between leader and followers whereby both parties intend real change (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1993). It results in "a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (Burns, 1978, p. 4). The outcome of transformational leadership is mutual realization of individual and organizational higher goals.

Table 8

Adaptation of Sosik et al.'s Christian Transformational Leadership Behavior Verification Model

Construct	Brief Definition	Manifestation Example
Idealized influence	Acting charismatically and ethically in ways that draw others	Participants modeled spirituality, humility, commitment, and service for members
Inspirational motivation	Crafting and articulating a challenging and meaningful vision	Participants engaged members and inspired them to undertake programs and projects that resulted in growth and dynamism
Intellectual stimulation	Challenging others to change self, others, and processes for good	Participants encouraged members to develop ideas and empowered them to implement new programs
Individualized consideration	Paying special attention to others' needs and assisting in their development	Participants were attentive and responded to members according to their various needs and concerns

Bass (2008) identified four components of transformational leadership. These include: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2012) presented five practices of exemplary leadership, namely: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. The four components of Bass (2008) and five practices of Kouzes and Posner (2012) express the essential characteristics of transformational leadership which I identified in participants' experiences. In this discussion, I am using the four components of Bass (2008) as the frame of reference in articulating the transformational leadership characteristics I identified in my findings.

Idealized influence. This transformational leadership quality refers to the charisma and principles in the leader that result in emotional bond between the leader and the follower. The leader serves as a model by exemplifying moral standards, values, behaviors, and actions that

followers identify with and emulate (Nahavandi, 2012; Sosik et al., 2011). Based on these criteria, I observed spirituality, commitment to service, humility, and moral authority (Sipe & Frick, 2009) as ways that participants exercised idealized influence in their communities.

As leaders of religious communities, participants modeled spiritual values by being prayerful themselves and encouraging members to engage in spiritual exercise. By upholding the loftiness of spirituality, they led their members along the path of spiritual development and transformation. Participants' motivational efforts were derived from their personal convictions and they extended opportunities to members to help them grow spiritually.

Participants also modeled the spirit of service. The various projects and programs they undertook pointed to their goodwill in serving the needs of the people (Greenleaf, 2003; Sipe & Frick, 2009). By their concerted efforts to cater for the needs of members sometimes under difficult circumstances, they showed the people what it means to care. They also demonstrated simplicity and humility in their leadership. These attributes endeared them to the people and created conducive pastoral environments. Stooping low to members' level and identifying with the people in their existential conditions engendered trust and approval.

Finally, I observed moral authority in participants which empowered them as spiritual guides for their members. In the findings, I observed various forms of moral authority. Prominent among these were listening to people's stories and using the homily as a pastoral tool in guiding them (Greenleaf, 2003). In schools, they guided the students to differentiate between right and wrong and to make good choices in life. The different instances which were common to at least six of the eight participants showed their idealized influence on members. By their words, actions, and attitudes, they modeled the way for their members in their pastoral situations (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Inspirational motivation. This refers to a leader's ability to motivate followers by communicating high expectations and challenging them with meaningful visions (Deluga, 1990; Northouse, 2010; Sosik et al., 2011). It describes the leader that inspires a shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). My findings showed participants motivated their members into undertaking projects and programs or engaging in ministries in ways that enabled them "achieve more than they would in their own self-interest" (Northouse, 2010, p. 178). As pastoral leaders of multicultural parish communities, they motivated the various cultural and linguistic groups to look beyond their differences to the common human heritage in which everyone shares and to the needs of the parish they all belonged to. By enabling shared vision, they made the people work together as members of the same faith community.

One of the situations that showed inspirational motivation was in adult faith formation. Participants elevated the status of this program in ways that made members step up in their religious commitments. They designed various programs to address diverse pastoral needs in their parishes and got members to respond accordingly. An example was the new evangelization program Fr. Emmanuel introduced by which he intended to foster a dynamic parish community. He created a shared vision of a parish that does not only "have an exterior expression of hospitality but also interior expression that's welcoming to other people" and made it successful by adopting the transformational measures of "providing a vision and helping and getting people to bring on that vision." A common feature in all the instances was the team spirit which enabled participants to actualize their visions (Northouse, 2010).

Intellectual stimulation. This transformational leadership characteristic encourages followers to be innovative, to think of creative ways of solving problems, and question their assumptions and beliefs as well as those of their leaders (Deluga, 1990; Northouse, 2010; Sosik

et al., 2011). It is a leadership quality that describes a leader who enables others to act and challenge the process (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). My findings showed that participants engaged and encouraged their members to think of innovative ways of improving their existential conditions. This occurred in multiple ways. They challenged members to improve their economic wellbeing and spiritual development.

Economically, participants challenged members to be creative and future-oriented by helping them visualize ways of being productive and managing their resources. Spiritually, their programs raised members' minds to higher values in order to become better individuals. These created avenues for members to grow in their relationship with God and become better members of their parish communities. An example was the new evangelization and faith formation programs. Using Fr. Emmanuel's words, he challenged his members "to think creatively as to what that could potentially mean." Their pastoral approaches show they enhanced dynamism in their parishes by empowering their members to work.

Individualized consideration. This transformational leadership quality describes a leader who serves as a mentor and gives followers personalized attention (Bass, 2008; Deluga, 1990; Sosik et al., 2011). This type of leader shows interest in followers' personal growth and development and pays attention to their specific needs (Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2010). Kouzes and Posner (2012) described it as encouraging the heart. From my findings, participants' exemplified individualized consideration in their pastoral leadership. Their care and sensitivity to the needs of members constituted the primary focus of their ministry. Participants' individualized consideration is explicated by Fr. Fintan's pastoral view that "being a priest is much more about people's lives than it is about dogmatic theology" and the "need to create avenues in which (people's) stories can be heard."

In their individualized attention, participants focused on providing opportunities for members to experience God's love. They exhibited the quality of attentiveness in their encounters and relationships whether at the confessional, in the office, in Church, in the hospital, or in members' homes. In these different pastoral environments, they provided a supportive climate for members and listened responsively to their individual needs (Northouse, 2010). Their caring attitude and attentiveness to the needs of members in specific situations reflect their awareness of the predominant pastoral need in the ministry.

Organizational Outcomes

The hallmark of this research was to explore the current pastoral leadership situation in the Catholic Church from the lens of priest participants who served as pastoral leaders. In the analysis and discussions, I have addressed the three-tier objectives of understanding what pastoral leadership meant for participants; examining participants' engagements in the light of available literature about contemporary pastoral ideals; and identifying the operative leadership theory in participants' ministry. Having achieved these objectives, I considered it necessary to delineate the organizational outcomes of participants' leadership experiences as a way of bringing the research study to its logical conclusion. Outcomes in this context refer to ways in which participants' leadership impact their parish communities and members, and what the pastoral situation would suggest about the future of the Church. I address these issues under value-based leadership, people-centered apostolate, and pastoral dynamism.

Value-based leadership. "Leadership involves values" (Northouse, 2010, p. 395) and Nahavandi (2012) defined values as "long lasting beliefs about what is worthwhile and desirable" (p. 108). Two themes in chapter four, namely, the priesthood as vocation and the priesthood as a ministry of commitment and service express the pastoral values of participants. It

showed the different ideals they held in high esteem which they endeavored to exemplify and communicate. For these reasons, they operated from a place of personal conviction and interior disposition. By their convictions, they exhibited a high sense of commitment and dedication to what they considered worthwhile and desirable for their communities and members.

The analysis indicated that participants' commitment was oriented toward helping the people understand their faith and live it actively by being a part of a dynamic community where everybody has a sense of identity and responsibility. Participants achieved these objectives through their different engagements. The core value was the wellbeing of their members in their different existential situations. The outcome of their pastoral efforts reflected Greenleaf's (2003) ten characteristics of a servant-leader. These are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (pp. 16-19). By these pastoral values, they impacted their communities and members positively and developmentally. Consequently, members understood their faith and became convinced Catholics, committed followers, and pastoral collaborators with participants on different levels. As collaborators, they became leaders and instructors in the faith formation programs, led at retreats, served as liturgical ministers, and became team members in pastoral leadership. By training and engaging their members at these various levels of collaboration, participants empowered them for greater service to their respective faith communities.

With participants' personal conviction and dedication, and their participatory approach to pastoral leadership, the growing decline in the different areas of Church life that the literature pointed out (Barrat, 2008; Sterkens, 2009) would not be a reality in their communities. Their transformational leadership qualities generated team spirit in their parish communities. The team spirit which was characterized by the collaborative qualities of goal setting, communication,

participation, decision-making, problem solving, interpersonal effectiveness, and cohesiveness boosted the morale and esprit de corps among members (Sipe & Frick, 2009, p. 89-90). The outcome was members' identification with and active involvement in the community life. This pastoral approach is indicative of the "connect and collaborate" strategy which is the twenty-first century leadership model for organizational sustainability (Friedman, 2006, p. 234). Based on the findings in this research, participants' collaborative tendencies and participatory ministry suggest a sustainable future for the Church.

People-centered apostolate. Ontologically, "people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions" (Greenleaf, 2003, p. 19). This assertion, which establishes the dignity of the human person constituted the essence of participants' pastoral ministry as expressed in the themes of commitment and service, and a ministry with complex realities. These themes present the wellbeing of members as the definitive focus in participants' pastoral ministry. They achieved this objective by attending to members' needs in all its pastoral ramifications with the ultimate goal of serving the needs of the people in their charge. The theoretical underpinning of this pastoral focus is that the goal of Church leadership is about serving the needs of the people.

In my reflection on participants' focus in the ministry, the prominent pastoral ideal that came to mind was presencing (Senge et al., 2004). Participants gave prominence to the wellbeing of their members by being present for them. Senge et al. (2004) described presencing as

deep listening, of being open beyond one's preconceptions and historical way of making sense. We come to see the importance of letting go of old identities and needs to control and . . . making choices to serve the evolution of life . . . leading to a state of "letting come," of consciously participating in a larger field for change. (Senge et al., 2004, p. 13)

The selflessness, openness, and attentiveness entailed in this presencing leads to a realization of an emerging future (Senge et al, 2004). In the pastoral context, this promotes the wellbeing of members and gives a future to the Church's mission.

This type of presencing is comparable to being “in the room, really be there, immersed in the reality of the people and environment, open to the moment, aware of the past and the future but not focused on them” (Sipe and Frick, 2009, p. 160). Fr. Fintan described it as having the feet on the ground with members, Fr. Domingo expressed it as being one with them, and Fr. Camillus described it as making people feel welcomed no matter their circumstances. It entailed understanding the people’s existential conditions, accepting them in those conditions, and withholding every form of judgment or bias (Senge et al., 2004).

This pastoral attitude indicated the merging of two worlds, namely, those of participants and those of their members. In the resultant symbiosis, members’ worries became participants’ concerns. Participants’ preoccupation was centered on helping members find meaning and direction in life, enjoy acceptance and sense of worth as part of the Church community, and attain fulfilment in their life of faith. They did this by “entering the private perceptual world” of their members and “becoming thoroughly at home in it” (Rogers, 1995, p. 142). In their concern, they were sensitive to members’ needs according to individual and group circumstances, and “to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever” they were experiencing (p. 142). This enhanced pastoral endearment and ensured collaborative ministry in participants’ pursuance of the Church’s goal of *salus animarum* – the salvation of souls (The Code of Canon Law, 1983, No. 1752).

Pastoral dynamism. Participants’ stories underscored a vibrancy in parish life that resulted from their concerted efforts. The factors that generated the dynamism were respect and appreciation of members, structural development, faith formation, community building, and individual involvement in parish life. Reflecting on the data evidence, I realized that the various faith communities came alive because participants entered into their leadership roles as lifelong

learners by perceiving each place of assignment as a learning organization – “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 1990, p. 14).

Participants made themselves lifelong learners and improved the community life by expanding their capacity to create, nurturing innovation and cooperation, and transferring knowledge in their collaborative ministry (Nahavandi, 2012). They achieved these by observing situations, reflecting on issues, asking questions for clarifications, envisioning possibilities, seeking advice, collaborating with members, attending conferences and courses, as well as initiating and implementing programs.

Participants respected and appreciated the talents, skills, and experiences of members, and collaborated with them on various pastoral fronts. By inviting members into participatory leadership and collaborative ministry through shared visions and responsibilities, they gave members a sense of self-worth that resulted in active involvement of members in the pastoral leadership arrangements. It made members identify with participants’ plans and purposes. By sharing their beliefs and values with members, participants obtained the needed buy-in which enabled success in their pastoral efforts (Northouse, 2010) and enhanced dynamism in the parish community.

In their structural development projects, participants improved the visual outlook of their parishes through renovation projects and provided needed spaces by constructing new facilities. The beautifications, expansions, and additions created convenience and made the Church more appealing than before. They initiated or upgraded faith formation programs in the parishes in ways that enabled parishioners to understand their faith, develop a sense of belonging in the community, and assume pastoral responsibilities by joining the various ministries in the parish.

An important pastoral engagement that served as the bedrock of success in participants' pastoral efforts was faith formation of members. Their goal was to get members to understand, own, and celebrate their faith. After entering the pastoral situation and seeing the different needs in the parish, they decided to form members for various reasons. First, they needed members to know their faith because they considered informed membership as viable resources in pastoral leadership. With the training and formation, they engaged members in different areas of the apostolate to help in supplying the different needs for organizational sustainability.

In community building, participants' goal was to build a community of love, care, and support. For that reason, they resolved existing conflicts among individuals and groups, and improved interpersonal, inter-ministry, and inter-cultural relationships. With the elimination of dissensions and establishment of common fronts, members identified and worked with one another harmoniously. This resulted in a spirit of solidarity and feeling of camaraderie among members. With the underlying structures of respect and appreciation of members, structural development, faith formation, and community building, the outcome was a dynamic community that witnessed transformations on different fronts.

Setbacks. Though the findings were overwhelmingly positive, they also indicated issues that participants were struggling with. Prominent among these were: solitude or loneliness, coping with feelings of rejection, dealing with opposition and cultural integration, and lack of cross-cultural orientation. Being celibate and living alone constituted a challenge to participants. Certain factors made this more difficult for them. There was the issue of having to live alone and far away from family in a different cultural setting. There was another issue of having to cope with inability to satisfy biological needs such as sexual desires. There was also the difficulty of

being ill and living alone in the rectory without assistance or company. Though not debilitating by any standard, these situations created considerable tension in participants in different ways.

A number of participants expressed difficulties in their pastoral relationships either with fellow priests or with parishioners. In certain cases, this triggered a feeling of being rejected. In other cases it created a sense of frustration. The problem I observed in these cases were lack of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006) and social judgment skills (Zaccaro, Mumford, Connelly, Marks, & Gilbert cited in Northouse, 2010) especially in perspective-taking, which is about understanding other people's attitudes toward problems and situations, and social perceptiveness, which is about understanding how other people function in organizational situations (Northouse, 2010).

Dealing with opposition and difficult cross-cultural encounters were other issues I noted in participants' stories. These were associated with lack of cultural competency on the part of participants (Chhokar et al., 2008; Lewis, 2006). The problem arose from lack of cultural orientation which would have prepared participants to enter into the cross-cultural situations they encountered. Therefore, their only option was learning on the job which made them susceptible to avoidable pitfalls. Apart from these setbacks, participants' experiences showed a prospering ministry and a promising future.

Research Contribution

Over the years people have asked me what priests do apart from celebrating mass and hearing confessions. I do not remember providing a response that satisfied their curiosity. This research has provided an enlightened response to those questions. The reawakening at the turn of the 21st century on the issue of organizational leadership and people's expression of concern about the future of the Church aroused my interest in understanding the pastoral leadership

situation in the Catholic Church in the contemporary society. Searching the literature, I found resources on various aspects of pastoral leadership both Protestant (Blasi et al., 1998; Cohall & Cooper, 2010; Kuhne & Donaldson, 1995) and Catholic (Culbertson, 1997; Hoover, 2010; Ranson, 2010). However, I did not find any research study that explored the experiences of Catholic priests in their pastoral leadership position in the contemporary society. This research study has provided a response to that pastoral concern.

I have addressed various aspects of the pastoral ministry in the Catholic Church from the lens of priest participants who serve as pastoral leaders. The findings provide insights to people seeking to understand the life of Catholic priests as pastoral leaders and the state of Catholic pastoral ministry in the contemporary society. The four ways by which this research has shed light on the pastoral situation in the Catholic Church include: explicating the reality of the Catholic priesthood, establishing the locus of pastoral leadership, demarcating the field of pastoral leadership, and articulating the pastoral ministry situation in contemporary society.

The reality of the Catholic priesthood. Participants' experiences showed that the priesthood is a vocation, not a profession (Gilchrist, 2005). As a vocation, it is an act of response to God's call. The priestly engagement is a state of being in people's privileged relationship with God, rather than a job they perform to earn a living. It entails seeking and following God's will in every pastoral plan and decision. Participants' presentation of their priestly vocation recalls the parables of the treasure in the field and of the merchant searching for fine pearls (Matthew 13:44-46). It is a fulfilling choice of life, so valuable that whoever is interested has to give up everything to embrace it. It begins with personal convictions (Luke 9:57-58), is rooted in faith and prayer (Engstrom, 1976), and comes with great costs, such as giving up lofty opportunities like marriage, family, and other materially profitable careers (Gilchrist, 2005; Luke 14:33).

Responding to the priestly vocation primarily entailed serving as God's presence among the people. In their leadership, participants epitomized the virtues of Christ the Good Shepherd (John 10:14-15). They incarnated the love and care of Jesus, and exemplified evangelical virtues by doing God's will (John 6:37-40) and caring for the people in their needs (Ford, 1991; Greenleaf, 2003; Luke 4:18-19). They were interiorly convinced and well-disposed for altruistic service in the ministry. Moreover, they embraced the core values of Jesus and positioned themselves to serve rather than be served (Matthew 20:28). They exemplified pastoral leadership as being and doing in the spirit of Jesus the high priest and model of Christian leadership.

People as the locus of the pastoral ministry. This point touches on the soul of pastoral ministry. The locus of participants' pastoral leadership was members' wellbeing. Their overarching concern was to serve the people and help them in their human situations. Participants' experiences reflected Gilchrist's (2005) pastoral thoughts that "We are shepherds in a pilgrim Church. We are meant to be guides for God's people" (p. 18). This means, their core value in the ministry was to bring the love of Jesus to the people they served and to form Christ in others. The analysis showed that participants were "guides," helping the people to develop their potentials in religious matters and enter into a loving relationship with God.

From the data evidence, the pastoral ministry is comparable to the family life and pastoral leaders are like parents whose prominent responsibility is to cater for the needs of their children and ensure the continual wellbeing of family members. In every area of the pastoral life – spiritual formation, structural developments, education, recreation, or any other aspect of the family life, everything was oriented toward the good of members. This means their pastoral leadership was about being interested in the people's wellbeing according to the example of Jesus who "unselfishly gave of His life" (Engstrom, 1976, p. 37) to save others.

The broad-based demands of pastoral leadership. One aspect of this research that has jolted me in a novel way is the demands of pastoral leadership. I was not actively aware of the vastness of the field of the pastoral ministry. When people asked me about priests' duties, my responses were offhanded answers that did not profoundly address the issue. The research findings have articulated the various areas of service in the ministry, the nature of the service, and the toll it takes on pastoral leaders. Engstrom (1976) expressed the view that a Christian leader "should be a man for all seasons, shifting from the permissiveness of summer to the demands of winter" (p. 79). Similarly, Paul talked about being all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9: 19-23). Participants' busy schedules showed that pastoral leadership is not a 9 to 5 job. Their involvement in different types of service showed that the ministry is not restricted to a particular area of focus. Similarly, their activities showed it is not limited to one geographical or socio-economic configuration. It is a ministry that is fluid and versatile in many ways.

The vast demands in the ministry imply the need for fitness. As participants' stories suggested, pastoral leaders who are not healthy or health conscious would not be able to cope with the stressful demands of the ministry. Therefore, pastoral leadership is a ministry that entails evolving a program for healthy living in terms of exercise, good eating habit, and rest. The summary of the broad-based demands in the ministry is that pastoral leadership is about striking a balance and coordinating all functions judiciously.

The leadership situation in Catholic pastoral ministry. One of the major objectives of this research was to identify the leadership theory associated with participants' experiences and what it portends for the future of their faith communities. The analysis has shown that the dominant leadership theory associated with participants was transformational leadership. This does not mean that transformational leadership is the general operating leadership style in the

Catholic Church. Rather, it means that participants' in this study exemplified qualities of transformational leaders. From the point of view of contemporary literature on the subject of organizational leadership (Friedman, 2006; Greenleaf, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010; Sipe & Frick, 2009), it implies that participants' parishes were future-oriented in their organizational life. Seeing their parishes as learning organizations (Senge, 1990), participants were always evolving ways to bring their communities up to date.

In the light of my findings, Knott's (2011) comment that "most Catholics want to be good and serve God, but many do not know how and many of us priests do not know how to lead them there" (p. 22) is not generally valid. Participants' experiences indicated that most Catholics want to be good and to serve God. They knew how to go about it by their involvements in faith formation programs and in various other ministries. Additionally, evidence in the data showed that as pastoral leaders, participants demonstrated their ability to lead the people to be good and guided them to a meaningful relationship with, and service to, God.

Against the gloomy outlook to the current pastoral situation portrayed in the literature as exemplified by Knott (2011), this research presents Catholic pastoral ministry and leadership in participants' communities as dynamic, prosperous, futuristic, and people-oriented. From a transformational leadership perspective, participants guided their members to where they believed God wanted them to be. They achieved their purposes by engaging members committedly and collaboratively. By this means they provided needed services for members and achieved their organizational goals of building a vibrant community.

Implications

From the point of view of priest participants, this research has addressed pertinent issues related to the pastoral ministry and its leadership in the Catholic Church of the 21st century.

These issues reveal the current state of affairs in the Church and provides an insight into the future. The catholicity of the Church (Stravinskas, 2002) was authenticated by the heterogeneity of culture and nationality evident in the constitution of priests in the research setting. This heterogeneity implies the Church's openness to diversity in the light of increasing multicultural realities of the contemporary period. Coming from diverse national and cultural backgrounds, priests equally embraced the multicultural and socio-economic realities they met in their pastoral locations. This shows the humanistic perspective they brought to the pastoral ministry in terms of their openness to render service to all people irrespective of their backgrounds. It also points to the humane orientation in the Church in terms of being sensitive to and supportive of the needs of individual persons in the community (Northouse, 2010).

The healthy state of the pastoral ministry in participants' faith communities evident in the findings provides hope for the future. The convictions and commitments expressed by priest participants, and their development-oriented dispositions and efforts imply existing motivational, innovative, and dependable qualities of personnel in the Church's pastoral leadership position. From this perspective, participants have positioned their parishes for an impacting presence in the world. However, there are areas that need improvement. This research is informative for the various arms of the ecclesiastical institution concerned with ensuring the pastoral wellbeing of people and the fulfilment of the Church's mission. These groups include: the Church's hierarchy, diocesan personnel, the priestly formation team, and leaders of secular organizations. The findings serve as an *instrumentum laboris* for consolidating the gains and ameliorating the challenges perceived in participants' experiences.

Implication for the Church's hierarchy. The persons in this group include: diocesan bishops and administrators who invite priests from other nationalities, cultures, and religious

congregations to their ecclesiastical jurisdictions for pastoral engagements. The universality exercised in their invitations is commendable. It expresses the oneness in the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, nos. 813-815). However, it is important to prepare invited priests on their arrival in order for them to be situated in the new cultural environment. Stories of participants from other cultures showed they did not receive cultural orientation before assuming their roles in American culture. They learned the American cultural ethos on their own and it affected them adversely in a number of ways. This situation implies the need for suitable cultural orientation programs for the enculturation of priests from foreign cultures.

Another area of concern that demands the attention of the hierarchy is the emotional, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing of pastoral leaders in terms of accommodation. All the participants in the study lived alone in their parishes. They mentioned loneliness as a challenge, except one person who spoke about doing better in solitude. This suggests the need to give priests the option of living with others in a common rectory or alone. Such options would alleviate the feeling of isolation expressed by those who preferred community life and forestall the discomfort expressed by the one person who preferred solitude but was constrained to live with others.

Implication for diocesan personnel. Each of the participants expressed deep frustration in their dealings with diocesan officials especially in the area of constructions and financial matters. They experienced strained relationships caused by what they perceived and interpreted as lack of confidence and trust. Participants' bitterness showed that diocesan officials were operating from the vertical "command and control" (Friedman, 2006, p. 234) perspective of pastoral relationship, instead of the horizontal perspective of "connect and collaborate" (p. 234). Participants' common complaint was that diocesan officials were out of touch with the reality in

the parishes. This means, the diocesan officials were legislating from the headquarters without understanding the pastoral situations at the local level.

The tension in this relationship implies a collaborative disconnect caused by lack of understanding between the officials in the diocesan headquarters and priests in the local communities. If not addressed, it could lead to adverse pastoral consequences. There is need for pastoral plans such as interactive sessions that will enable diocesan officials to visit parishes, interact with members at the communities, and listen at a deeper level of compassion and understanding (Greenleaf, 2002; Scharmer, 2009; Senge et al., 2004). Such pastoral enterprise would enhance understanding and better working relationship between priests at the periphery and the diocesan officials at the center.

Implication for the priestly formation team. The importance of the seminary as “a spot from which a profound influence for the good of society could be wielded” (Greenleaf, 1998) cannot be overemphasized. Greenleaf’s view rightly suggests that pastoral leadership starts from seminary formation. The different ideas articulated in the research findings constitute important areas of focus in priestly formation. From the findings, it is implied that the formation teams in the seminary are doing well in preparing pastoral leaders for the ministry. However, there is still more to be done, especially in cross-cultural studies.

In the emerging world of the future, diversity is converging and the society is becoming increasingly multicultural (Chhokar et al., 2008; Friedman, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Nahavandi, 2012; Northouse, 2010). Priests trained for the Church of the 21st century should be culturally competent. The implication of the cultural naïveté related by participants in their pastoral experiences is that seminaries should include cross cultural courses in their educational curriculum. Movement in the world is becoming more fluid and modern technology has created

cultural convergence with people from diverse background coming together (Friedman, 2006). From participants' experiences, none of them was working with only one cultural group. Their stories showed they were serving people from a variety of racial, cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds. Including cross cultural courses in the seminary curriculum would enable pastoral leaders to minister effectively to the people in any cultural setting they find themselves.

Implication for the civic society and leaders of secular organizations. Civic engagement is one of the major topics of concern in contemporary social thoughts and the role of the Church in safeguarding this duty cannot be overemphasized (Driskell, Lyon, & Embry, 2008; Greenberg, 2000; Uslander, 2002). These observations suggest the need for mutual exchange between the religious and the secular orders. Secular institutions could learn from the Church, just as the Church could learn from these other institutions. In the literature review, I presented multiple examples of leadership development efforts in the socio-economic and educational sectors of the global economy at the turn of the twentieth century. These served as secular frames of reference that encouraged my interest in exploring the Church's pastoral leadership.

The findings from participants' pastoral leadership experiences could provide learning opportunities for leaders of secular organizations, both for their introspection and for personnel and professional development. The issues of acculturation, cultural competency, formation, self-care, disposition for service, and other salient issues raised in the research could help secular organizations position themselves for higher gains. The prospects and challenges underscored in the research are not peculiar to the Church. They are also applicable to secular organizations as contemporaneous institutions charged with the duty of human development. If leaders of secular organizations and corporate entities could reflect on the findings of this research and empower their personnel with opportunities for professional development, those personnel may come to

appreciate their job more personally, serve more devotedly, and experience job satisfaction with great benefits to the organization.

Future Research

Initially, when I was reflecting on the situation of the pastoral ministry in the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the socio-cultural situation of this historical moment, I realized there were different aspects that needed research attention, due to the complex nature of the subject. In the light of that awareness, I was conflicted about what aspect to focus on. As a member of the Church and a clergy who is interested in pastoral leadership, I decided to focus on the demographic to which I belong in order to understand the subject matter from within. The next challenge was to decide which group I should focus on within the clerical order – bishops, priests, or deacons. I decided on the priest pastoral leaders. Within this group I had to decide on which segment of priests – older pastors who are more conversant with the past than with emerging socio-cultural realities of the time, younger pastors who are in touch with emerging modernizations, or newly ordained who are still learning their ways in the ministry. I decided to focus on priests who by their age and years in the priesthood would be more in touch with the realities of the time.

Another challenge was whether to study the issue quantitatively or qualitatively. I decided on qualitative study in order to appreciate the personal and affective dimensions of participants' experiences in the ministry. I explored their experiences and obtained helpful insights into the pastoral situation from eight priest practitioners. The result showed that pastoral leadership is a way of life and not a job, and it thrives on interior conviction and commitment to service. Furthermore, the ministry is a complex field of needs with attendant multifarious challenges. The findings showed that participants were operating in the transformational

direction suggested in the literature. By implication, this means the pastoral ministry is well positioned for the future, based on the transformational qualities in the leadership styles of research participants.

However, the clerical perspective alone is not sufficient to draw a final conclusion on the state of the Church's pastoral ministry. With a wide range of areas to focus on, more research studies are needed in order to have a comprehensive knowledge of the situation. First, there is need for quantitative research studies on priests that would complement this qualitative effort. Such studies should involve the entire spectrum of priest pastoral leaders – older pastors, younger pastors, and newly ordained priests who are serving as pastoral associates. Secondly, other clerical demographics should be studied to obtain their perspectives. These are bishops and deacons. Since bishops coordinate pastoral duties among priests and the laity, their perspective would provide insights that could not be obtained from priests. As pastoral associates, deacons' perspective would be necessary, especially in the area of pastoral collaboration with priests.

It would be necessary also to study the various demographics of the laity – men, women, and youths. The outcome of such studies would provide pastoral perspectives from the point of view of followership. Between the clergy and laity there are religious brothers and sisters whose voices would be necessary. These are demographical groups in the Church that work more with the laity on the social order, such as schools, hospitals, administration, and social work. Their perspectives would add value to the study of the Church's pastoral ministry. Due to the affective nature of the pastoral ministry, I strongly suggest more qualitative studies that explore the realities than quantitative research that skims the surface. I consider it necessary to hear the stories of these different groups, instead of sampling their opinions in ways that do not give them the opportunity to express themselves profoundly in terms of their experiences and perceptions.

Final Remarks and Conclusion

Pastoral leadership has been my area of interest in the ministry from my formation years in the seminary. As a priest, my concern has always been about fulfilling the Church's mission of helping people achieve fulfilment in life by leading them according to the Christian standard modeled by Christ. The need to explore the pastoral experiences of Catholic priests in the 21st century socio-cultural environment and the organizational outcomes of those experiences arose from this concern. In my several conversations with fellow priests and Church members about the pastoral situations in the Church, I was often left wondering where the Church is and what the future holds.

The findings in this research have allayed my fears and restored my hope of a promising future. They have shed lights on the conviction and personal disposition of participants in their priestly duties as a way of life and a commitment to service. Their visionary, creative, motivational, and collaborative qualities, as well as their pastoral attitudes and relationships have resulted in positive impacts in their various places of assignment. On the theoretical level, these qualities and attitudes suggest transformational leadership in operation. This in turn implies organizational growth and wellbeing of members.

The findings do not provide generalizable conclusion about the pastoral situation in the entire Catholic Church. Nevertheless, they serve as pointers to the factors needed for dynamic pastoral ministry and leadership in the Church. They also highlight the problems and challenges that need the attention of respective ecclesiastical authorities in order to position priest pastoral leaders for a fruitful ministry. The overarching statement concerning my findings in this research is that participants viewed pastoral leadership as a people-centered engagement, and it operated on the basis of Christlike qualities such as personal conviction and altruistic commitment.

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Appendices

10	Qualities and attitude	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
11	Early ministry	x	x	x	x			x	x	6
12	Relationships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
13	Cross-cultural encounters	x	x	x	x			x	x	6
14	Learning on the job	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
15	Efforts and achievements	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
16	Perceptions/ acknowledgement s	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
17	Worldviews	x	x		x	x		x		5
18	Pastoral insights/ personal thoughts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
19	Culture shock	x			x			x		3
20	Cultural/ Pastoral mistakes/ regrets	x		x		x				3
21	Cultural influences and setbacks			x				x		2
22	Benefits	x	x		x			x	x	5

23	Pastoral positives	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	7
24	Support group	x				x			x	3
25	Satisfaction and fulfilment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
26	Personality type/ Self perception	x	x	x			x	x	x	6
27	Pastoral Values	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	7
28	Restrictions and boundaries	x		x	x	x			x	5
29	Pastoral outcomes	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	7
30	Style, approach, and strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
31	Pastoral goals		x		x	x	x	x	x	6
32	Youth Ministry	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
33	Pastoral Priorities	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
34	Pastoral issues and situations	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
35	Self-care/ recreation	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	7
36	Socio-economic situation	x	x		x			x	x	5
37	Communication	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	7

38	Support and collaboration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
39	Lack of support/ collaboration			x	x			x	x	4
40	Ministry to the sick and homebound	x	x	x	x		x		x	6
41	Ministry to the bereaved	x							x	2
42	Change and resistance		x	x	x			x		4
43	Creativity/ vision/ initiatives	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	7
44	Mentorship		x	x	x	x			x	5
45	Lack of mentorship			x					x	2
46	Assumptions	x	x		x	x		x	x	6
47	Shortcomings		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
48	Pastoral solution/ Crisis management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
49	Suggestions and persuasions		x		x	x	x	x		5

50	Difficulties and Disappointments		x	x	x		x	x	x	6
51	Stress		x	x		x	x	x	x	6
52	Spiritual/ pastoral developments	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
53	Renovation and development	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	7
54	Empowerment		x			x				2
55	Appreciation and reinforcement		x							1
56	Reading			x						1
57	Specialization			x	x				x	3

Appendix B

List of Descriptive terms

No.	Categories
1	Background
2	Clarification
3	Journey to the priesthood
4	Assignments
5	Demographics of places
6	Ongoing formation
7	Pastoral interests
8	Surprises and awareness
9	Challenges and obstacles
10	Qualities and attitude
11	Early ministry
12	Relationships
13	Cross-cultural encounters
14	Learning on the job
15	Efforts and achievements
16	Perceptions/ acknowledgements
17	Worldviews
18	Pastoral insights/ personal thoughts
19	Culture shock
20	Cultural/ Pastoral mistakes/ regrets

21	Cultural influences and setbacks
22	Benefits
23	Pastoral positives
24	Support group
25	Satisfaction and fulfilment
26	Personality type/ Self perception
27	Pastoral Values
28	Restrictions and boundaries
29	Pastoral outcomes
30	Style, approach, and strategy
31	Pastoral goals
32	Youth Ministry
33	Pastoral Priorities
34	Pastoral issues and situations
35	Self-care/ recreation
36	Socio-economic situation
37	Communication
38	Support and collaboration
39	Lack of support/ collaboration
40	Ministry to the sick and homebound
41	Ministry to the bereaved
42	Change and resistance
43	Creativity/ vision/ initiatives

44	Mentorship
45	Lack of mentorship
46	Assumptions
47	Shortcomings
48	Pastoral solution/ Crisis management
49	Suggestions and persuasions
50	Difficulties and Disappointments
51	Stress
52	Spiritual/ pastoral developments
53	Renovation and development
54	Empowerment
55	Appreciation and reinforcement
56	Reading
57	Specialization
