

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.



University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9325129

**The impact of the family on the choice of the Catholic
priesthood in India and the United States**

Mappilaparambil, Sebastian Thomas, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1993

Copyright ©1993 by Mappilaparambil, Sebastian Thomas. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

#

**THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY
ON THE CHOICE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD
IN INDIA AND IN THE UNITED STATES**

by

SEBASTIAN MAPPILAPARAMBIL, V.C.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1993

COPYRIGHT BY
SEBASTIAN MAPPILAPARAMBIL
1993

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Philosophy.

April 15, 1993

date

M. Herbert Danzger

Chairman of Examining Committee

April 16, 1993

date

Paul Attewell

Executive Officer

Professor M. Herbert Danzger

Professor Lindsey Churchill

Professor Gerald Handel

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY
ON THE CHOICE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD
IN INDIA AND IN THE UNITED STATES

by

Sebastian Mappilaparambil, V.C.

Adviser: Professor M. Herbert Danzger

The impact of the family on the choice of the Catholic priesthood in India and in the United States is examined using the interview method. Twenty priests and their forty parents from India and twenty priests and their parents from the United States are the subjects of this investigation.

The socio-economic conditions of the families of the Indian priests were lower, the family size was larger, the sons' educational opportunities were dim, the chance of getting a job was unlikely and the boys were younger when they decided to choose priesthood, compared to the respective conditions of the priests in the United States. These situations had some impact on the Indian priests' choice of the priesthood. On the other hand, they had not much influence on the American priests.

Both the Indian and American parents were highly religious and their priest-sons believe that the religious life of their parents was very helpful in choosing the priesthood. However, the religiosity of the Indian parents, according to the index we have set, was slightly higher than that of their counterparts in the United States.

The socio-economic conditions and the religiosity of the Indian parents had a greater impact on their son's choice of the priesthood more than that of the American parents on their son's choice of the priesthood.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me to the completion of this dissertation and I would like to express my gratitude to at least some of them. I am greatly indebted to my adviser Professor M. Herbert Danzger. He has helped guide my thinking through years of interaction, sharing of insights and encouragement all through my graduate studies and dissertation research. Professor Lindsey Churchill guided me in a special way at every phase of this research. He and Professor Gerald Handel helped me from the beginning of my graduate training to the end of this research by their guidance encouragement and finally, serving in my dissertation committee. My sincere thanks to them. I also remember with gratitude the helps and encouragements of Professors William Kornblum, Ivan Szelenyi, Robert R. Alford and Sydney Aronson. My thanks go to all my teachers and to the participants of this dissertation.

Had it not been for the Vincentian Congregation, I would not have come to the United States for graduate studies. My sincere thanks to my Superiors for selecting me for studies and for their prayers and encouragement. My appreciation and thanks go to all my relatives friends and confreres here and back in India for all their support. Last but not least, my thoughts go to my dear and loving parents, brothers, sister, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces far away in my home country, but always being spiritually with me, anticipating my graduation and return to India. Thank you all very much.

DEDICATED TO
MY DEAR AND LOVING PARENTS
AND TO ALL THE PARENTS OF PRIESTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
CHAPTER 1. The Problem	7
CHAPTER 2. The Sociological Context of The Problem: A Review of the Literature	23
CHAPTER 3. The Indian and the American Societies: A Brief Outline of the Socio-Economic and Religious Background	43
CHAPTER 4. Indian And American Societies (contd.): The Syro-Malabar and the Irish American Communities	78
CHAPTER 5. The Occupational Choice: General Theories	119
CHAPTER 6. The Choice of the Catholic Priesthood: The Impact of the Family on the Indian and the American Contexts, An Analysis of the Interviews. A. The Impact of the Socio- Economic Conditions	140
CHAPTER 7. The Choice of the Catholic Priesthood: The Impact of the Family on the Indian and the American Contexts, An Analysis of the Interviews. (contd.). B. The Impact of the Parental Religiosity	184
CHAPTER 8. The Choice of the Catholic Priesthood: The Impact of the Family on the Indian and the American Contexts, An Analysis of the Interviews. (contd.). C. The Impact of the Parental Religiosity (contd.)	236
CHAPTER 9. The Impact of the Family on the Choice of the Catholic Priesthood in India and in the United States: Conclusions	273
Appendix	296
References	307

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	India and some western countries that rank top in religiosity. p.....	60
Table 2.	Perception of Indian Seminarians of all rites (according to Vallipalam) and that of the Syro-Malabar Priests in the present sample regarding the financial condition of their Family's Financial condition. p.....	148
Table 3.	Perception of the Indian Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers about their Family's Financial condition in the present sample. p...	149
Table 4.	Perception of the American priests, their Mothers and their Fathers about their Family's Financial condition. p.....	152
Table 5.	School attended by the Indian Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers. p.....	158
Table 6.	The level of Education of the Indian Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers. p.....	158
Table 7.	School attended by the American Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers. p.....	159
Table 8.	The level of Education of the American Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers. p.....	160
Table 9.	Number of Children in the families of priests in India and in the United States. p.....	172
Table 10.	The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian priests, their mothers and fathers.	189
Table 11.	The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the American priests, their mothers and fathers. p.	196
Table 12.	The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American priests. p.....	198
Table 13.	The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American mothers. p.....	199
Table 14.	The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American fathers. p.....	199

- Table 15. Mothers' (Indian and American) prayer and encouragement that their son choose priesthood, according to their sons, husbands and themselves. p..... 250
- Table 16. Fathers' (Indian and American) prayer and encouragement that their son choose priesthood, according to their sons, wives and themselves. 256

INTRODUCTION

A person's occupation exerts a pervasive influence on his life. It affects all the moments of his future life. Thus, the great importance of the occupational choice! There are several factors that influence an individual's selection of an occupation. This dissertation is an attempt to explore one of the many factors, namely, the impact of one's family on the choice of one particular occupation, that is, the Catholic priesthood both in the Indian and in the American cultures.

One's choice of priesthood, in the Christian terminology, is called his 'vocation' to priesthood. The word vocation comes from the Latin word 'vocare' meaning to call. Theologically speaking, this call is from God, who calls someone to His service. Hence the vocation of a person consists in a call from God and a positive response on the part of the called.

We see in the Old and New Testaments God calling several men to His service. Abraham and Moses are such examples in the Hebrew Bible. The same call of God is seen in the New Testament as well. The call of the Apostles by Jesus, "Come follow me" (Mt.4:18ff & 10:1ff), is the beginning of priestly vocations in the Catholic Church.

There are theoretical and practical aspects in the choice of priesthood. Theologically, the choice of priesthood, is the call from God. From the practical point of view we learn that the call or invitation to priesthood is selective. All those who want to become priests are not chosen, and this call or choice of God is made through the authorities in the Church. The candidate to priesthood must possess the requisite qualities, that he is free of any irregularity or impediment and that he has fulfilled certain canonical requirements (The Code of Canon Law, Canons 1024-1042 ,pp. 183-186). Looking at the choice of the priesthood in these perspectives is the theological and canonical investigation of the problem.

But this study is designed in a sociological perspective. Sociologically speaking, priesthood, like any other profession is a career or an occupation. There are many sociological factors such as impact of family, peer group, school, church and related organizations, considerations of prestige and social status, possibilities of job and educational opportunities etc. that influence one's choice of priesthood. There are also other powerful forces, such as priests, nuns, teachers etc. who directly or indirectly influence the individual in his decision. Rather than examining all the factors and sources of the impact, I limit this research to one aspect of the question, namely, that of the impact of the family on the individual in his choice of the priesthood in India and in the United States.

Religious people, such as priests, brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church dedicate their lives to a higher calling of the spiritual realm, and hence their occupations were not subject to a secular type of study until the latter part of this century. Fichter (1961:xiv) writes that in spite of the 'other-worldliness' of these dedicated individuals, there is a worldly plane upon which their vocation can be discussed as an occupation or profession. Each of these persons is, in a true sense, a lifelong "employee" of the Church. Much of what they do in the service of the Church is paralleled by the patterns of human relations that are common to the society in which they live and work. The social scientist does not analyze the supernatural and theological implications, but the sociological aspects of the priesthood.

The sociological perspective of family and socialization is the center of this study. We know that family is very critical in the socialization of the religious, political and social spheres of life (Elkin and Handel 1960). It also exerts great influence in the achievements of certain goals like that of a leadership position in the political and social life. The impact of the family on the individual with regard to the choice of any occupation is beyond doubt (Gross 1958; Goldstein and Oldham 1979). We think that the Catholic priesthood is not an exception to this.

Hess and Handel (1959:8) says that the concept of socialization refers to the parents' efforts to get the child

regard himself in substantially the same way they regard him. From birth, also, the child is engaged in acquiring conceptions of his parents, striving to form a view of them which accords with their self-images. Why? (Grove 1940:286) says that the child covets the privilege of belonging religiously just as he does in any other sphere of group interest, and this is sufficient to give the family, as long as culture is not complex and conflicting within itself, power to determine his religious career.

In this dissertation we are attempting to explore the components of, as well as the extent of the influence the family exerts on the individual in the choice of priesthood. How does the family influence one? Is this impact the same both in India and in the United States or do they differ? The hypothesis tested in this dissertation reads like this: The impact the family members had on Indian boys in their choice of priesthood, is different from that which family members had on the American boys in their choice of priesthood.

We study this impact of the family in various aspects: the religiosity of the family, the financial condition of the family, family size, the influence of the family members on the individual, the location (urban or rural) of the family, the education and occupation of the parents. It needs to be clarified here that the choice of the priesthood is, first and foremost, the decision of the individual himself. This study will illustrate how the individual's family initiates,

reinforces or helps him to choose the priesthood.

There are many studies in this field in the United States, but very few in India. To the best of my knowledge, there is no qualitative and comprehensive study to give the whole background of the family. In many research studies only the seminarians or/and the priests or/and the bishops were asked to participate in the studies. In other studies non-priests or non-seminarians of their age groups were included. But in the present research, the priests and both of his parents are included to get an interactive picture of the trio in the family, prior to one's taking the decision (during the training period he might change his decision) to become a priest. To achieve this end separate and private interview with each priest, his mother and his father were conducted. This approach was used to obtain reliable, candid and thorough information from them.

The uniqueness of this research consists also in the fact that it is cross-cultural. All other studies are done in a single culture. This dissertation focuses its attention on Indian and United States cultures, and compares and contrasts these cultures and people with each other. Hence the importance and relevance of this research.

The outline of this research is summarized as follows: After stating the problem and the method of this investigation (chapter one) we discuss the sociological context of the problem by examining the literature in the field (chapter

two). Here the works of Joseph Fichter (1961 and 1968), Raymond Potvin and Antanas Suziedelis (1969), Douglas T. Hall and Benjamin Schneider (1973), Dean R. Hoge, Raymond B. Potvin and Kathleen M. Ferry (1984), Raymond H. Potvin (1985) and Eugene F. Hemrick and Dean R. Hoge (1985 and 1987) are reviewed.

To provide a societal basis of comparison the Indian and American societies are described (chapters three and four) in their various aspects - social, economic, political and religious. As this study is centered on the priests of the Syro-Malabar and Irish American churches, the nature of these particular churches are also explained here. Since this research is in the area of occupational choice, one chapter (five) exclusively discusses the related theories. The following chapters are devoted to the analysis based on the interviews with the priests and their parents in the light of the various studies in the field. Here the Indian priests with the American priests, the Indian parents with the American parents and the relationship and influence of the parents on their priest-son in both countries are compared and contrasted and the relative impact is assessed. The final chapter is the conclusions drawn from the investigation.

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

In one of the sociological studies on the occupation of priests, brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church, Fichter (1961:xiv) writes that the human being in the service of the Church does not operate on either a purely natural or purely supernatural level; to be appreciated he has to be understood as a total social personality with total complex tasks, motives and objectives. Each of these persons is, in a true sense, a lifelong "employee" of the Church. Much of what they do in the service of the Church is paralleled by the patterns of human relations that are common to the society in which they live and work.

A lifelong occupation also includes implications of direction, achievement and progress (Dubin 1958:178; Fichter 1968:137). Ideally speaking, the diocesan priest's occupation includes such implications of direction, achievement and progress. It is correct to say, according to Fichter, that "religion is an occupation" just as one can say that teaching, politics, the army or the law is an occupation. Hence the priests are professionals.

Pope Pius XII (1951:53) seemed to recognize both the supernatural and social aspects when he pointed out that the

number of priests has fallen short of ever-growing needs. It is "necessary to recruit workers" and also necessary that "the souls of those called by God be prepared for the impulse and the invisible action of the Holy Ghost." The focus of this study is on the choice of the priestly occupation.

How does a young man happen to be an employee of the Church? Or, more precisely, how does a boy choose to become a priest? A person's orientation to any state of life is rooted partially in the experience of the past. Undoubtedly, there are other influences also behind his choice of priesthood, such as inner calling, impact of priests, brothers and sisters, vocation literature, vocation talks, magazine and television advertisements, schools, peer groups, religion, church related organizations, family, etc.

The general view existed among Catholics that the strongest influence and encouragement to a religious career comes from the candidate's mother. A study (Allen 1955:186-190) of successful Methodist ministers showed that their mothers' favorable attitude towards ministers during their childhood seemed to have a positive influence upon their choice. But this does not seem true any more in the United States. Potvin (1985:25-26) says that while eighty-three percent seminarians in 1966 reported mother's encouragement in choosing the priesthood, only seventy-five percent seminarians did so in 1984.

Research surveys (for example, Greeley 1972:19; Hemrick and Hoge 1986:23 and 1987:13), however, show consistently that the greatest encouragement to enter the seminary comes from priests. Potvin (1985:26) says that studies (Amato 1983 and NORC 1972) showed that along with parents, priests were an important source of recruitment. His own survey (1985:26) found seventy-two percent of the seminarians in the sample reporting encouragement by their pastors and as many as eighty-seven percent reporting encouragement by other priests as influential for their choosing the priesthood. Hemrick and Hoge (1986:24) mention that Fee et al. (1981) reported that priests provided the strongest encouragement to choose priesthood. The survey of Hemrick and Hoge (1987:13) revealed that a priest's example was most important after "inner calling."

Gilbert (1958:1035) says that the Notre Dame study of major seminarians shows that the degree of encouragement, from highest to lowest, was in the order of priest, mother, father and religious sister. For seminarians who came from families with below average income, the order of encouragement is as follows: mother, priest, religious sister, father. Greeley (1972:18-19) reflecting on the 1972 NORC survey states that the priests themselves say that the most influential person in their own decision to enter the seminary as another priest.

To the 1984 survey (Hemrick and Hoge 1986:25) question "What **one** single factor was the greatest influence on your

decision to become a priest?", thirty-four percent responded that it was their inner calling and, in a 1986 survey (Hemrick and Hoge 1987:13), forty-six percent gave that answer. Piety in early adolescence is often taken as an indication by parents and other adults that the child in question is "good material" for the seminary.

The various studies show consistently that prospective candidates for the seminary are more than ordinarily faithful to religious practices. Catholic teenagers have better record in this regard than do Catholic adults, but the vocation prospect is even better than the average teenager. Four out of five future seminarians attend Mass more than once a week, with forty-six percent going daily. Seven out of ten receive Communion more frequently than once a week, with thirty-six percent being daily communicants. Two out of five went to confession every week. Fichter (1961:47-48) thinks that the statistics point to the conclusion that the more faithful an adolescent is to religious practices the more likely he is to be a genuine prospect for the full time service of God. But the piety itself is germinated as a result of parental guidance.

It may be expected, says Fichter (1961:49) that pious youths come from pious families, and in some respects research surveys have shown this is true. About one quarter of seminarians in the U.S. come from homes where the family rosary is recited regularly. Almost nine out of ten youths say

that there were traditional religious symbols, like crucifixes and sacred pictures, displayed on the walls of their homes. There are also certain instances where young men, hailing from families without much piety and/or religious practices, have chosen priesthood.

The same study also reports the influence of the following: vocation talks, thirty-eight percent; vocation literature, thirty-two percent; magazine advertisements, eleven percent; and television advertisements, three percent (Fichter 1961:47-48).

Fichter (1961:41) observes that Catholic schools have long been a primary source of vocations. Youngsters who attend Catholic schools have a greater tendency to enter the religious career than do those who attend non-Catholic and public high schools. About two-thirds of all priests in America had all their pre-seminary education in Catholic schools. This number seems to have been constant over some years, and since 1970 it was about the same for priests in all age groups (National Opinion Research Center [NORC] 1972:39-40; Hoge, Potvin and Ferry 1984:25). These and other studies document in favor of Catholic education producing more priests. The main reason for this may be the Catholic atmosphere created by the very presence and different activities of priests, sisters and other dedicated Catholic teachers who inspire the young boys to priesthood.

The prospective seminarians were involved in religious

functions by their membership and activities in various organizations. About eight out of ten reported that they belonged to school groups like the Sodality and the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. Those children who are formally organized into a pious association, particularly on the high-school level, like Sodality of Mary, Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, Cherupushpa Mission League, etc. (pious associations in the parishes for children to help them to grow in devotions, missionary spirit, etc.) have always attracted students who are more actively interested in religion than the other students. Fichter (1961:14 & 53) reports that surveys show that four out of five religious functionaries who attended Catholic high schools were members of such groups.

Hemrick and Hoge (1986:22 and 1987:12) found some of the seminarians in the United States have at some time been involved in various adult activities like catechism teaching, parish councils, eucharistic ministry or lectoring, (a lector is a person designated to read parts of the Bible, excluding the Gospels, at church services). The director of these group activities usually would be a priest, sister or brother who are able to have contact with the prospective candidate for the seminary. Another group experience in the elementary school level that serves as an indirect stimulus for vocations seems to be the Knights of Altar or such other associations of similar nature.

Membership in the altar boys group appears to be an

important factor in the life of the prospective seminarian. Studies (eg. Hemrick and Hoge 1987:15) show that four out of five seminarians and three out of five lay Brothers had been acolytes in their boyhood. Those who served the sanctuary most regularly were almost unanimous in declaring that this experience had some definite influence upon their decision to enter the service of the Church. In this situation these boys are under the direct supervision of the priest, brother or sister who trains them for the service, and they also have the closest view of the priest during his liturgical functions. Obviously this experience does not affect all youngsters in the same way since the great majority of acolytes never enter the seminary or novitiate.

A student receives advice concerning his future plans not only from his teachers, but is more likely to receive advice from his parents, particularly if they are well-to-do. "Advice is given somewhat more frequently when the father is a professional man or a business executive than when he is a manual laborer; however, the percentages (fifty-seven percent against forty-two percent) do not differ as much as one might expect" (Hemrick and Hoge 1987:194).

Data also suggest that "the family background of an individual has considerable bearing on his job orientation during the formative years. The sons of families in the high-status occupations develop more specific job plans during their school years than the sons of manual workers and

farmers. . . . And those who do plan on a professional career come from families which may be able to provide the necessary additional years in school" (Hemrick and Hoge 1987:196).

Fichter (1961:84) and Potvin and Suziedelis (1969:20) found that the source of vocations is no longer the lower class, financially and occupationally disadvantaged, poorly educated segment of the American Catholic population. In addition, research data (Hemrick and Hoge 1987:21) show that vocations came from families of all sizes.

The age of decision for a person entering an ecclesiastical career is probably also influenced by the attitude of the parents. The extent to which parental intervention had encouraged their leaving the seminary or prevented them from getting into the seminary is not known. A study of major seminarians (young men who are trained and do their studies specifically related to the Catholic priesthood) shows progressive maternal opposition from the youngest to the oldest. In the Carthage survey, eight percent of the seminarians mentioned "discouragement from family and friends" as a hindering factor to vocations to the priesthood. (Refer Fichter 1961:18-19; Hemrick & Hoge 1986:24.)

Ralengkotter (1954:190-195) states that in spite of the general attitude of vocation recruiters that they must "get the young," the trend of the parental attitude seems to be in the opposite direction - that their children delay the choice of a life vocation until after they have finished high school.

The present study also found this trend among the parents. But there was an exceptional case in India where the parents would not send their son to college fearing he might change his mind against choosing priesthood. So too, there were cases in the United States where parents allowed their sons to go to seminary high school. Those who attend seminary high school are probable candidates to priesthood.

As seen above, the various agencies or situations have also influenced many to choose priesthood. It is also observed that in all societies, the family system and the occupational system are closely related. The family prepares the individual for work. Our aim here is to investigate how a family prepares or influences its son to become a priest. How is this influence manifested in the Syro-Malabar families of India and how does it take shape in the Irish American families? Are they alike or different? What are the similarities and differences?

One peculiar and important phenomenon stands out in the religious background of these prospective candidates, and that is "vocations run in families". About two-thirds of them have one or more close relatives (siblings, first cousins, uncles and/or aunts) who are also following the religious life. All of the surveys in the U. S. show consistently that about one-fourth of them have a brother or sister or both following a vocation. These percentages are much higher than they are for the average practicing Catholic family. The reason for this

may be partially the personal example and influence of the individual who is following the vocation; but it seems also to be the fact that an attitude or frame of mind, toward the concept of vocation is built up among the members of the family in which some are already in the Church vocation (Fichter 1961:49-50).

Developing a framework for understanding the nuclear family as a group, Hess and Handel (1959:chapter one) says that events occurring within the family is far from random fashion; even uncertainty is given a customary place in a family's scheme of things. They think that in their mutual interaction, the family members develop more or less adequate understanding of one another, collaborating in the effort of establishing consensus and to negotiate uncertainty. The family's life together is an endless process in the movement in and around consensual understanding.

The great influence of family on an individual is beyond any question. Surveys show that religious life of the parents of the seminarians has great impact on their son's choice of the priesthood. Previous studies have shown, say Hemrick and Hoge (1986:22) that a typical seminarian's parents attended Mass regularly and are moderately involved in other Church activities.

The unique focus of this dissertation is, how do the parents influence their son to choose priesthood? Do their family life, childhood training, economic conditions,

education and occupation and family size influence their son's becoming a priest? What do the parents think of their influence in this regard and how has their priest-son sensed it?

We are going to investigate precisely these points as they are related to the choice of priesthood. We compare the priests and their parents of both India and the United States and to see how the parents in each culture influenced their sons to become priests. The similarities and dissimilarities in the way of exerting this influence and whether the extent of the influence is the same are examined.

This is a cross cultural study intended to examine the different views of priesthood and process of family influence in two cultures. Such a cross cultural study has so far not been done by anyone in this particular area.

We have seen above in this chapter that research surveys show consistently that the greatest encouragement to enter the seminary comes from priests. But the general view existed among Catholics was that the strongest influence and encouragement to a religious career came from the candidate's mother. The same was also the finding of Potvin and Suziedelis (1969). But my research question is, that, the Indian family's influence and encouragement to the choice of priesthood coming from the candidate's mother, father and other family members is different from that in the United States.

Hence, my hypothesis is: The impact the family members had on Indian boys in their choice of priesthood, is different from that which family members had on the American boys in their choice of priesthood.

Method of the Investigation.

Data for this research was gathered during 1990 - 1992 by direct in depth interviews with the participants, namely, the priests and their parents. I selected twenty priests from India and twenty priests from America. These forty priests and their eighty parents constitute the subjects of this investigation.

The subjects were selected by a stratified random sampling. All the Indian subjects were from the state of Kerala for two reasons. First, the Syro-Malabar Catholics are mostly resident of that state and secondly, hailing from there I was more familiar with the people and places. Then I divided the State into coastal, plain and hilly areas. With the help of local parish priests and friends I found the samples in each location. In the United States I chose samples from three states, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania from the diocesan directory as well as from the information of friends.

Incidentally, let me mention some surprising findings I came across while doing the interviews. My initial suspicion was that since the interview method is not commonly used in

India and the people there are not familiar with it, they might not be willing to be interviewed. On the other hand, I believed that since the method is very common and is used in various studies, it would be easy to do the interviews in the United States. But the expectations turned out to be untrue. In India, none of those I approached refused to be interviewed, but in the United States I had a very hard time getting people to be interviewed.

I had difficulty finding Irish American priests with both their parents alive. As this had been anticipated, I contacted only young priests hoping they would have their parents alive, but even that proved unsuccessful. Many of them had only one parent; most had their fathers deceased. I contacted two Catholic dioceses to get their help to identify priests with both parents alive. Neither did that help me much. In the list of sixteen priests, which one diocese provided, ten priests had their fathers deceased and one both of his parents. Only five priests had both their parents alive.

The initial contact with the priests for the interviews was even more difficult. The problem was reaching them. In some cases the answering machines and in some other cases their secretaries promised a return call which very often did not happen. Some priests even after consenting to the interview stepped back from their commitment. Their excuses were, "I do not want to put any pressure on my parents," "my parents are shy," "it is not possible," "my parents are now

upset because their daughter is sick," "they have some hearing problem," and "they are away on vacation."

Why did the priests excuse themselves and their parents of being interviewed? In certain cases, I guess, the excuses may be genuine. In some other cases, the priests in their second thought wished to respect the freedom of their parents or that they did not want to leak out their family secrets. In any situation, I do not presume that the relation between the priests and their parents had anything to do with it.

But it should also be gratefully acknowledged that some of the priests were extremely helpful. They invited me for lunch, picked me up from and dropped me off at the bus/train station. Some even coordinated interviews with other priests. All the parents were very cooperative and nice to me, and some of them even told me to ask whenever I had some financial need in my studies. They thought that I, coming from a developing country, might need some financial assistance to complete my studies.

Another interesting thing I noticed is that in India parents lived not very far from where the priests worked. But in the United States, in many instances the parents lived in a different State from the priests work-place. The life style of people in India and in United States are the reason for this difference:

Both in India and in the United States, Catholic priests belong either to the Eastern or Western Rite Church and to

some ethnic group, Latin, Syro-Malankara or Syro-Malabar in India and Irish, Italian, Slavic, French, German, Armenian or Polish in the United States. The samples will not represent all these categories. Instead, in order to secure a certain amount of homogeneity in the comparison, the following characteristics are sought.

1. Since ethnicity plays a major role in the life of the Church both in India and the United States, due emphasis should be given to it. Hence one ethnic group from each country, Syro-Malabar priests from India and Irish priests from the United States were selected. The former are over-represented in India as the latter are over-represented in the United States.
2. Care was taken to select those priests who have both parents from the same ethnic background and both of them alive.
3. To have a comparable time period, priests ordained in the last ten years, that is those who took their decisions to become a priest after the Second Vatican Council (1965), were chosen. This is also beneficial in that since the priests selected are young, there is more probability that their parents are alive.

4. If selection of priests in the sample were mixed (of diocesan and religious clergy) the comparison would be difficult due to their different levels of commitment (Hemrick and Hoge 1987:Chapter 4). Hence only diocesan priests are selected for this study.
5. Each one of the subjects was interviewed separately and an interview guide was followed throughout the interview. The relationships and the influence of parents and their sons in both countries are assessed. The comparisons of the Indian priests with the American priests and the Indian parents with the American parents are analyzed. The relative impact is measured as it relates to the various aspects of the study.

Chapter 2.

The Sociological Context of the Problem:

A Review of the Literature.

It is necessary that a researcher should be familiar with the previous works in his chosen field of study to get a background knowledge of the area. There are so many works including bibliographies, monographs and research papers which provide excellent data on seminarians and priests. Some of them also cover the parental influence on the choice of priesthood. This chapter is a survey of the literature of the area of research.

Hall and Schneider (1973:23-24), speak of the three most comprehensive sources of research on clergymen. The first is the "now-classic annotated bibliography" of Menges and Dittes (1965) who present some 700 references to the psychological research on clergymen. The second source are the research reports, that are specifically directed to the Roman Catholic priests and are assembled by D'Arcy (1968). Whereas the Menges and Dittes review concentrated on psychological research and reported research summaries, the D'Arcy contribution simply reported references; it is more general, in that citations are reported for sociological studies as well. The third source of information regarding research on clergymen is a book by

Joseph Fichter (1961).

In this chapter, the works of Joseph Fichter (1961 & 1968), Raymond Potvin and Antanas Suziedelis (1969), Douglas T. Hall and Benjamin Schneider (1973), Andrew Greeley (1977), Dean R. Hoge, Raymond B. Potvin and Kathleen M. Ferry (1984), Raymond H. Potvin (1985) and Eugene F. Hemrick and Dean R. Hoge (1986 & 1987) are discussed.

Fichter's Religion as an Occupation (1961), is a scientific study on the Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Occupations. He stresses that even though vocation is a "divine call" it could be discussed as an occupation or profession and must be open to scientific study. He deals with the background of selection of candidates to religious life, their professional training and education, the roles they perform, the problems they meet during their careers and the structural and organizational forms in which they are encapsulated. He treats at length the parental influence behind the choice of priesthood and other dedicated lives. According to Fichter the average seminarian comes from a middle class, urban family with more than four children. He is neither the first born nor last born and his early childhood was happy. He has been educated in Catholic schools and has one or more close relatives who are also following the religious life as seminarian, priest, brother or sister.

America's Forgotten Priests - What They Are Saying (1968), by the same author is another scientific study about

Catholic priests in line with the recommendations of Second Vatican Council. This work has very little to do with the present research. It is a very popular work however, and so deserves at least to briefly state its theme. It is the report on a survey of the clergy, that is, of diocesan priests, who are neither pastors nor Monsignors. These rank-and-file priests who assist in parochial work or fill a variety of assignments in supra-parochial work, according to Fichter, are "forgotten men." Actually, they constitute more than half of the clergy and they certainly do more than half of the work. Yet they have no juridical status and almost no rights. Fichter deals with different aspects of these lower-echelon priests, such as their relationship with the bishop, seminary training, continuing education, local working conditions, different facets of their career etc. He also speaks about the married clergy and some social and political matters of conscience with some recommendations for the future.

Seminarians of the Sixties: A National Survey, (1969) by Raymond Potvin and Antanas Suziedelis is a bench-mark study in the field. It is based on an extensive sample survey of effective enrollment of 7167 seminarians out of 43,518, as of October 1966. Of these 6414 (ninety percent) responded. They included religious and diocesan and major and minor seminarians from all regions of the country. Among the sample there were 1,161 seminarians in the theologates, (school where students preparing for priesthood take courses in theology

prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church) (the total enrollment in theologates was 8,371 in the survey year, 1966-67). Hall and Schneider (1973:32) assess that the Potvin & Suziedelis study is the most recent and complete assessment of persons preparing for the priesthood and that the data generated in this study reflect the research summarized in the works of Fichter (1961, 1968), Menges and Dittes (1965) and D'Arcy (1968), regarding the background and influences of individuals who entered the seminary.

Potvin and Suziedelis found that the mother of the seminarian played a key role in the development of the son's vocation to the priesthood. Not only was she found to be the more devout parent but she clearly was the model of piety and religious devotion to her son. The data also showed a special closeness between the mother and the seminarian. She is more often the confidante, the helper and the parent to whom the son brings his problems and achievements. Also the father was discovered to be more faithful to the religious practices than the average Catholic father.

In comparison with the parents of the non-seminarians, the parents of the seminarians, though firm in discipline, are seen as more affectionate and supportive. Yet the mother is seen as the more influential of the two in fashioning the son's ideals, his likes and dislikes. Both parents of the seminarians believed in sending their children to Catholic schools and in general were committed more than the average

Catholic to institutionalized religion. The researchers were able to identify clearly the characteristics of the vocation family.

Potvin and Suziedelis suggest that their data confirm some of the earlier conclusions of Fichter (1961) that the average seminarian comes from a middle class, urban family with more than four children, is neither the first born nor last born, reports his early childhood as happy, has been educated in Catholic schools and has one or more close relatives who are also following the religious life as seminarian, priest, brother or sister. To be more specific, they indicate that three-quarters of their sample come from homes with reported incomes of \$5,000-15,000, eighty percent come from suburban households, fifty percent come from families in which there are more than four children, and thirty-eight percent are firstborn (a figure which somewhat contradicts the Fichter conclusions, but may be due to the fact that the families were smaller at the time of later study.) The family is described by seminarians as generally positive though somewhat strict. Sixty-eight percent of high school seminarians attended Catholic school, and ninety-five percent of parents of the seminarians attend mass weekly or more often. The research of Potvin and Suziedelis also included some data collected on a comparable sample of Catholic boys who were not in the seminaries. The most striking differences between this group and those enrolled in

the seminary was that the seminarians came from larger families than the non-seminarians, a greater proportion of the non-seminarians attended public schools, the parents of the seminarians were more faithful in attending mass than the parents of the non-seminarians, and the non-seminarians described their parents in less positive terms. Obviously no one of these factors is presented necessarily causative in the choice of a vocation, but as Potvin and Suziedelis indicate they are certainly part of the socio-religious matrix from which vocations have arisen.

Another noteworthy work is The Organizational Climates and Careers: The Work Lives of Priests (1973), written by Douglas T. Hall and Benjamin Schneider. According to the authors the purpose of this book is to present a theory of career development in organizations, to devise measures to test the theory and to study intensively the careers of Roman Catholic diocesan priests as a distinctive group of working men.

The above research is designed to study the work career of the priests of the Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford as suggested by the Senate of Priests and approved by the Archbishop. The authors were to research centering on the individual priest's responses to problems such as: 1) enthusiasm for, and satisfaction with present work; 2) the extent to which the priest feels he is using and developing important skills and competencies; 3) the level of esteem

which he feels he receives from his peers, superiors, parishioners, and the esteem with which he regards himself; and, 4) the relationship between his own needs for utilizing his most preferred capabilities and the demands of his assignments. To obtain data the researchers utilized three data gathering procedures: individual interviews, questionnaires and constant liaison with the personnel board members of the Archdiocese.

The researchers found that three-quarters of the priests responding to the question on career selection had chosen priesthood by the end of high school; two-fifths had chosen it by the end of eighth grade. This seems to be a very early age range to make such an important commitment to a total style of life. These age data appear to differ from those found by other researchers.

Along the same line they also found that in describing why one entered the priesthood, 75% of the respondents indicated influences other than themselves, their own interests, and their desire to serve others. Their family, a particular priest or the general influence of the Church tended to be the most important factor in their career selection.

Another author is the well-known sociologist Andrew M. Greeley whose works in this field are based on the surveys of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). Greeley has written extensively on Catholicism - church, school, family,

priesthood etc. The picture he draws about the relationship between the support of the family and the choice of priesthood in the United States today is a very dim one. He discusses the problem in several of his books, especially in The American Catholic: A Social Portrait (1977).

Greeley reports that two surveys of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 1963 and 1974 measured a magnitude of change in American Catholicism. The religious behaviors like weekly mass attendance, monthly confession, prayer, sexual orthodoxy have all seen a drastic decline. There is a strong linkage between the decline in sexual orthodoxy (Sexual orthodoxy consists chiefly in the legitimacy to a monogamous marriage, the union of which is usually expected to result in conception, pregnancy and childbirth. On the other hand, premarital and extramarital relations, use of artificial birth control devices, cohabitation, gay and lesbian relations, divorce etc. are sexual revolutions that caused the decline of sexual orthodoxy) among the American Catholics and the declines in Church attendance, in happiness over the possibility of a son's becoming a priest. The Catholic attitudes toward religious doctrines, values and practices also have suffered a heavy loss. He predicts that if the next fifteen years are as bad as the last ten for the American Catholic Church, a mere twenty-nine percent will find themselves very pleased at the prospect of their son being a priest.

Greeley writes that in the 1963 survey, sixty-six percent of parents said, they are "very pleased with son a priest", and in 1974, the same has gone down to fifty percent, a fall of sixteen percent in 11 years time. The change in the thinking on birth control is clearly the most important factor at work in the decline of support for a priestly vocation in one's family.

According to Greeley, there has been a positive correlation between attendance at the Catholic school and support for a priestly vocation for one's son. In 1974 this relationship became negative for the Irish Catholics. If the change in sexual ethics had an especially deleterious effect on those Irish who had a Catholic education, one would expect that those who had a Catholic education would be significantly fewer in 1974 than the rest of the Irish if they were now in disagreement with the church's sexual ethic. Those Irish who had turned against the Church's sexual morality from Catholic education would have turned even more sharply against support for a priestly vocation than the typical Catholic respondent.

In 1963, eighty-three percent of the parochial school-educated Irish were ready to say that they would be very pleased if their son would choose the priesthood - seventeen percentage points above the national average. By 1974 this percentage had fallen to forty-five - five percentage points below the national average. Almost all of the change was in that large group of the Catholic-educated Irish who rejects

the Church's sexual teaching. This shift of attitudes seems to have had a particularly harmful effect on attitudes toward the clerical vocation among those who were its strongest supporters -the Catholic-educated Irish. Greeley reported in 1977 that there had been an enormous decline in the number of seminarians.

Another work, Research on Men's Vocation to the Priesthood and the Religious Life, by Dean Hoge, Raymond Potvin and Kathleen Ferry (1984), apparently prompted by the shortage of priests, is nothing more than the summarization of all the existing research on men's vocations with some suggestions, as everyone at the conference on the Catholic religious vocations at Notre Dame University in March 1983 agreed, would be a useful and helpful first step in understanding vocations to the religious life. Hence most of the points on the subject of the Catholic priesthood dealt with up to then could be traced in this booklet.

Seminarians of the Eighties: A National Survey, by Potvin (1985) is a planned longitudinal study on the seminarians. This study also is based on the responses of the survey of 680 seminarians in the theologates. (In the survey year, 1984-85, the total enrollment in the theologates was 4,170). The 1966-67 questions were repeated and new questions on religious values, attitudes and experiences, not assessed in the first study, were added. The objective of the study was to collect as much data as possible in the hope that further research

will be stimulated and more meaningful discussions initiated so that the problem of dwindling vocations to the priesthood can be addressed in a realistic and fruitful manner.

The research found that the seminarians in the theologates (students who take courses in theology prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church for those preparing for the priesthood) tend to be older than they were in the sixties; the percentage of seminarians from an Irish background decreased considerably, while that of the Spanish-speaking has gone up; the percentage of the seminarians coming from the higher income groups has gone down; while it is said that more vocations came from families with a large number of children, the data suggest that large families do not produce disproportionately more vocations; previous Catholic education is not now an absolute prerequisite for a young man to enter the seminary even though this appeared to be true in the past; as in 1966, the 1984 data depict a religious orientation within the home which may well be conducive to the child's choosing the priesthood as a vocation.

According to Potvin, today's seminarian describes his relationship with his parents much as he did in the past. The mother, however, is seen as closer to her son and more overprotective. The seminarians said that their parents showed affection often giving them a hug or a pat on the shoulder, whenever they were troubled would invite them to talk, helped them with their school work, listened to their opinion and

thinking even when they obviously disagreed with it, were eager to try new things and see new places with them, would explain when making or enforcing some rules, and were supportive. They were supportive and they lacked nothing they really needed. They were strict but at the same time gave a lot of freedom.

About the timing of the decision in the 1980's serious consideration of a vocation to the priesthood was initiated later in life than in the past, when a majority of the seminarians first thought of becoming a priest in the elementary school. Fewer seminarians now report encouragement from their parents for their vocation compared to 1966, while data indicate that such encouragement is more important for nurturing the vocation. Priests are another important source of encouragement. Personal encouragement is most important than vocational literature, talks, magazine or television advertisements. The study also deals with the attitude of the seminarians toward religion, priesthood, celibacy, satisfaction and withdrawal from the seminary.

Two other recent studies, Seminarians in Theology: A National Profile, by Eugene Hemrick and Dean Hoge, (1985); and, Seminary Life and Visions of the Priesthood: A National Survey of Seminarians (1987), by Eugene Hemrick and Dean Hoge, relate well to the present research. The former presents the findings of a national survey made in 1984-1985 among the seminarians in Theology. The participants of this survey were

3040 seminarians. A number of questions asked in this survey were exact repeats of questions asked by Potvin and Suziedelis in their survey of seminarians in 1966-1967.

The study also helps one to understand who these seminarians are, from the point of view of family background, educational and ecclesial experience, as well as what are their opinions and visions regarding priesthood. It offers insights into what prompted those presently preparing for priesthood to consider this option.

Some of their pertinent findings are: though there is a sharp decrease in the percentage of the Irish seminarians, still they are the largest group; despite an increase of the Hispanic seminarians, they are still greatly under-represented; there is not much change in other national groups; most seminarians and their families have low residential mobility; most seminarians have dated (the seventy-three percent in 1966 has increased to ninety percent in 1984), but very few (three percent) have been married or have been in the military (thirteen percent) before entering the seminary; the median income of seminarians' families is comparable to that of all Catholics; seminarians come from families similar in size to the average Catholic families and most have Catholic parents; on the average, the seminarian's parents are more educated than the parents of all Catholics aged twenty to thirty-nine.

The parents of seminarians attended Mass regularly and are moderately involved in church activities. Most seminarians first thought of becoming priests in elementary school but did not decide definitely until college or after college. Seminarians themselves have been heavily involved in the liturgical ministry, religious education and teaching before entering the seminary. There has been a decline in the number of seminarians having relatives and close friends in the religious life prior to entering seminary. Most seminarians have been altar servers and have participated in retreats and vocational programs; vocational talks and literature have a moderate influence on men in deciding to become priests, but magazine advertisements and television advertisements have very little effect. The two most influential factors causing seminarians to become priests are an inner calling and a priest's example. Being prayerful is the most important quality seminarians identify for any religious ministry and the second is being able to relate to people.

The above research also documents the changes from 1966 to 1984. It summarizes the changes under seven headings: 1) a high percentage of smaller seminaries are amalgamated and centered around major universities, 2) all the seminaries began field education and/or internship years, 3) shift from rules and schedules to personal freedom, 4) a shift away from pre-Vatican II textbooks and replacement of Latin textbooks by English, 5) introduction of psychological testing or

counseling, 6) most of the seminaries joined the Association of Theological Seminaries; and 7) the expansion of the number of non-priesthood students to seminaries. In short, seminaries in 1984 have become quite different institutions than they were in 1966.

Seminary Life and Visions of the Priesthood: A National Survey of Seminarians (1987), represent the findings of the survey of 2,308 seminarians conducted in 1986. The important findings, most of them being consistent with the previous surveys, which have some bearing to my research are summarized below.

The mean age of the seminarians has crept upward by four-tenth of a year. In 1966, no seminarian was over fifty, but in 1984 four percent were and in 1986 it was again four percent. As in the past, the seminarians were disproportionately Irish, and there were disproportionately low numbers of Italians or Hispanics. The vast majority of the seminarians had served as altar boys, Eucharistic ministers and catechism teachers. Of the seven possible influences given, clearly the most important is "the inner calling" (forty-six percent). This far exceeds the next two important, "a priest's example" (seventeen per cent) and "a desire to help others" (fourteen per cent).

The research also looks into the perceptions of Seminarians about the seminary, their future priestly roles etc. There is a shift in the seminarian's perceptions. Twenty

years ago they saw their training as a broad professional formation. Now they see it as a spiritual formation for a priestly role. There is an overall improvement in all the facets of seminary personnel, student-faculty relations, formation and programs. According to the seminarians the primary focus of their priesthood should be, in the order of rank "personal spirituality," "celebrating the sacraments," "giving homilies," and "ministering to the faithful."

Mathew Vallipalam (1989) made a sociological investigation in the Major Seminaries of India. His Priestly Formation in the Changing Society of India: A Sociological Investigation in the Major Seminaries of India, is based on an empirical survey done in 1985. The participants numbered 1,000 out of 2,849 major seminarians enrolled in 1984-85 in the 24 seminaries in the four South Indian States of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, more than half of the total number of seminarians in India. The respondents included diocesan and religious seminarians of theology and philosophy, of Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin rites.

The above study on the formation of priests in India attempts to explore whether the current formation system is suitable to India or not. With the facts and figures this study reveals how the seminarians think and feel about their life and education and also their preparation for their future ministries in the context of Indian social reality.

The fourth chapter of this book "Critical Factors Influencing Vocation," is also pertinent to the present research, but deals with the topic from another perspective, namely, how the background from which his life has taken shape influences the candidate's formation. In other words, it is based on the concept that a person's present reflects his past environment. It deals with the family background, religious atmosphere, parents' religious practices, socio-economic conditions, parents' formal education, rural-urban influence, caste considerations and interpersonal relationships.

A great majority of the Indian seminarians come from families with an average income and living in villages. Most of their fathers are small farmers or artisans. Almost all their parents are on one level of education, which is the elementary school level. One-fourth of them come from the lower caste strata. They are from somewhat large families with an average of five members each. More than half of them have one or more priests or religious in their families or among their relations. Their parents are generally devout and their interpersonal relationships with family members and relations are good.

As to the factors influencing vocational choice, the study attributes a great role to the Christian community. More than half of the ninety-three percent who answered the question said they had been influenced by some significant person in their lives. Forty-four percent of them were

influenced by seminarians, seventeen percent by a parish priest and another seventeen percent by a religious person and nineteen percent by their parents. It is reported that eighty-six percent of the seminarians claimed that their parents' attitude was very positive. Only four percent were not in favor of their son joining the priesthood, while nine percent were indifferent. More than fifty percent of the seminarians are reported to have had some vocational guidance before they entered the minor seminary. But the seminarians coming from a poor family background received less vocational guidance than those who came from a good family background.

Catholic schools played a significant role. Three-fourths of the seminarians today were educated in the Catholic schools. The remaining one-fourth were educated in non-Catholic or public schools. The parents take great care to find a Catholic school to educate their children, in the belief that their children will get a very good education in Catholic schools compared to the education in non-Catholic or public schools.

Before entering the major seminary, one-fourth of the seminarians had undergraduate degrees and about two percent graduate degrees or teachers' training certificates. About six percent decide after high school (ten grades) and sixty-five percent completed high school plus two years college. But their educational qualification before they decided to become a priest is not clear since the education could be had after

the decision, that is, after joining the minor seminary. A little less than half of the seminarians make their decision to become priests while in high school at the age of fifteen or sixteen. Late vocations are very few.

This survey of the literature included only the important works in the field and especially the recent ones. In reviewing them, care has been taken to present only those ideas that are related to the present research. Hence many ideas have been left out.

All of the research shows that those who chose priesthood were influenced considerably by their family and significant others. The first set of studies found that undoubtedly the mother influenced the son more than anyone in the choice of priesthood, but more recent studies show that the place of the mother is taken by a priest or a seminarian. The religious behaviors of the American Catholics have declined; their religious doctrines, values and practices also have suffered a heavy loss, as have the number of those who choose priesthood. Compared to the sixties, very few parents are pleased at the prospect of their son becoming a priest.

Earlier, the age of decision to become a priest was mostly during the elementary school or in the high school. But the recent surveys show that the age of decision has crept upward. Another change is that though the Irish still remain the largest group in percentage of seminarians, there is an increase of Spanish-speaking seminarians. Also the percentage

of seminarians from higher income groups has gone down.

In the sixties, the seminarians came from middle class, large, urban families, educated in Catholic schools, having one or more close relatives in the priesthood or other states of religious life. However, the recent data suggest that seminarians come from families similar in size to the average Catholic families; previous Catholic education is not an absolute prerequisite for young man to choose the priesthood. But with regard to the seminarians in India, the situation of the sixties in the United States, still persists.

CHAPTER 3

THE INDIAN AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETIES: A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

An individual's decision about his occupation evolves from the social, economic and religious factors of the society he lives in. They affect everything a person does. Therefore, to identify and understand the behavior of Indian and American priests in their choice of priesthood, one has to understand his experiences as they derive from the social, economic and religious conditions and ethnic groups. We will discuss in this present chapter the socio-economic conditions and the religious sense that have existed and that continue to dominate in the Indian and American societies.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

INDIAN SOCIETY

A glance at the various aspects of the Indian society might help us to grasp the influence it exerts on the choice of the Catholic priesthood. We look at the nation, its people, the government, the family, the economic system, the various

languages and the caste system with special reference to the Catholic Church.

The Nation

India is the largest democracy in the world. The preamble of the Indian Constitution declares "India a sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and lays down the primary objects of the constitution, namely, to secure to all citizens justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity and fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and the integrity of the nation" (Mathew 1990:488). Socialist means economic equity without which political equality and democracy are a myth. Secular does not mean anti-religious, but equal treatment of all religions.

The People

After China, India is the most populous country on the face of the earth. According to the latest (1991) census, the Indian population is 843.93 million. In 1989 it was 685.18 million. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities projects the figure of 961,531,000 for 2000 A.D. While India has just over two percent of the total world area (the land

surface of the earth is 148.95 million square kilometers and India has 3.28 million square kilometers), it accounts for fifteen percent of the world population. The average density of population per square kilometer in 1981 is 216. Rural population is close to seventy-seven percent and the urban is little over twenty-three percent. Literacy is about thirty-six percent (Mathew 1990:93, 241 422 and 426).

India is a Union of States. The Union has exclusive power to make laws on all matters in the Union List. There are now twenty-five states and seven union territories. The states have exclusive power to make laws on all matters on the State List. There is also a Concurrent List of powers, allowing both the Union and States to have concurrent powers to legislate on any matter not enumerated in the Concurrent List. In matters not enumerated, the Union has the power to make laws and in conflicting situations, the Union has the power and its laws prevail (Mathew 1990:488).

The Government

In India the head of the State (nation) and the head of the government are different. The President is the head of the State. He is elected by the representatives whom the adult citizens elect by voting. The Prime Minister is the head of the government and is appointed by the President. He/she needs to be a member of the Parliament, not later than six months

after the appointment. The states also closely follow the pattern of the Union Government. For each state there is a head of a state, the Governor. He is appointed by the President of India, usually as recommended by the Prime Minister of India. There is also a head of the government, the Chief Minister. He is selected by his colleagues in the assembly and is appointed by the Governor. Like the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister also, if not a member of the State Assembly, must become one within six months after his appointment. The states have one or two houses.

India has a Parliamentary form of government. The Parliament consists of the President and two Houses, the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha). Though the Indian Constitution closely follows the British Parliamentary model, it differs from the British in one important respect. In Britain, the Parliament is supreme. No court can question the validity of any law passed by the Parliament. In India the Constitution is supreme, not the Parliament. There are three branches of government - the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. But unlike the United States where the three are independent units, in India the Executive is subordinate to the Legislature. The Judiciary alone functions as an independent branch.

There are many political parties which are formed in line with the religious affiliations or languages. The major exceptions to this are the Congress, Communist and some

Socialist Parties.

The Family

Looking at family we observe that India has a strong tradition of stable families. A family is constituted by marriage and marriages are mostly arranged and performed with religious rites. Childhood marriages and 'Sati' (the custom that demanded the widow to jump into the funeral pyre of her husband) were prevalent. Now both of these are legally banned. Divorce was unheard of in the past. Patriarchal and joint (extended) family systems were the norms of residence. Strong family ties and religion pervaded the family atmosphere. The members of the family, whether Hindu, Christian or Muslim, got back to their homes in the evening to pray together. But in the course of centuries these practices underwent many changes and still continue to change. Joint family is giving way to nuclear family. Many of the young people do not blindly accept the system of arranged marriages. Now the prevalent custom is that the parents find a prospective bride or groom, but the daughter or son could object if the choice is unacceptable. Romantic love is increasingly becoming a principal factor in the choice of a partner. Marriages are not always performed religiously. Though not as it was in the early days, strong family ties and family prayer continue to exist. Divorce takes place here and there. Courtship and dating as in the West are

still not very common in India.

The Economic System

Though India is one of the top ten industrialized nations in the world, agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy contributing the largest share of the national income and the greatest source (eighty percent) of employment to the people. India opted for a mixed economy in which public and private enterprises cooperate (Mathew 1987:546). The World Bank Report issued in Washington in December 1989, puts India's GNP per capital in 1988 at \$330 (Mathew 1990:524). The reason for this poor situation is the population. The Economic Handbook of the World 1981 says: "Only a dozen countries exceed India in Gross National Product, but its high population places it among the poorest of the world's countries in terms of the per capita income" (Banks et al. 1981:196).

The Languages

India never had a common language intelligible to all the masses of the country. The 1961 and 1971 censuses had listed sixteen-hundred and fifty-two languages as mother tongues spoken in India. Of these thirty-three are spoken by groups numbering over one-hundred-thousands. The Indian Constitution

has recognized fifteen of these languages. In the question of a common language the Constituent assembly could not arrive at a consensus. When put to a vote, Hindi, spoken by over one-hundred and fifty-three million people, won by a margin of a single vote - the casting vote of the President. The Constitution therefore recognized Hindi as the official language of the Union (Article 343 et seq.) and the regional languages as the official languages of the States concerned (Art. 345 et seq.). English was recognized as the authoritative legislative and judicial language (Art. 348 et seq.). Thirteen languages are official language of various States (Mathew 1990:433-434). Indian States were formed mainly on a linguistic basis.

The Caste System

A caste is the attribution of superiority or inferiority to permanent and hereditary groupings in a society. The prestige of a person is measured in India by the caste he belongs to. It is a way of life which keeps a group well knit together by its own customs and ritual, especially by endogamy. Hence the caste groups exercise great power over their members and are great forces of survival. To break caste is to cut oneself off without any hope of being adopted by another group. Thus an ostracized brahmin cannot become a warrior or even an untouchable since one has to be born within

one's caste; only if he finds others of his own caste similarly ostracized can he once more belong to a group because a new sub-caste has been created (Dhavamony 1982:50).

Max Weber (1967:39-40) says about caste.

A caste is doubtless a closed status group. All the obligations and barriers that membership in a status group entails also exist in a caste, in which they are intensified to the utmost degree.

Weber continues to explain that caste is characterized by occupational specifications. The Brahmins, the highest caste, are often priests and administrators. The next is the Kshatriyas who are warriors protecting the people politically and militarily. The third caste is Vaishya who were peasants and traders. The lowest caste is the Sudras, the untouchable, whose occupations were the meanest or the most detestable jobs associated with cleaning (Max Weber 1967:55-57, 64 & 77).

But this situation is undergoing drastic changes. There are fewer caste restrictions today than there used to be and young people do not very often consider it an obstacle to their relationships. Indian democracy has been keen on equality, economic and social. Indian Constitution (article 7) abolished the practice of untouchability in any form and any offense in this regard is punishable. Yet people are still caste-ridden and hundreds of atrocities take place every year based on caste (De la Gueriviere 1981:159).

Caste and the Indian Catholic Church

In Christianity, there is no caste in principle. "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27, The New King James Version). But caste exists there in practice. Not only that there existed separate churches for different castes, but they exist even today in certain areas. I quote a portion of the editorial of the Examiner:

In parts of India there are separate chapels, churches and burial grounds for different caste groups. In one parish in Tamil Nadu there are two churches, one for Nadars, the other for Vellalas. In another place part of the Church is reserved for one caste and another part for another. The mass of clergy and laity in India are still caste-conscious. In certain dioceses there is rivalry between priests of different castes. Church appointments and recruitment to seminaries and religious congregations are made on the basis of caste....

The bishops' meeting (Catholic Bishops Conference of India) in Tiruchirapalli therefore did well to issue a statement roundly condemning caste as well as the caste mentality within the church and outside it. "We state categorically," said the bishops, "that caste has no place in Christianity. It violates the God-given dignity and equality of the human person." Quoting St. Paul, the bishops said that "in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God...there is no Jew nor Greek, slave nor free...all are one in Christ Jesus." The bishops went on to say: "It is intolerable that caste should be a determining factor in membership of pastoral council and other Church associations; and, even worse, in ecclesiastical appointments and posts of responsibility in religious congregations (Examiner 1982:97).

There is, however, one difference between caste in Hinduism and caste in Christianity; while in the former caste is legitimized, in Christianity, it is not.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan (1940:309-310 & 316-320), a former President of India and a famous philosopher, Indian society is molded basically on religious faith and practices and the values derived from the philosophies and ideologies starting from thousands of years. Prominent among the religions are Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Jainism.

AMERICAN SOCIETY

We are looking at the American Society in the same manner as we have looked at the Indian society.

The Nation

According to Robin Williams Jr. (1951:6-8), the history of the United States and the nature of its present culture and social structure are the result, in part, of a unique combination of geographic combinations. In the first place, the North American continent is a great land mass bounded to east and west by the great expanses of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. A second prime geographic feature of the United States is the great expanse of contiguous land mass. Within the present boundaries of the United States are approximately three-million square miles - an area exceeding that of all Europe.

America sees itself as a new world, approximately four-hundred years old and is mostly populated by immigrants. What Oscar Handlin (1951:3) wrote is true and thought provoking. He begins the 'Introduction' of his book like this: "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then discovered that the immigrants **were** the American history." Apart from the remnants of Indian tribes, the United States has no autochthonous population; all people are either themselves immigrants or else descendants of more or less recent immigrants. Every aspect of American history, every phase of American life bears testimony to this fact (Herberg 1960:7).

The People

The United States population according to 1990 census is just 248,709,813 (Bureau of the Census 1991:71). The official language is English, but Spanish is gaining momentum. The immigrants continue to speak their native languages as well.

Millions of people who emigrated to this land from different parts of the world carried with them the culture and religion they inherited. These cultures have been assimilated to the American culture which is hailed as a "melting pot," individuals of all nations are melted into a new culture. Instead of 'melting pot' some use the phrase 'a mosaic society' and still others a 'stew pot' to describe this

phenomenon of cultural assimilation (Herberg 1960:19; Greeley 1977:23-28 & 211).

In the context of our study, special mention is to be made about the Irish culture which is apparently disappearing. According to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, (Glazer and Moynihan 1970:250-251) on the surface, the "Irish" in Irish-American is fast fading. Unquestionably, however, an Irish identity persists. The Irish are commonly thought to be friendly, witty, generous people, physically courageous and fond of drink. There is a distinct tendency among many to try to live up to this image. The problem with perpetuating this Irish type is that it is essentially proletarian and does not jibe with middle class reality. The three additional factors working toward a decline of Irish identity in America are the decline of immigration, the fading of Irish nationalism, and the relative absence of Irish cultural influence from abroad on the majority of American Irish.

The Government

The United States, like India, is a Union of States. There are fifty of them, and the District of Columbia. The United States became a nation through its Constitutional Convention of 1787, in which some of the powers belonging to individual states were given to the federal government.

The American political system is **constitutional, federal,**

and **competitive** two-party system. It is a constitutional because the country is ruled according to the constitution and there is a sharp distinction between the office and incumbent. The system of government in the United States is federal. The President has the supreme power. He heads both the State and government. There are two Houses - the Senate and the House of Representatives - to help the President in the administration. A distinctive component of American political life is the two-party system. They are Democrats and Republicans and there are striking similarities today between the two. No law forbids the formation of new parties.

Each State has its own constitution. The State Constitutions provide for a legislature of two Houses, (except Nebraska which has only one House) a governor and a judicial system of its own. The state governments can deal with all matters which are not reserved for the federal legislature.

The United States was established as a representative democracy - a political system in which all adult citizens have the right to vote for government leaders who, once elected, act on behalf of voters. American citizens were never expected to be involved in day-to-day decision making, although the Founding Fathers wanted citizens to vote and, through their voting, to hold public officials accountable.

The United States is the super power and one of the industrial giants of the world. According to the Bureau of Census (1989) the per capita income is \$18556.

The Family

The structure of family in the United States has undergone sweeping changes. A typical American family is nuclear, passes inheritance equally through both parents, divides family decisions equally, entails establishment of a residence separate from each other's relatives and involves marriage of one woman to one man at any particular time. Now some new patterns of family and marriage like cohabitation, gay and lesbian families are being experimented with.

As a result of the weakening of the stigma of remaining single, the number of those who remain single or marry late has increased. Felicity Barringer (1991:1), a special reporter to The New York Times, says that a March 1990 survey - which is not based on the 1990 census - has offered a long view of the changes in American marriage and family patterns.

Children of the 1950's are living alone in record numbers, children of the 1960's and 1970's linger in the parental nest and almost one-quarter of the children of the 1980's and 1990's are living with a single parent. While men and women are marrying later than ever before in this century (at an average age of twenty-six and one-tenth of one for men's first marriages and nearly twenty-nine and nine-tenth of one years for women's first marriages), the 1990 figures complete a parabolic trend that bottomed out in 1956 (when men, on average, married at the age of twenty-two and one-half of one and women at the age of twenty and two-tenth of one), and is now back where it was a hundred years ago. One population researcher believes that the trend toward delayed marriage may be peaking. (Barringer 1991:1)

The divorce rate is said to be very high in the United States. Speaking about divorce rate Peter Rose and others (1982:219) write:

However the statistics are interpreted, there is no doubt that more marriages break up now than in the past. There are also many marital separations that do not end in divorce. The combined number of separations and divorces may actually be equal to or larger than the number of marriages that remain intact as long as both partners live. Rising divorce rates seem to occur in all Western industrialized societies, but the United States now has the highest divorce rate in the world.

Bureau of the Census (1991:62), Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1991, reveal the same that there were nine and seven-tenth of one marriages and four and seven-tenth of one divorces per every 1000 population. The 1990 Demographic Year Book of the United Nations (1992:507 & 747) reports the figure of 2,448,000 marriages and 1,175,000 divorces in the United States in 1990.

The Economic System

American economy is based on capitalism. Capitalism is the economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of the means of production, where most investments are determined by private decisions rather than by those in government, and where prices, production, profits, and the distribution of goods are services or determined mainly in the free market.

In his brilliant analysis of the American scene, Robin Williams (1960:415-470) sees as the principal value-orientations of its culture: a stress on active mastery of the external world, a world-view that is open, a rationalistic rather than traditionalistic approach to life, orderliness, a universalistic ethic and an emphasis upon equality over hierarchy and the individual over the group. Implicit in these cultural themes is an esteem for freedom and self direction. According to Robert Lynd ((1967:56, 60-61 & 72), individualism, pragmatism, laissez-faire, democracy, making money are some of the elements of the American Way of life. Robert Merton (1968:190; also Lynd 1967:72) notes that money has gained, today, more importance than anything. The American society generally judges a person's worth on the basis of success and success usually is measured by how much money one makes. Money is peculiarly well adapted to become a symbol of prestige. In short, as Father Joseph Fichter (1961:25) says, "the American culture is widely individualistic and strongly imbued with motives of profit and self-satisfaction."

In short, most of the differences between preindustrial and industrial societies describe, to some extent, India and United States respectively. Ferdinand Tonnies' (1887) 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesellschaft,' Emile Durkheim's (1964a) 'mechanical solidarity' and 'organic solidarity' and Robert Redfield's (1941) 'folk society' and 'urban society' well suit the two societies.

2. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Religion is found in every known society of the globe. The philosopher Henri Bergson (1935:92) said:

We find in the past, we could find it today, human societies with neither science nor art nor philosophy. But there has never been a society without religion.

Emile Durkheim (1915 [1965:62]) noted that there is no known society without a religion" and he defined religion as,

A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.

Religious beliefs give the individual believer an explanation of life and a guide for ethical behavior. Religion tries to make sense of human burdens and frustrations like poverty, disease, death etc. and gives strength and hope for the future.

India and the United States of America are the two most religious minded peoples among all the countries. A 1976 survey (Furman 1984:132¹) indicates this very well. The questions asked were:

¹Furman quotes it from Public Opinion, 1979, Nos. III-V, pp. 38-39. My search failed to find the source.

- 1) Do you believe in God?
- 2) Is your religion very important to you?
- 3) Do you believe in life after death? are as follows:

Table 1 India and some western countries that rank top
in religiosity.

Countries	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
India	99%	86%	76%
U.S.A.	94	58	71
Canada	89	36	54
Italy	88	36	54
Benelux	78	26	48
G. Britain	76	23	43
France	72	22	39
West Germany	72	17	33
Scandanavian	65	17	35

As evident from the statistics, almost everyone in India believes in God. Religion is important to them and three-fourths of the Indians believe in life after death. In the

United States belief in God and belief in life after death are almost equal to that of the Indians but religion is important for just fifty-eight percent of the Americans. In this section we examine separately the religious background of the Indian and the American societies.

RELIGION IN INDIAN SOCIETY

India has an age old tradition of spirituality. Her 'Rshis' and 'Sanyasins' (the sages) led a life of severe austerity, renunciation and high contemplation. Though economically poor, India is spiritually very rich, and from the beginning of the known history, Indian people gave primacy to spirituality in their lives over everything else. Being well aware of the transient nature of this world, they were longing and searching for the Absolute - the Eternal Bliss - and abandoning the pleasures of this world they retreated to the mountains to pray and meditate for God-realization. Even today, we notice this spiritual impact dominating the daily lives of the Indian people. The reason for this religious impact, irrespective of their religious affiliation, could be that the family imparts a religious training to its children from their early childhood. Hence any consecrated life is considered by Indians as a sublime call for higher holiness and is held in great esteem.

Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism and Islam are the leading religions in the world today. Two of these great world religions - Buddhism and Hinduism - originated on Indian soil. The major religions in India are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikh, Buddhism and Jainism. Of these Hinduism draws the majority of Indians, namely, 549,779,481 (a little over eighty-three percent). Islam is accepted by 75,512,439 (about eleven and one-half percent) Indians. Christianity has the third place with 16,165,447 (two and one half percent) followers. Sikh has 13,078,146 adherents (close to two percent). Buddhism, a religion derived from the doctrines of Hinduism and essentially based on kindness, humanity and equality was founded by Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C., has 4,719,796 (three-quarter of one percent) believers. Jainism has 3,206,038 (one-half of one percent) devotees. There are 2,766,285 (less than one-half of one percent) Indians who belong to various small religions. Only 60,217 (one-tenth of one percent) of all Indians who have not stated affiliation to any religion (Mathew 1987:397 &385).

In the ancient as well as in the modern times religious tolerance in India was unparalleled by any other country in the world. All religions are acceptable for Hindus. Houston Smith (1968:76) describes the Hindu view on this regard:

The various major religions are alternate and relatively equal paths to the same God. ... To claim salvation as the monopoly of any one religion is like claiming that god can be found in this room and not the next, in this

attire but not another. Normally each individual will take the path which leads up life's mountain from his own culture; those who circle the mountain, trying to bring others around to their paths are not climbing. . . . It is possible to climb life's mountain from any side, but when the top is reached the pathways merge. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, as one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so diverse are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways (Smith 1968:77).

But unfortunately, in the modern times and even in the present days we sadly note so many atrocities and riots in the name of religion. The present unfortunate developments of disharmony (Hazarika 1990:3; Crossette 190:6 and Gargan 1993:1 & 8) are brought about by some religious fanatics and certain politicians who wish to capitalize at the polling booths.

RELIGION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

According to Gallup and Castelli (1989:45):

American life in general is famous for its diversity and the American people for their independent nature. The same is true when it comes to religion. There are literally hundreds of denominations in the country, and according to the U.S. Statistical Abstract, eighty-seven have more than 50,000 members. Ten denominations represent at least two percent of the population. American history has created a type of religious culture that is unique: it is marked by assigning great importance to religion, maintaining the focus of religion on the individual and respecting religious diversity.

It is easy to illustrate the importance of religion to Americans:

- . 94 percent believe in God.
- . 90 percent pray.

. 88 percent of the Americans believe that God loves them and only three percent believe that this is not the case. More than three-quarters say their religious involvement was a positive experience over their lifetimes, with 38 percent saying that it has been 'very positive'.

. 78 percent say they have given 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' of thought to their relationship with God over the past two years (Gallup and Castelli 1989:46).

The Census Bureau of the United States has kept any question about religion off the census questionnaire for fear of church-state entanglement. Hence the only source of information about the religious life was from the data gathered by organizations like the Gallup Poll or the National Opinion Research Center which tend to speak with 2,000 people or less. But as reported by Goldman (1990:1 & 18) a large telephone survey of 113,000 households in the forty-eight contiguous states of the United States, conducted from April 1989 to April 1990 and commissioned by the Graduate School of the City University of New York, confirms that the country is broadly religious and widely diverse, with more than nine in ten Americans identifying with one of the myriad of denominations. Dr. Martin Marty, a religion scholar on the faculty at the University of Chicago, considered it "astonishing that in a high-tech, highly affluent nation, we have ninety percent who identify" themselves as religious. He continued, "if such a poll were done in Western Europe, the ancestral home of many Americans, you would run at least a third lower on every indicator."

One of the most remarkable aspects of the America's faith is its durability. Gallup and Castelli (1989:16 & 251) think that

Despite all the dramatic social changes of the past and practices of Americans today look very much like the beliefs and practices of the 1930's and 1940's. Church membership and attendance figures today are identical to what they were in the thirties; belief in God has held steady; the same percentage of Americans today as in the forties believe in the afterlife. In some way Americans are even more 'religious' today than they have been in the past. In the 1930's, ten percent of the Americans read the Bible daily; in 1980's it was fifteen percent. In the decade between 1978-1988, belief in the divinity of Christ and personal commitment to Christ increased. Church membership and attendance held steady throughout the decade, with seven in ten Americans claiming church membership and four in ten attending once a week. The percentage of Americans who said religion was 'very important' in their lives also held steady, at about fifty-five percent.

However, in spite of this consistent orthodoxy, Americans remain highly independent in their religious life. They increasingly view their faith as a matter between them and God, to be aided, but not necessarily influenced by religious institutions. That is, they do not equate religion with church membership or attendance. This attitude is rooted in very specific beliefs:

- . The vast majority of Americans believe that it is possible to be a good Christian or Jew without going to church or synagogue.
- . A similar majority believe that people should arrive at their religious beliefs independently of any church or

synagogue.

. A majority agree that it doesn't make any difference which church a person attends, because one is as good as the another (Gallup and Castelli 1989:252).

The findings of the surveys of 1957 through 1988 show that there is a consistency in this matter. In 1957, fifty-eight percent of Americans replied yes to the question, "Do you think a person can be good Christian if he doesn't go to church?" In 1978, the identical percentage answered yes to the question, "Can a person be a good Christian or Jew without going to church or synagogue?"; seventy-six percent answered yes to the same question in 1988 (Gallup and Castelli 1989:46).

Andrew Greeley (1989:2-3) also speaks in the same vein in his "Religious Change in America," about the perception some people have that religion in America must have changed enormously since the Great Depression was yielding to the Second World War. This change is not something positive towards the growth but to the decline of religion. But this alleged decline of religion is derived from vested interests Greeley (1989:13 and 128) writes:

Most of the belief items demonstrate not mutability but remarkable durability over time. Whatever else may have happened in American religion, the central beliefs of Americans have not changed in the forty years during which survey questions have been asked about these beliefs.

As to the indicators of religiosity we see that, the patterns of American church attendance are remarkably stable (chapter four); prayer and religious experiences have increased since 1972 (chapter five); and the financial contributions to church have gone up (chapter six). In short, there is no evidence of sustaining the assumed decline of religion or secularization in America (Greeley 1989:116, 119 and 128).

"Religious pluralism was the primordial characteristic of American Society" (Furman 1984:123). McGuire (1987:225) thinks that pluralism is an especially important feature of the American religious sense. It means that today no single world view holds a monopoly. Religion has become more social than religious. Will Herberg said that Americans were participating in religion more but heeding its teaching less because "belonging" to a religious community had become more important than sharing its beliefs or living its ethics. Individuals needed an organization in which to establish an identity for their personal life and derive a "place" in the American society. Not belonging to a society was tantamount to being un-American. So, the membership in the three major religious bodies, Protestant-Catholic-Jew, has increased substantially. There is every sign of a notable "turn to religion" among the American people. This is because they are more interested in "having a religion" than in being religious. He also stated that the faith of Americans is no longer deeply committed to

the distinct ideologies of these three religious communities but these religions merely represent different ways of being American (Herberg 1960:2).

But the times have changed and so too the religious trend. In 1978, a major study, "The Unchurched American," was conducted by the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center which discovered that "for many Americans, **believing** was becoming increasingly divorced from **belonging**." The unchurched is defined as "those who are not members of a church or have not attended services in the previous six months other than for special religion holidays, wedding, funerals or the like." The survey, however, offered encouraging findings for organized religion. Most of the unchurched remained "believers," with at least half saying they could see a situation that could bring them back into the active community of worshippers. In 1978, forty-one percent of all American adults were unchurched; in 1988, that figure rose to forty-four percent (Gallup and Castelli 1989:15 and 136).

Nor can there be much doubt that, by and large, the religion which actually prevails among Americans today has lost much of its authentic Christian (or Jewish) content. Even when they are thinking, feeling or acting religiously, their thinking, feeling and acting do not bear an unequivocal relation to the faith they profess. Religious groupings throughout the American society have been stamped with recognizably "American qualities" to an extent that foreign

observers may find the various American religions more like each other than they are like their European counterparts (Herberg 1960:2-3 and 82; Stark and Bainbridge 1985:429-430).

Peter Berger (1970:4-5) summarizes the same notion in a simple way. He says that there are good reasons to think that the motives for participation have changed greatly from traditional ones. It is safe to say that, compared to early historical periods, fewer Americans today adhere to the churches out of a burning desire for salvation from sin and hellfire. Many do so out of a desire to provide moral instruction for their children and direction for their family life, or just because it is a part of the life style of their particular neighborhood. The difference between the European and American patterns has been aptly characterized by the sociologist Thomas Luckmann as, respectively, "secularization from without" and secularization from within."

Secularization is another characteristic of American Society. It is also the dominant theme in modern assessments of the future of religion. What does secularization mean? Stark and Bainbridge (1985:429) write: "According to Webster the term **secular** means "of or belonging to the world and worldly things as distinguished from church and religious affairs." Secularization to become worldly. More specifically, modern writers use the term **secularization** to mean the erosion of belief in the supernatural - loss of faith in the other-worldly forces (Stark and Bainbridge (1985:429)).

Stark and Bainbridge (1985:429-431) argue that "secularization is nothing new, that it is occurring constantly in all religious economies." It is "a self-limiting process that engenders revival (sect formation) and innovation (cult formation)." They also mention that most modern scholars do not regard current trends of secularization as the harbinger of religious change, but as the final twilight of the gods, because of the new intervening factor: the rise of science. Science is expected to make religion implausible. But Stark and Bainbridge (1985:431) vigorously argue that religion will persist because the supernatural assumptions are the only plausible source for many rewards that humans seem to desire intensely. Only the gods can assure us that suffering in this life will be compensated in the next. Indeed, only the gods can offer a next life - an escape from individual extinction.

Gallup and Castelli (1989:251-252) say that secularism is pervading the American consciousness. Every aspect of contemporary religious life reflects this paradox-pervasive secularism and mounting religiosity, strengthening of religious structure in spite of increasing secularization. We might not correctly deny the fact that there are people who take their religion seriously. Gallup and Castelli say that America has been "secularized" in many ways but it would be hard to prove it by looking at America's religious beliefs. America's faith has held steady, and there is no reason to expect that to change in the near future.

But we see a new trend in the 1990's. People seem to turn to religion. This change is seen in many athletes and therapists. Take for example, baseball player Darryl Strawberry. The New York Times writer Vecsey (1991:1) says that the player

announced that he had experienced a religious awakening and had begun tithing, the biblical tradition of giving part of one's income back to God. ... In doing so he has joined a number of other prominent athletes who say they give a fixed percentage, usually ten percent, of their income to a church. ... The amount of money being given by these wealthy young men has brought a new focus on the role religion plays in sports.

Similarly, differences in the life of so many people, attributed to religion, have been changing the way psychology regards religion. Goleman (1991:C1 & C18) of The New York Times writes:

While Freud dismissed religion as an illusion, growing numbers of psychologists are finding religion, if not in their personal life, at least in their data. What was once at best an unfashionable topic in psychology has been born again as a respectable topic for scientific research. ... The emerging consensus among psychologists studying religion is that the spiritual life is more often of psychological benefit than not, and it is time for a scientific outlook at religion that does more than dismiss it.

Robert Bellah (1967:1-21) proposed a concept of Civil Religion. The separation of church and state in America has not denied the political realm of a religious dimension. Although matters of personal religious beliefs, worship and

association are considered to be strictly private affairs, there are at the same time, certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share. These have played a critical role in the development of American institutions and still provide a religious dimension for the whole fabric of American life, including the political sphere. This public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals and that is called by Bellah the American Civil Religion. In other words it is the religious sanctification of American political ideals, historical leaders and the ultimate destiny of the society.

Though separation of the Church from the state is declared in the first amendment of the Constitution, religiousness is maintained in the American system. For example the state employs chaplains in the army, Congress gives money to charitable organizations and the church is granted exempt status in taxes. The Pledge of Allegiance is another example (Furman 1984:131). Even the dollar bill carries the inscription, "In God We Trust." Christmas and Thanksgiving - though now social celebrations - are religious in their content.

There is also evidence for the existence of an invisible religion in America. Luckmann (1967) and Yinger (1960, 1970) believe that many Americans who do not belong to churches or sects still practice a type of religion that is substituted for a formal religious organization's practices and beliefs in

a secular society. The study of two-hundred and eight households in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by Richard Machalek and Michael Martin (1976) found support for the existence of invisible religion (Refer Shepard 1981:352).

Johnstone (1975:82) thinks that illiteracy of religious doctrines is increasing in the United States even among members of religious groups. Gallup polls and the National Opinion Research Center survey have clearly shown this fact.

According to Gallup and Castelli (1989:12), the 1960's was not a good time for organized religions; in a 1971 survey, almost four in ten among the Catholic and Protestant clergy under forty said they had seriously considered leaving the ministry. The figure was even higher, six in ten, among the rabbis. But the survey offered little evidence that a weakening of faith was implicated in the desire to leave the religious life. Many of the clergy blamed an inability to communicate with their parishioners, while others admitted they are confused about their role and what was expected of them. Still others thought religion was irrelevant, while another group said they felt they were in a straightjacket of rules and regulations.

Protestants frequently cited financial reasons as a consideration in leaving the ministry while a prominent reason cited by Catholic priests - roughly one in five - was the desire to get married. Two basic tenets of the Catholic Church - priestly celibacy and strictures on birth control - were

then being challenged by a large majority of young priests. In fact two of three under age forty expressed disapproval of their church's ban on the use of artificial means of birth control. But two of three priests over forty agreed with the church ruling on birth control (Gallup and Castelli 1989:12).

Current studies underscore the hold that religion continues to exert on Americans' lives. In 1990 appeared Garry Will's book, "Under God: Religion and American Politics." His thesis is that nothing has been more stable in American history than religious belief and practice. He argues that "religion has been at the center of our major political crises." He also argues that Ronald Reagan succeeded as a great communicator because he was communicating religious attitudes. The failure of Gary Hart, he assesses, stemmed from his lack of roots and moral vocabulary and that of Michael Dukakis, was due to his lack of passion.

On the other hand, George Bush succeeded by exploiting the themes of patriotism, religion, and law and order (Kakutani 1990:C17). Bush hoped to use the same techniques, that is, to sell religion for votes in the 1992 presidential campaign also. He loudly spoke about God and values, made alliances with various conservative churches and went to the extent of accusing the Democratic Party and its Presidential candidate of lacking them. Clinton, on his part, challenged it. Both candidates appeared on television to convince the public that they are religious. This shows that religion is

still very appealing and important to people.

America is predominantly a Protestant country (Maynard 1941:278). Together with other Catholic immigrants, the Irish successfully established Catholicism as a minority religion. This is especially because Catholicism is a basic part of Irish identity. The Irish Catholics have maintained a strong commitment to Catholicism as well as some characteristic attitudes that differ in important ways from those of Protestant Americans (Fallows 1979:127). While the Irish Catholic sub-society with its parallel institutions and communality still exists at some class levels and some places, there is growing evidence that the boundaries are permeable and that Irish Catholics are increasingly merging at their own class levels with Catholics of other ethnic minorities and with members of the Protestant majority (Fallows 1979:128).

The existence of religious individualism, that is, the logical possibility of as many religions as there are individuals - one religion for each person - is studied and accounted for by Robert Bellah (1985:221, 232-234 and 246-250). This is again restated by Harold Bloom (1992) in a recent book, "The American Religion." He says that America is a dangerously religion-soaked, even religion-mad society.

Bloom refers to the 1989 Gallup poll and writes that the vast majority of Americans believe in some version of God and to most of them God is some way personal. In his view "the American Religion has slowly been replacing European

Christianity in America ever since the nation's founding." According to him the American religion is "post Protestant and post-Christian" and possesses certain characteristics: the belief that one "finds God in herself or himself," the belief that spiritual freedom depends on being alone with God, the belief that salvation cannot come through the community or the congregation, but through "a one-on-one act of confrontation" (Kakutani 1992:C17).

Bloom argues that the societal consequences of turning this emphasis on self (or self reliance) into mere selfishness, and the believer's freedom from others into the bondage of others are to be seen everywhere, in our inner cities and in our agrarian wastelands. He also refers in passing, to fundamentalism as "the great curse of all American religion and of all religion in this American century" (Kakutani 1992:C17).

It appears that in America, religion is gaining momentum. Some thought that such a thing will never happen again due to secularization and the impact of science. But their contention proved wrong. Religion has not weakened. The difference is just in the way people practice it. While some follow the organized religion, others think that a personal relationship with God is what matters. It might be true to say that some way Americans are even more "religious" today than they have been in the past. Many studies, surveys, polls and debates confirm this.

Conclusion

A bird's eye view of the salient features of both Indian and American societies bring to light many similarities as well as the dissimilarities in them. A close look shows that the similarities outweigh the dissimilarities. Both countries are democratic, religious and very complex in their cultural milieus. Though no longer alike, there were so much in common in their strong family ties, family life, prayer life, obedience to the teaching of the Church and ethno-centrism. Today, the Irish Catholics have lost their grip almost in all these areas while the Syro-Malabar catholics still preserve them.

With all its traditional outlooks and social evils like caste system, poverty and such and with a large population whose backbone is agriculture, India remains a pre-industrial country. The United States is a modern and industrialized nation with a comparatively smaller population and a strong capitalistic economy.

India is a country with a long history where a person is free to choose any religion to reach God, because all religions are considered different paths to the same goal, religion is God oriented. In the United States, a land of immigrants, religion has become more social than religious. Here belonging to a religion has become more important than living its beliefs. The American religions have become more y like each other than their European counterparts.

Chapter 4

THE INDIAN AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETIES, (CONTD): SYRO-MALABAR AND IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

The previous chapter was a discussion of the general background of the Indian and American societies, but this section is an attempt to take a closer look at Syro-Malabar and Irish American Catholic Communities where the priests and their parents grew up. The discussion will be centered around the Syro-Malabar and Irish American Catholic Churches, the Syro-Malabar and Irish American Catholic families, and the Syro-Malabar and Irish American Catholic clergy.

1. SYRO-MALABAR AND IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

The Catholic Church is a communion of the individual churches which grew up in different places after the historic Pentecost in Jerusalem. The Church started in Jerusalem, spread to other parts of the world. But they differed one from another. The reason for this difference is that "the heritage handed over by the apostles was received in different forms and ways so that from the very beginnings of the Church it had varied developments, thanks to the similar variety of natural

gifts and conditions of life" (Abbott 1966:article 14). These particular forms and ways found their place in the liturgy and it became a rite. A rite is more than liturgical customs. It could be the style of Christian life of a community which, according to the Decree on Ecumenism (Abbott 1966:articles 15, 16 & 17) is "to be found in the particularities of worship, of canon law, of asceticism and monasticism and also in the peculiar theological systems."

Eastern or Western Rite, the Catholic Church is a communion of faith under the Pope. The Church's official stand in this regard is clear from the following statement:

Such individual Churches whether in the East or in the West, although they differ somewhat among themselves in what are called rites (that is, liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and spiritual heritage), are, nevertheless, equally entrusted to the pastoral guidance of the Roman Pontiff, the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme governance over the universal Church. They are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (Mt. 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff (Abbott 1966:article 3).

Both Syro-Malabar and Irish American Churches, of which we speak here, are Catholic but have different ethnic churches. The Syro-Malabarians are mostly in India and especially in the state of Kerala. There are many of them living outside India, for example, in the United States. These Catholics living outside India are being organized so that

they could maintain and continue their age old tradition. In the United States, some of the Bishops have assigned priests to take care of their spiritual needs according to the spirit and instruction of the Second Vatican Council. In its document, "Decree on Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church," we read: ". . . where there are faithful of a different rite, the diocesan bishop should provide for their spiritual needs either through priests or parishes of that rite or through an episcopal vicar endowed with the necessary faculties" (Abbott 1966:article 23; the "Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches" article 4 and the Code of Canon Law, 383 #2).

The Irish American Church, as the terms signify, has its roots in Ireland and is constituted of Irish immigrants and their subsequent generations. It is a part of the Roman Church. Differentiating between specifically Irish and specifically Catholic aspects of the lives of the Irish Americans is very difficult. Catholicism has played perhaps a stronger role in their lives than for any other people of Western Europe. It is perhaps impossible to separate the part played by Catholicism in creating a social context for belief and action in a largely Protestant country from the part played by the Irish cultural heritage in which that Catholicism has been embedded (Fallows 1979:128).

SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is mostly concentrated in the State of Kerala. Hence it is helpful to have a bird's eye view of the State before we deal with the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

KERALA

Kerala, the cradle of Christianity in India and the smallest of the Indian States, lies at the southernmost extremity of the Indian peninsula. It is a narrow strip of land three-hundred-sixty miles long; its broadest point is only seventy-five miles and its total area is 14,908 square miles. Kerala is the only typically tropical region of India comparable to Ceylon, Malaysia and Indonesia. The state is separated from the rest of India by mountains, the Western Ghats, stretching from north to south on the one side and the Arabian Sea on the other. The mountains contribute to the heavy rainfall, which provides year-round lush green vegetation, rivers and lagoons (Kurian 1975:60).

Kerala is the most densely populated state of India; this factor reduces the standard of living in spite of the lush tropical vegetation and the very high returns per acre of land (Kurian 1975:61). The estimate of the population according to the 1991 census is about thirty million. After his third visit

to Kerala, Peter Miller, senior editorial staff of the National Geographic Magazine wrote about Kerala:

Kerala is one of the most crowded rural spots on earth. ... It squeezes a population larger than California's into a tenth of the space, most of the people living along the coast, laced by forty-one rivers and more than a thousand canals" (Miller 1988:596).

Except that, in the coastal areas of Kerala where fishermen have their huts huddled in a knot, writes Woodcock,

The Keralan Villages bear little resemblance to the tight, squalid settlements of northern India which huddled along a single street or in a knot of houses for mutual protection. The simplicity of Keralan life tends to mask its poverty, for it goes with a sense of order. ... (Woodcock 1967:44-47).

Peter Miller (1988:596) writes about Kerala:

Its villages are visibly cleaner and its cities less slum-ridden than in almost any other part of that nation. Health standards are high. Compared with the national average, Kerala's birthrate is a third lower, infant mortality two-thirds less, life expectancy fourteen years longer.

The State of Kerala "has the highest literacy rate among all the States in India" (Vallipalam 1989:114). Peter Miller (1988:596; also Molitor 1991:18 & 23) continues:

In this state that spends forty percent of its budget on schools, virtually every child attends at least a few

years of school, which is free through the tenth year. All this is the legacy of enlightened Hindu rulers who during the nineteenth century encouraged European missionaries to spread learning among their subjects.

Religiosity in Kerala

Most of the people in Kerala are religious minded. The common religious ceremonies are the daily prayer and participation in the church functions. This is true with regard to the followers of all religions. Vallipalam observes:

The innumerable shrines and pilgrim centers of both ancient and modern India are not dead monuments but living realities. Hundreds of thousands of people visit those holy places daily, some of course out of historical or artistic curiosity, but by far the larger number to express their religious belief through prayers and offerings (Vallipalam 1989:103).

Prayer is not confined to temple, mosque or church. The visitors from the United States mentioned above noted about Kerala as follows:

The Malayala people of Kerala and their dynamic church are the essence of strength, struggle and solidarity. Church bells ring out the Angelus over velvet green rice paddies. And though only one or two of the many women planting are Christian, they will all stop and pray together (Molidor 1991:23).

In most homes every family member spends some time in prayer, individually or collectively. K.C. Chacko (1983:35) writes about prayer in Catholic homes in Kerala:

The custom of family prayer prevails in most families. In many areas Catholic houses could be identified by the rising strain of evening prayer from the homes. They never make a secret of it. All the members join in prayers.

As Vallipalam (1989:103) states, the family, the socio-economic environment and vocational orientation are influenced by the Indian religious ethos.

Religious Tolerance in Kerala

Because of this sense of religious tolerance, it was possible for the religions like Christianity to find roots in Kerala as long as the new converts observed the social requisites of a caste-dominated society (Kurian 1975:62). Traditionally kings and chieftains practiced tolerance of diverse faiths. One of the reasons for the survival of Christianity, Islam and Judaism was the tolerant attitude of the rulers. There are even a few instances in which churches were built with the help of Hindus at times when Christians were poor (Kurian:62-63).

A. Sreedhara Menon (1984:228-230; also Mundadan 1984:152-153) states that the relations between the Hindu rulers and

their Christian subjects were based on mutual trust and faith. The rulers like the Cochin Raja and the chiefs of Vadakkumkur, Thekkumkur and Ambalapuzha helped not a little in the progress of Christianity in their kingdoms by donating lands for the erection of churches and extending other facilities. Pyrard de Laval who visited Calicut in 1607 describes what he found. He wrote:

It has merchants from all parts of the world and of all nations and religions by reason of the liberty and security accorded to them there, for the king permits the exercise of every religion and yet it is strictly forbidden to talk, dispute or quarrel on the subject.

According to A. Mathias Mundadan (1984:153) everyone enjoyed religious freedom, as the Hindu chiefs and their Hindu subjects adopted a highly tolerant outlook towards the non-Hindus. Even the Hindus who became converts to Islam were not subjected to any kind of ill-treatment. The relations between the different communities were on the whole cordial. It is particularly noteworthy that the Hindu rulers continued the policy of religious toleration followed by their predecessors and gave all facilities to the foreign Christian missionaries to carry on their proselytizing activities.

While violent religious conflicts and occasional disputes between religious followers are common in north India, there is hardly any such conflict in Kerala. On the other hand, a general religious harmony exists among the people of Kerala.

Peter Miller (1988:601) describes it as "a medley of faiths: three-fifths Hindu, one-fifth Muslim, one-fifth Christian. Most of the last are 'Syrian Christians'." Some recent visitors from the United States noted about this aspect of Kerala:

Each visit to a church community brought out the entire village, whether Christian, Hindu or Muslim. Families came armed with firecrackers, flowers, fruit and colorful umbrellas. All came to celebrate (Molidor 1991:21).

Christianity in Kerala

There is a strong belief that Christianity was introduced in Kerala in the first century A.D., that is, three centuries before it gained official recognition in Europe or became the established religion in Rome. Even Hindus agree that it is believed that the apostle Thomas arrived here in A.D. 52 and the Syrian Christians have descended from him (Radhakrishnan 1940:310; also Menon 1984:84). The belief in the St. Thomas tradition is firm and widespread among the Christians of Kerala, and many scholars consider it reliable (Mundadan 1984:24-25), though some modern historians (refer Mundadan 1984:24) have rejected the evidence on which it rests. In the background of the extensive trade relations that existed between Kerala and the Mediterranean countries before the Christian era, it must be stated that there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the St. Thomas tradition (Menon

1984:84).

The traditional accounts preserved by the Jews who came to Cranganore in 68 A.D. contain a reference to the existence of a Christian community at the place Menon (1984:84). After the Portuguese influence increased on the Kerala coast, the Jews from Cranganore moved to Cochin and joined other Jews there, and, under the special protection of the raja of Cochin, flourished as a community and contributed to the trade interests of Cochin ever since. When exactly the first settlement of Jews in Kerala occurred still remains a moot question. It has been claimed that Jewish colonies were strewn along the coast in the first century A.D., and that it was these colonies which attracted St. Thomas the Apostle to Kerala and that it was among these Jews that he first preached the Christian Gospel, and established the nucleus of Christian communities (Puthiakunnel 1973:26; also Mundadan 1984:19). The statement of Pantaenus, the head of the Alexandrian school, who visited Kerala in the second century A.D., that he found a flourishing Christian community here is also cited as evidence in favor of the Apostolic origin of the Kerala Church (Menon 1984:84 & 86-87).

Kerala had contacts with the countries of the outside world from time immemorial. The Arabs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Israelites, the Greeks, the Romans and the Chinese were among the foreign peoples who had contacts with the Kerala coast in the ancient period. Ancient

Kerala had been famous for her spices like pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric and it was her fame as the land of spices that brought foreigners and cultures to her shores even from the third millennium B.C., if not earlier (Menon 1984:45; also Miller 1988:609).

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is that group of Catholics who claim their origin from the first century apostolate of St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ, and follow a combination of local (Malabar) and Chaldean (East Syrian or Persian) religious customs and traditions. (There are five principal rites used in the Eastern Church (Oriental Church) in their entirety or in modified form. They are the Byzantine, Alexandrian, Antiochian, Armenian and Chaldean.) The present Syro-Malabar Rite is a westernized and latinized form of the Chaldean Rite ((Menon:85 &194). The designation **Syro-Malabar** came into ecclesiastical use after the middle of the 19th century (Podipara 1976:15 & footnote 2).

The Syro-Malabar Rite uses Syriac and Malayalam languages in its worship in Kerala, and English or the local language in other places. From the very early days the Syriac liturgy was prevalent among the Christians of Kerala. The early Christians (St. Thomas Christians) were, in fact, called Syrian Christians because they followed the Syriac liturgy. Syriac,

it may be mentioned, was a dialect of Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ (Podipara 1976:21; also Menon 1984:85 and Miller 1988:601) and it became the language of the Mother Church of Persia with which the Church in Kerala had ecclesiastical communion from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries A.D. It was therefore only natural that Syriac became the sacred language of the Kerala Church as well (Menon 1984:85).

Being the most ancient Christian church that is culturally well integrated with the Indian society, the Syro-Malabar Church possesses many indigenous features of traditional socio-religious organizations in India. For example, there was 'Yogam' (council) -the way the Hindu Temples were governed - consisting of all the heads of Christian families to assist the Archdeacon, who looked after the temporal affairs of the community, to make appropriate decisions. The yogam functioned at the local, regional and common levels. The bishops were the spiritual leaders of the community. The structure of this church has several characteristics of a semi-autonomous organization since it is a particular oriental church. Nevertheless, it was a part of the universal Catholic Church which is well known for its powerful authority structures in the world (Kuriedath 1989:xxiii and 5; also Aerthayil 1982:38-39; and Podipara 1970:95-98).

In the course of history the structure of Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has undergone conspicuous changes with regard

to centralization and bureaucratization and these two aspects of authority could be noticed in different periods of the history of the community. The community enjoyed reasonable autonomy during most of the period up to the end of the sixteenth century when it was affiliated to the Chaldean (Persian) Church; its structure was comparatively less centralized and bureaucratized. From the time it came under the Portuguese political and ecclesiastical powers in the 16th century, the structure became more centralized and bureaucratized and consequently less autonomous, and this setup continued up to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Now the structure seems to be undergoing decentralization and debureaucratization (Kuriedath 1989:xxiii-xxiv).

Besides the Syro-Malabar Rite, there are also two other Catholic Rites in India. One is the Syro-Malankara¹ Rite (Church). It is called so since it follows a mixture of local and Antiochean (West Syrian) customs and laws in its religious practices; it also belongs to the original Christian community founded by St. Thomas. The other is the worldwide Roman (Latin) Rite (Church) which originated mainly from the proselyting work of the Portuguese missionaries from the sixteenth century onwards.

¹In 1930 a large group of Jacobite Christians reunited with the Roman Catholic Church. They retain the Malankara rite. Malankara is another name for Malabar. (Podipara, 1986:91; Vithayathil, 1980:88).

Today, there are about two and seven-tenth of one (2.7) million Syro-Malabar Catholics, one and three-tenth of one (1.3) million Latin Catholics and less than three-tenth (0.29) of a million Syro-Malankara Catholics in Kerala. The Syro-Malabar Church alone has twenty-one Archdioceses/dioceses, over 40,000 priests/religious/seminarians, about 2,000 parishes and over 3,700 other institutions. One third of the Indian Catholics are in Kerala. About one fifth of the thirty million people in Kerala are Catholics and one fifth are Muslims. The majority of the remaining are Hindus. Generally, all the religions in Kerala go in harmony with each other and have many things in common such as family prayer, fasting and feasts, schools and semi-sponsored political parties. In this study I concentrate on the family life of the Syro-Malabar Catholics.

The subjects of this study in India belong to the Syro-Malabar Church. The counterpart of my subjects - the Irish Catholic priests - belong to the Latin (Western or Roman) Rite. The Irish Catholic Church once used Latin as their liturgical language. But now English is usually used by the Irish American Church.

IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

About the state of Catholicism Joseph Fichter (1954:237) wrote:

The Catholic Church in America has grown with the nation. At the middle of the twentieth century it has reached a point where it may profitably 'take stock of itself'. It has successfully passed through the youthful stage of establishing itself in what had been an alien Protestant culture. It has been preoccupied with proving itself an institution which could resist attacks from organized Know-nothingism, Klanism, and other antagonistic ideologies; which could overcome the internal problems of trusteeism and of ethnic disputes among immigrant clergy and laity; and which could build a tremendous physical plant of churches, seminaries, schools, convents and hospitals, in spite of the relative poverty of most of its members.

Let us examine the role played by the Irish in this build up of the Church.

Immigration since the middle of the nineteenth century caused the number of Catholics to increase with every boatload of new arrivals. As Cogley (1973:52; also Glazer and Moynihan 1970:231; and Fallows:1979:23) puts it:

These new Americans came from all the old Catholic nations of Europe. More than a million Poles and a comparable number of Italians were in the New World by the time the Great War broke out in Europe. Over the years millions more - the French, the Spaniards, the Germans, the Austrians, the Czechs, the Hungarians, the Lithuanians, and other Catholics from Eastern Europe - had been added to the prolific Irish, who continued to dominate numerically the Church in America though they were soon outnumbered by the later arrivals.

However, we must bear in mind that most Americans of Irish ancestry are not Catholics but Protestant (Goldman 1990:A1 & A18). Obviously, the Irish Church in America was established in the nineteenth century in the sense that parishes were organized and the churches were built at that time (Fallows 1979:231).

McCaffrey (1976:Chapter six) says that the American Catholics before the great Irish exodus, due to the impact of Irish famine (1850's),

were culturally Anglo-Saxon, and like their English counterparts, they were humble and quiet in their religious observances, tiptoeing about so as not to disturb or antagonize the Protestant majority. Small in number, inconspicuous, and respected, the early Catholic leaders (many of whom, like John Carroll, the first American Catholic bishop, were of Irish origin themselves) cultivated a style of Catholicism that would merge into the mainstream of Anglo-American culture.

But the Irish famine changed the whole scenario. Within the short span of three decades, a massive religious explosion occurred in America. From a membership of under 1,000,000 in 1830, Catholics numbered over 3,000,000 in 1860. Besides the famine, pressures of overpopulation, domination by a foreign power, political and religious persecution, economic desolation and crop failure were all components in the exodus of the Irish from their native land to America. Along with these pressures to leave their old country, there were strong enticements to migrate to the new, namely, passage money from relatives who had already made the journey and the glorified

accounts of the opportunities that awaited the adventurous in the new country. With few prospects at home, and little hope for improved conditions, the flow of Irish immigration began even before the American Revolution, rose to the flood between 1835 and 1855, and became institutionalized as a way of Irish and American life in the years that followed (Fallows 1979:5 and 129).

Fallows (1979:130) argues that there are two facets of Catholicism before and after the famine period, both in Ireland and in America. Not only the lives, but institutions as well, were structured differently in the aftermath of the famine. Prior to the 1850's, Irish Catholicism had been loosely structured, closely identified with the daily life of the peasants, and more sensitive to the Irish needs than to Vatican policy. It was a rural, richly communal, traditional, peasant religion, stripped of the cultural richness normally associated with Catholicism. Contrasted sharply with the emerging form of American Catholicism, it was equally anathema to the reforms that were to be introduced to Ireland in the 1870's by Paul Cardinal Cullen in a successful effort to instill authority and discipline in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Thus 1870 marks the point at which Irishmen both at home and in their new environment were exposed to rigid religious controls over morals and conduct that came to typify a new puritanism within Roman Catholicism. The religious and social characteristics of the Irish were in striking contrast

to those of the existing Catholic population. But the Irish are, as Greeley (1990:5) says, the most conservative of all American Catholics.

According to Fallows (1979:5-6), for the Irish, the long experience of domination by the English in their homeland had created a sense of peoplehood which may well have accentuated ethnic identity beyond that felt by less persecuted peoples. Although numerically the majority, they were a subjugated people who were constantly reminded that they were culturally inferior, racially degenerate, and religiously misled. Though physically they were similar to the Anglo-Saxons, many Irish had been so systematically deprived of education and training for any but the simplest rural pursuits that their lack of skills reinforced the image of racial inferiority. Religiously they were the first large ethnic wave to America which brought Catholicism as an integral part of its culture. It was not the national origin component of ethnicity that automatically relegated the Irish to an inferior position, but the Catholic religious component which came to represent the critical factor making them seem strange, suspect, and therefore to be set apart. Hence the creation of a subculture evolved as part of the means of survival.

About the above nature of the immigrants to bring everything with them to the immigrating land, Handlin writes: "Invariably the way seemed to be the complete transfer of the old religious systems to the New World. It was not simply the

Gospel and the priests the immigrants would bring with them, but holidays and processions, ancient costumes and traditional rites, the whole life of religion at home. All these they wished to replant in the unreceptive soil of America. The only way to be sure of survival was to insist on the rigid preservation of the whole" (Handlin 1951:129).

Another custom that prevailed in the early nineteenth century American Church is the trustee system. Under the system, writes Cogley, the parish lay vestry owned Church property and doled out the pastors' salaries. The system worked well enough until some lay groups began to hire and fire their priests without the approval of the Bishop. The trustee system goes all the way back to the beginnings of Catholicism in the colonies. The first Archbishop Carroll had always insisted that a bishop could not surrender his spiritual authority to the whims of a lay congregation, but he did not hesitate to approve the idea of laymen controlling the parish property (Cogley 1973:30-31; also McAvoy 1969:chapter 5).

In Fichter's (1954:237-238) opinion, Catholicism in America is an urban religion in the sense that more than eighty percent of its adherents are city dwellers. It has become a "success" in the cities. The reason for it is that immigrants who constitute the American Catholic Church settled around the ports of arrival. Those who later moved to other places, chose cities because of better job opportunities.

The sheer numbers of the Irish, their concentration in urban areas and their demand for Irish clergy inevitably led to the transformation of the Catholic Church from an institution under native-born and French leadership to one primarily Irish and urban-based. Subsequent Irish bishops took steps to ensure that the quality of the priests sent from Ireland was improved, and hastened to build seminaries for the education of priests in America (MacAvoy 1969:129-130). "Thus American Catholicism," writes McCaffrey (1976:91), "became and for a long time remained part of the Irish religious empire that dominated the English-speaking world."

Similarly, by the late 1800's, the Irish concentrated in the urban East, established dominance over the American Church, and over the spreading institutional network of hospitals, orphanages, schools and colleges it supported (Fallows 1979:130). The Irish American Catholics thought that establishing and maintaining the Catholic schools was the only, or best, way to protect the faith of Catholic children. They sacrificed a lot to this end and they succeeded in it, despite the attacks. Fallows (1979:130) says that the study of Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi (1966) found that the religious impact of parochial education was greatest among those who attended these schools from first grade through college, and who came from devout Catholic homes.

In the eighteenth century if the immigrants from Ireland were the largest group in the Catholic Church, only one-

twentieth of the American clergy were Irish (Cogley 1973:31). But on the other hand, today, as Andrew Greeley (1977:26, 159 & 131) observes, although the Irish Americans represent less than seventeen percent of all American Catholics, they have thirty-four percent of the clergy and over half of the hierarchy. In the past, one could always count on the Irish, more than the Italians or any other group, to become priests or nuns, but today one cannot count on the Irish anymore. More of the young have chosen careers in business and other professions rather than the religious life.

Steinfels (1989:1) reports that the American Catholic Church is feeling an acute shortage of priests to cater for the needs of their faithful. While the Catholics grew by fifteen percent over the last twenty years, the number of seminarians in graduate-level studies declined by more than half. In 1970, 37,000 active diocesan priests served fifty million Catholics. Now fewer than 25,000 active diocesan priests serve fifty-five million Catholics. At this rate it is projected that by the year 2000, the number of Catholics will reach sixty-five million and the number of priests 18,000. Some remedial measures are already taken to cope with the situation such as recruiting second-career persons to priesthood (those who are already in a career leave to become priests), encouraging family people to permanent diaconate and entrusting lay people with some of the duties which traditionally only priests were allowed to discharge.

2. SYRO-MALABAR AND IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLICS

The life and practices of the Syro-Malabar and the Irish American Catholics are explored in the following pages.

SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLICS

Podipara (1973:107-111) describes the special way of the life of the Syro-Malabar Catholics has been described as "Indian in culture, Christian in religion and oriental in worship." Christians are considered high castes. Local tradition maintains that the majority of the people converted by the Apostle were brahmins and persons of other high castes. Observers (Mundadan 1984:165; Kuriedath 1989:5; and Aerthayil 1982:43-45) agree that the Christians still retain some of the customs very similar to those of the brahmins. The community of St. Thomas Christians adjusted itself to the environment in which it had been living. They adopted many Hindu customs associated with birth, marriage and death. But many of these customs were suppressed in the Synod of Diamper in 1599.

A. Sreedhara Menon (1984:86 & 229) states that several Hindu customs and practices (e.g., observance of untouchability, belief in astrology, Mantravada [black magic] etc.) were prevalent among them, but the Synod of Diamper issued a series of decrees with a view of removing all traces of Hindu influence from among the Christians. He further

observes that the Christians have completely assimilated themselves in the community in which they live by adopting the language, dress and habits of their Hindu brethren. Though Christian in faith, they are Keralites in all respects. In other words, they christianized (Aerthayil 19882:42) many ancient Hindu practices. In the words of Logan (1951:254; also Menon 1984:45):

It is certain that Indian ideas and practices contributed largely to the form which orthodox Christianity in the West finally adopted. Monasteries and nunneries, tonsures, rosaries, confession and celibacy all seem to have found their way to Europe from Indian sources.

Unlike the Hindu women, the Christian women (and Muslim women too) were fully dressed, covering the upper part of their body. They wore practically the same ornaments as the Hindu women. In appearance and dress the Christian male of the age could hardly be distinguished from the Nair,² for he too wore the tuft (into which they inserted a metal cross which distinguished them from their non-christian brethren [Aerthayil 1982:52]) and the ear-ring. The vast majority of the Christians were vegetarians; rice, curry and milk being their main items of food. Beef eating had not come into vogue (Menon 1984:228-229; Mundadan 1970:122; Podipara 1970:82).

²The term 'Nair' once signified a soldier and it was applied to St. Thomas Christians also, who were soldiers by profession. (Puthiakunnel, 1964, 47; also footnote 28. It is also one of the Hindu high castes. A. Mundadan, 1970:94).

The Christians of St. Thomas followed different occupations. Most of them were agriculturists. They cultivated pepper, coconut, paddy, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, vegetables and, in modern times, they also grow rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, cashews and so on. As a recent development, they have dairy farms, sea food and poultry farms. Many men engaged in trade and many others chose to be warriors and they were excellent in fighting. But the women remained at home according to the custom of the nobler castes and did the household work (Mundadan 1970:119-121; Miller 1988: 609-610).

Socially the St. Thomas Christians enjoyed the status of High castes. It cannot be denied that there existed and still exists caste in Christian churches and even in the Syro-Malabar Church to the extent of not having even intermarriage between the members of other caste. Catholics in Kerala are not very much different from the Hindus with regard to the caste observances (Koilparambil 1982:4; Dhavamony 1982:52; Podipara 1970:83).³

Regarding mate selection and marriage, George Kurian writes what he found in his study:

Among the respondents, fifty four and one-half of one percent married by arrangement made by parents with the consent of the respondents. Interestingly enough, twenty and four-tenths of one percent of them claimed that they married by self-choice with the consent of their parents.

³ Note that the whole book is a treatise on caste elements in the Christian churches in Kerala.

While this is most significant in a traditional society, in which arranged marriage is still the norm, the self-choice in Kerala does not include dating in the Western sense. It only meant that the couple met each other informally through family friendships, contacts in school, college and places of work (Kurian 1975:66).

As to the choice of spouses for children, Kurian says that only about twelve and one-third of one percentage of parents insisted on arranged marriages for children according to their own ideas. Among the respondents, sixty-five and one-half of one percent wanted to arrange marriage with the consent of their sons and daughters. This is actually what happens in most of the marriages in Kerala. In fact sons and daughters are free to say 'no' to a proposal if they don't like it and it is unlikely that the parents push the case (Kurian 1975:68).

In this context it is appropriate to mention that one could notice some similarity between mate selection and the choice of priesthood. If the decision to become a priest was not acceptable to the parents, (but mostly it is the other way because the parents very much love to have a priest-son), as it might happen in the case of the choice of a spouse, the son had to abandon his decision. If it happens, but very rarely, the son usually seeks the help of some others, for example a priest, to influence the parents to get his parents' approval to his decision.

In the past, there had been occasions of pressure to marry someone according to the parents' liking. But, there is

no such compelling of anyone to choose priesthood. At the same time we might not rule out some kind of persuasion in very few instances. On the other hand, the United States parents generally do not interfere with the decision of their children. The attitude is, it is their life and they have to make the decision. Once the children reach a decision, the parents support them. This is the same with regard to the choice of priesthood also. The influence of parents and others in an individual's decision making is minimal in the United States. The important differences between Indian and American culture and family system in this regard are also to be considered. The general societal trend in India seems to be that the parents reserve to themselves the right to approve their children's decision.

According to a law passed by the Parliament of India, on the ninth of May, 1961, to give, take, or demand a dowry is an offence, and the penalty is six months in jail and fines up to 5,000 rupees. However, it is difficult to eradicate an age-old custom by legislation because dowries play a definite role in the average Indian family. A dowry is paid in lieu of inheritance rights of daughters (Kurian 1975:68).

Divorce, according to Kurian (1975:71), is so rare that it is not yet statistically significant in Kerala; this is generally true for the rest of India. Therefore, many respondents of the survey said that they had no frequent disagreements with wives. When disputes did take place, about

fifty-four and one-half of one percentage of the respondents wanted to settle them by mutual talk; about forty-one percent wanted to settle them by keeping silent for some time. Only three percentage of the respondents would consider separation and two percentage a divorce; this is a confirmation of the prevailing tradition of marriage stability in Kerala.

Kurian (1975:71) found in his survey that unhappiness of the children was considered by sixty percent to be the major problem in divorce. Others considered objections by close relatives and social disapproval to be equally serious problems. A predominant majority, namely, eighty-five percent, felt that parents should stay together for the sake of their children. Most (fifty-one percent) felt that divorce legislation would not affect marital stability in Kerala. The largest single group responding to this point (forty-six percent) felt that traditions are strong enough to withstand marriage break-ups.

It may be appropriate to mention here that there are fewer dropouts from priesthood in India compared to many other countries. It is the Indian tradition and mentality that one follow his chosen path despite difficulties. Whatever befalls one is his 'karma' (fate). After all, every state of life has difficulties and to run away from one's chosen state, especially from priesthood is considered to be very shameful, both to the individual and to his family.

The Keralite society is a very peculiar one. Here women

are respected but men have the power (Kurian 1975:81). Boys enjoy more freedom than girls. Usually women do not go out alone and never after evening; another grown up person or at least a child will accompany her whenever she goes out. Women customarily walk behind their husbands even if they are going somewhere together. They eat only after men and children finish. Generally, men do the outside work and women do the house chores. The latter may help the former in their works but usually not the reverse. Many things stated about the Indian family earlier are valid in the case of Syro-Malabar families as well. However, the waves of change are not absent.

As to the status of women, Kurian (1975:75) observes:

Among the respondents thirty-six and one-third of one percent felt that women should work only when their work does not result in neglect of the family. Some (twenty-eight percent), while considering the question of privileges accorded to women, indicated that they wanted women to stay at home. A number of them were willing to give equality in social activities. However, sixty-eight percentage of the respondents were willing to accord equal privileges to women. Only twelve percent considered limiting equality; fifty-five percent wanted women to have equality in inheritance and twenty-nine percent were willing to give women some share in family property.

Concerning the discipline of children, Kurian (1975:76) observes:

Only nineteen percentage of the respondents expect their children to obey them without question. There is a predominance of people fifty-five years and older who wanted strict obedience. Most of the parents (seventy-three and one half of one percent) expect obedience, but want to encourage initiative.

Respondents of the survey think that children between twelve and thirteen years of age were expected to be put under some control. Kurian (1975:77) says:

Among the respondents, twenty-nine and one half percent said the children should not be allowed to contact or associate with members of the opposite sex. However, sixty-six percent were willing to give freedom under supervision. Only four and one-half of one percent were willing to give unrestricted freedom. Some (twenty-five percent) wanted their boys and girls to study in separate educational institutions; forty-one percent were willing to allow them to study in the same educational institution.

Concerning the elderly, Kurian (1975:77-78) writes:

Sixty-eight and one-half of one percentage of the respondents expressed the opinion that parents in old age should stay with one of the children. The main reason given is affection. The minority, who preferred separate living arrangements, gave as the main reason the desire to be independent. The strong sentiment for having elderly parents in one's own home is still dominant. However, one should note that in Kerala, where single separate houses are the norm, it is still possible to find room for parents.

Podipara (Podipara 1970:81; also Aerthayil 1982:205) thinks that there are many values which the family holds very dear and in high esteem. Whether nuclear or extended, there exist strong family ties. Honesty, courtesy and respect for elders are considered as valuable moral qualities. When an elder walks into a house all others will get up. If he is a very respectable person nobody will sit until he says so. When parents get old they are never sent to nursing homes or left to live alone. They are taken care of, mostly by sons. At

the time of sickness, death or other needs not only their family and relatives but others also come to their aid.

From wake-up to bed, from birth to death, the life of a Syro-Malabar Catholic is permeated by religiousness. They are pious people. The very decoration of the home - some homes have a special prayer room - is intended to create a religious atmosphere. You will generally find a crucifix (until the Portuguese arrival there was only the crucifix [Mundadan 1970:158-159]) and holy pictures on the walls of most of the homes. Babies will be shown these pictures and taught about whom they represent. Religious instruction starts at babyhood. Prayers are taught from the time the child begins to talk. Usually babies are not sent to sleep without at least making a sign of the cross on their forehead. The older ones help to impart religious knowledge to the younger ones.

Since the Syro-Malabar Catholics are strongly religious, they pray in the morning, noon and evening. The evening prayer is the family prayer in which all the members participate. In most cases it consists of the Angelus, the Rosary, litanies and other prayers to the saints. They prayerfully remember all family members, living and dead; they also pray for priests, for the increase of vocations etc. Generally, all those who are able will attend Holy Mass daily. As much as possible they build their houses around the church (Aerthayil 1982:51). Even if the church is far away they don't mind walking a few miles to attend Holy Mass. Most of them, without fail, will go for

Sunday Mass. In the morning and evening, the people used to join the priests in the church in the reciting of the Divine Office (Puthiakunnel 1964:135-140; Mundadan 1970:161). They are earnest in participating in Church related activities. Children must attend Sunday Catechism even if they go to Catholic schools.

Advent, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter and St. Thomas Day etc. are celebrated with cultural and religious solemnity. They observe fast and abstinence on these and many other occasions (Aerthayil 156-174, 193-201; Mundadan 1970:176-179; Podipara 1970:93-94). They also participate in Holy Hour, Twelve and Forty Hour adorations, retreats and other spiritual exercises.

IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLICS

The Irish were calm, quiet, contented, good Catholics who, in the beginning, mostly selected mates from their own ethnic group and usually lived in the same neighborhood. "To be an Irish Catholic . . . was in itself a mark of social and religious superiority." Catholicism is a basic part of Irish identity. (But it is erroneous to say that all Irish Americans are Catholic (Fallows 1979:103, 104, 127 and 6-7, 62-65).

Even when they crossed the Atlantic, the Irish did not give up everything. True, in the process of cultural assimilation they lost many of their traditions. But they were

the first large ethnic wave to America which brought Catholicism as an integral part of their culture and, in adapting to the American culture, they succeeded in retaining their strong commitment to Catholicism as a conspicuously different cultural feature. If today's Catholics are assimilated into the American society, then much of the credit should go to the bishops and priests of the nineteenth century (Fallows 1979:6-7, 127-128 and 132-133, 63).

Daniel Moynihan (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963:230) praises the tremendous sacrifice of Irish Catholics for their church. He writes: "They have built it from a despised and proscribed sect of eighteenth century to the largest religious organization of the nation.... This is comparably the most important thing they have done in America. But they have done it at a great price. In secular terms, it has cost them dearly in men and money. A good part of their surplus that might have gone into family property has gone to building church." They were persecuted for their faith with their fellow believers. To preserve and transmit their faith they started their own schools.

Irish Americans constitute seventeen percent of the American Catholic population, thirty-four percent of the clergy and half of the hierarchy. The 1986 National Survey of seminarians reveals that only twenty-two percent of seminarians are Irish; but it is the highest single ethnic group (Greeley 1972:17; Hemrick and Hoge 1987:63).

But the present day Irish have moved from their self-enclosed ethnic neighborhood and abandoned the mate selection from the ethnic group. Now sixty-one percent of Irish Americans are of mixed ethnic background. From the superNORC composite sample of close to 18,000 Americans, Greeley (1977:chapter ten) shows that the Irish Catholics are less likely to marry before the age of twenty-one, less likely to be divorced (the Irish have an unusually low rate of divorce - seven percent), less likely to have three or more children (the mean is two and one-half of one). There is some evidence that attitudes of Catholics including the Irish, are changing towards family planning, as the rhythm method is being replaced by the use of the pill. The majority of Irish Catholics support the legal availability of abortion for those who wish to use it.

Many things said about the Syro-Malabar Catholics, such as, large and extended families, close family bonds in which the parents' generation demands and receives respectful attention, arranging matches for their children, dominance of men, strong faith, running of their own schools etc. were also true with the Catholics in Ireland (Fallows 1979:91-92, 97, 98, 101 and 103).

Greeley (1977:chapter seven) shows with the data made available by Dr. Melvin Kohn of the National Institute of Mental Health confirms the general picture of a more active and more affectionate family life among the Catholics than

among the non-Catholics. The Catholics are affectionate and spend more time with their spouses and children than the non-Catholics. But compared with the Italian and German Catholics, the Irish have the lowest scores on the discipline control-scale. Discipline and obedience do not seem nearly so important to them. There are more rules made by Irish parents but less concern is manifested about fulfilling the obligations of them. In most important respects, it would appear that the Irish family has become simply an American family (Fallows 1979:11). Most of the characteristics Greeley gives above are not at all different from that of the Syro-Malabar Catholics.

3. SYRO-MALABAR AND IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLIC CLERGY

Celibacy is mandatory for Catholic priests today. But for the first three centuries there existed no special law in the Eastern or Western Church obliging the clergy to remain celibate. But there were many clergy who led a celibate life in accordance with the Gospel spirit. None of the authors of the first three centuries affirms a strict obligation to celibacy. Neither Tertullian, nor Origen, nor Clement of Alexandria, nor Eusebius of Caesarea, nor St. Cyril of Jerusalem, nor St. Jerome seems to speak about clerical celibacy as something obligatory (Lea 1966:10; Puthiakunnel

1964:88). The Council of Gangre even condemns the Christians who because of a depreciation for married clerics refused to attend their liturgical functions and Holy Mass (Puthiakunnel 1964:88).

Puthiakunnel (1964:90) writes:

Clerical celibacy was made obligatory in Western Christendom by the Council of Elvira (Spain) about A.D.300. The Canon thirty-three of the Council imposes celibacy upon its Bishops, priests, deacons and all the minor clergy. If they continue to live with their wives after their ordination and beget children, they were to be deposed.

Boswell (1980:179, note 35) argues that "this Council (of Elvira in A.D.305) is noted for the severity of its provisions: it was the first to insist on clerical celibacy." He says that "the First Lateran Council of 1124 declared all clerical marriages invalid" (Boswell 1980:216).

Towards the beginning of the fourth century, in Eastern Christendom, though marriage was forbidden to priests after their ordination, (Council of Neocaesarea, A.D. 314), a stricter discipline regarding celibacy was not adopted until the seventh century (Council of Trullo, 693)(Puthiakunnel 1964:90). Puthiakunnel states that some of the Oriental churches have no obligatory clerical celibacy even to date. A few such churches have relative celibacy. But the Syro-Malabar clergy are obligated for absolute celibacy (1964:111-115).

SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC CLERGY

About one third of the Indian clergy comes from the Syro-Malabar Church. To be precise, there are 14,074 (Appassery and Arukalil 1986:507) priests in the whole of India and of them 4498 belong to the Syro-Malabar Church and the rest to the Latin and Syro-Malankara Churches. The number of Syro-Malabar clergy continues to increase.

Until a few decades ago candidates to priesthood generally came from noble families, that is, from those families which enjoyed both sound economic and social status. The new converts, especially from the low castes were not chosen to the priesthood. As a result, the priests enjoyed great love and high respect in the society. The economic condition was considered because all the expenses of the training period was to be met by the family. High social standing of families improved the effectiveness of their ministry because the priests generally did not go outside of their own diocese and so they were known to every one. If a priest's family were poor, the people might not honor him as much as they honor a priest from a rich family. So too, if there are some weak elements or some problems in the priest's family they might say, "physician, first cure yourself." Hence strict norms were observed in the Syro-Malabar Church in the selection of candidates to priesthood.

But the situation has changed today. Many candidates come from economically and socially lower class families and not necessarily from noble families. Consequently the respect and

status of priests in the society also has gone down slightly. The reason for the mitigation of the criteria of selection is the rapid expansion of missionary activities of the Syro-Malabar Church in other parts of India where the family status of the priests will not be known. In addition, the dioceses or orders have volunteered to meet much of the expenses of the seminary training and thus solved the financial problem.

As in the case of social and economical issues, we see a twist also in the demand of celibacy from the priest, but in an opposite direction. Going back to the history, we observe that until the beginning of sixteenth century, Syro-Malabar Clergy were generally married. But there were clergy who led a celibate life even at that time. After the coming of the Portuguese to Malabar, due to the influence of Latin Church discipline, many of the Malabar clergy began to practice celibacy. But it seems that celibacy was formally and canonically prescribed for the Malabar clergy in the first Synod of Angamalee in 1583 (Puthiakunnel 1964:99-100).

Syro-Malabar priests were known as '**cathenars**' or '**cassanari**' (Western writers used '**cassanars**') which was a Malabarization of the Syriac word '**quasisa**' (elder or presbyter). '**Cassanari**' is taken from Arabic meaning '**Casis Nair**,' that is to say, priests of Nairs (Puthiakunnel 1964:47; also footnote 28). The clerics below the priests' grade, whether deacon or not, were known as chemas (deacon). Outside the Church the ancient Syro-Malabar priests were not very

different from the ordinary people in their dress and there is no doubt that they were generally married (Mundadan 1984:185-186).

Priests were ordained for the parish, and not for the diocese. Often they were married and were promoted to orders before the canonical age. In selecting candidates there was no age restriction. Little children and afterwards boys of sixteen and seventeen were ordained. The reason for the lack of age restriction, it is guessed, was the difficulty of the bishops to come from Babylon to ordain candidates to sacred orders (Mundadan 1984: 186 and 188). The ordination took place in two stages: at the first stage the candidates were made 'chemas', when the orders up to diaconate were conferred on them and the second stage they were made **cathenars** when priesthood was conferred on them. The assembly of the parishioners presented the candidates to the bishop through a letter patent called 'desakkuri'. The letter gave the candidates the title to be maintained by the parish (Podipara 1970:89).

IRISH AMERICAN CATHOLIC CLERGY

The missionary priests who had accompanied the immigrants to America had been, in fact, among the least disciplined and most unruly of the Irish ecclesiastics and were frequently almost as culturally and intellectually unpolished as their

parishioners. In the view of Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore, the Irish priests under his supervision were the least trustworthy of the American clergy and the cause of practically all scandals of the day. In the future, he wrote, every Irish priest would be carefully scrutinized before he was accepted in the diocese. This was not the bishops's first displeasure with the Irish clergy. For years he had made no secret of his opinion that they were poorly educated, uncultivated, troublesome, and all too often intemperate in their use of alcohol (Fallows 1979:129; Cogley 1973:32; McAvoy 1969:107). Later we see that the priest was usually the best-educated person in the Catholic Community (Cogley 1973:62).

According to Fichter (1961:124-126), the Catholic priest tends to share in the relatively high status generally enjoyed by the clergy in America. He writes:

While his precise position is difficult to measure scientifically, the social position of clergymen is colored by two thousand years of Church history, and those who construct rating scales place the clergy among the top occupations. The priesthood and the ministry seem to be maintaining their high rank among occupations in spite of another factor that is often mentioned: the so-called trend to secularism and materialism in our culture. ... The extent to which the American people consider clergymen "useful" to the society was dramatically highlighted in a survey taken in 1953 by Elmo Roper, in which he asked what group of leaders in the country was doing the most good. No group - whether government, congressional, business or labor - came anywhere near to matching the prestige and pulling power of the men who are the ministers of God (Fichter 1961:126).

Robert Hodge, Paul Siegel and Peter Rossi (1964:290-292) studied the occupational prestige of priest and found it tied with a rank at twenty one and one-half of one percentage with head of a department in state government, civil engineer and an airline pilot in ninety selected occupations in America.

Status is easily determinable to the extent that the person having the status is more easily recognizable. Fichter (1961:119-120) writes:

Unlike the professional functionaries of most American religious bodies, those of the Catholic Church wear a distinctive garb. ... While American priests and brothers do not wear their cassocks or robes on the streets as their European counterparts do, they are usually recognizable by their black suits and various forms of clerical neckwear. (Now the members of Salvation Army and other non-Catholic functionaries also follow the Catholics and wear some recognizable garb or neckwear.)

As to the advantages of social status for the priests, Fichter (1961:115) says:

If the Catholic religious functionary is held in high esteem by his fellow Catholics and fellow Americans, he tends to have social power among them. This means that his role can be performed more effectively and that his influence can extend more widely throughout the society.

Conclusion

Irish Catholics and Syro-Malabar Catholics, as the names indicate, are two ethnic Churches in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The former are in the United States either as immigrants or having their ancestors from Ireland and the

latter are of Indian origin claiming their faith from St. Thomas the Apostle. Both of these ethnic Churches have a considerable number of followers and are conservative. They grew up in foreign cultures but each assimilated the respective cultures in its life.

Among all other ethnic Churches the Syro-Malabar and Irish American Churches have more vocations to priesthood in their respective countries. Even in this modern age, in spite of all the turmoil in the Catholic Church, many young men decide to become priests. In the American Catholic Church, comparatively more priests are ordained in the Irish American ethnic group than in any other one. So too, in India, more priests are ordained in Syro-Malabar Church than in any other. Hence it seems interesting to study how the families in each of these cultures influence their sons in the choice of priesthood.

Yet the shortage of priests is very acute in the U.S. Catholic Church. There are not enough priests to satisfy the needs of the faithful. The future is not a bright one. While the number of Catholics is increasing, the number of priests is decreasing. This tendency is a signal of an alarming situation. The bishops are alarmed and they seek many remedial measures to address the problem. On the other hand, the Indian Church, especially the Syro-Malabar Church, has enough clergy and is in a very comfortable position today and hopefully for the future as well.

CHAPTER 5

OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE: GENERAL THEORIES

Occupational choice, as the term implies, refers to the selection of a specific type of work (Woelfel 1975:44). Unlike the past, in modern society every individual has to choose an occupation, and this choice is based on many determinants. Sociologists have suggested some theories about occupational choice. In this chapter we will have an overview of them and will discuss the situations conducive to the choice of priesthood.

Career, as Fichter (1961:162-163) describes it, is a continuous, lifelong occupation that includes implications of direction, achievement and progress. The term is usually employed in relation to a profession for which some training was necessary and in which advancement is expected. One does not speak of a career in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. There is a generally accepted distinction between persons who perform professional functions and those who work at a job. The closer an occupation approaches professionalization the more likely is it to involve the concept of career. Each task or position along the line of the career may be referred to by the functionary as "my job" but

the occupation as a whole is seen as a profession. The job, for example, teaching by a religious sister, is a segment of her total career as a religious functionary.

Rosenberg (1957:5-6) thinks that the choice of an occupation is very important for an individual. But there is a crucial problem in making a choice, namely, that it is the adolescent who, still developing both intellectually and emotionally, has to make his life-long decision at a very early time of his life when he is ill-fitted to do so. First, young people do not understand the complex nature of society, and, second, they are undergoing deep-seated emotional experiences which obscure their basic needs and desires. The stresses and strains of adolescence are many and are confusing.

In any society there are thousands of occupations to choose from. How does an individual happen to choose a particular one? It is not necessary that one give serious consideration to all of the occupations. One can easily eliminate most of them based on the values, life style, sex, race, religion, nationality, "social publicity," (that is, no or little knowledge about some occupation, eg., a nuclear physicist), reality factors (lack of mental, physical, material, resources) and other factors (Rosenberg 1957:4-5).

There are several theories as to how one chooses an occupation. Let us briefly review some of those theories which are summarized by Ginzberg et al. (1951), Samuel H. Osipow

(1975).

1. Accidental theory.

Accidental theory relies uncritically on external factors of exposure and chance circumstance and ignores a wide range of individual options. Certain people choose occupations which they do not like and which are against their own preferences. If you ask, "How did you happen to be in the present job?" many people would respond, "It was an accident." Accidental theory is also supported by the biographical data of a number of well known people, like David Ricardo, Whistler, Malinowski etc. Needless to say the individual must react actively for the exposure to be effective (Ginzberg et al. 1951:18-21; Caplow 1978:218).

2. Impulse theory

Impulse theory proposes that the internal elements largely condition the responses of the individual to external factors. Hence the theory stresses the individual's internal emotional forces. In fact, it was the stress on the internal factors, that gave rise to this theory. It has been contended, especially by the psychoanalysts, that occupational choice can be understood only through a theory that explains the individual's behavior primarily in terms of unconscious

forces. The following example illustrates this approach.

The British psychoanalyst Ernest Jones reports the case of the patient:

As a child he had shown an unusually strong interest in the act of micturition, in the guidance of the flow, in the force of it, and so on. When a little older, he was passionately fond of playing with streams and puddles. He later became a well-known engineer and constructed a number of canals and bridges (Ginzberg et al. 1951:21).

Both the "accident" and "impulse" theories stress a single factor or set of factors: the former, the external factors and the latter, the internal factors. But they have one important element in common, that the individual is assumed to be largely passive with respect to the choice process. One contends that the individual makes a choice because he must respond to the overwhelming impact of a stimulus or of a reality situation; the other, that he is propelled by the strength of his basic impulses (Ginzberg et al. 1951:23).

3. Inheritance theory

There is another very interesting theory of occupational choice, that is, the direct inheritance of one's father's occupation. It is appropriate to mention that inheritance is conspicuous in occupations requiring either capital investment or childhood participation. Both of these elements are

typically found in farming, and almost all farmers are recruited from farmers' sons. Retail trade is another major occupation characterized by these elements, although to a lesser degree.

Isolation is another factor which clearly promotes the inheritance of occupation. Farmers, miners, mill operatives or fishermen are likely to be physically isolated in communities where few new jobs are open to their sons. So, too, in more complex societies where a stable caste system is prevalent, the religious and social sanctions may compel the sons to follow the footsteps of their fathers.

It is commonplace, even in the shifting occupational scene of the United States, that sons tend to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. If opportunities were completely open, and if no other factors of influence intervened, the probability that a son would have the same job as his father is the probability that anyone would have a job. But there is a cultural influence at work, particularly in the family, and it operates unevenly. As Gross (1958:148) remarks, "the family is the medium through which cultural imperatives are brought to bear on the growing child. It is not then surprising to learn that a considerable part of his job horizon is defined for him by his family. A major question is how many occupations the individual's family knows about or is sympathetic towards". But in the choice of priesthood, we do not see this direct inheritance because of the rule of

celibacy for priests.

In the estate system of the middle ages, the serfs had little freedom of occupational choice, but they did have some; a few were able to enter the Church, become soldiers, or run away to towns (Caplow 1978:215). This is nowhere uncommon.

Introducing the essay, "The American Occupational Structure: Patterns of Movement" of Blau and Duncan, Paul Blumberg (1972) comments on an important myth of the American Class system, which holds that equality of opportunity exists here. Hence anyone with sufficient motivation can work his way to the top, regardless of social origins. This is proved by the American business elite who, by their own efforts, rose from humble origins to the pinnacle of power, wealth and prestige. They disprove it by citing studies and argues that innumerable studies have demonstrated that this myth is not and never was accurate.¹

¹ To cite only one example, in the early 1950's Fortune magazine studied the social origins of 900 highest paid executives of 300 of the largest U.S. corporations and found that 75 per cent of these men came from homes where the father was either a businessman himself or a professional. Less than 8 percent of the business leaders came from working-class homes. And of the younger executives (those under fifty years of age), only two and one half percent had working-class backgrounds.

The information on the occupations of the U. S. senators' fathers show that "the senators were sons, with only a handful of exceptions, of men possessing upper and middle class occupations. The children of low-salaried workers, wage earners, servants and farm laborers, which together comprised 66 percent of the gainfully employed in 1900, contributed only seven percent of the post war senators." (The Editors of Fortune, The Executive Life, Garden City, NY: Doubleday Dolphin Books, 1956, 34-5; in Paul Blumberg, ed., (1972:497), The Impact of Social Class, (New York: Thomas Y.

Gilbert and Kahl (1982:153) seem to agree with Blumberg (1972) when they say:

There are limits on free competition because the stratification variables reinforce one another and because occupation, money, connections, and values are interdependent and through the family are partly passed on from one generation to the next.

4. Developmental Theories

a. Ginzberg's Theory²

Ginzberg and others (1951:11-15) thought that there are four important variables that play a significant role in the choice process. The first is the "reality factors," those social and economic forces which determine the environment into which an individual is born, in which he grows up, and to which he must react when he starts to think about his future occupation. In short, what role the environment plays in the choice process.

The second variable is the influence of the educational process. We know that an ever larger number of the desirable positions in our society can be filled only by those who have

Corwell Co.).

²Donald Super (1953) in his article, "A Theory of Vocational Development," in The American Psychologists, Vol. 8, (May):185, wrote that each of the elements in the theory of occupational choice put forth by Ginzberg and his associates had already been set forth by psychologists doing research in this field.

successfully completed a long period of formal training.

The third variable is the emotional determinants, because the choices are made by people who are always under the influence of powerful emotional needs and desires.

The fourth variable to be considered is the role played by values in the decision making process.

But these four variables did not provide the elements out of which to build a general theory of occupational choice.

Ginzberg and others (1951) developed a comprehensive theory to permit the identification and analysis of the major factors in the vocational decision making of the individual. They recognize three major factors involved in it: the self, reality, and key persons. There are eight subcategories: capacities, interests, values, time perspective comprising the self and family, environment, world of work, and life plan, comprising reality.

The basic elements of the developmental theory of occupational choice are three: "it is a process; the process is largely irreversible; compromise is an essential aspect of every choice." The process of occupational decision making could be analyzed in terms of three periods: fantasy, tentative, and realistic choices.

According to Ginzberg and others (1951:186), the period of fantasy choice (before age eleven) is governed largely by the wish to be an adult; the period of tentative choices beginning at about age eleven, is characterized by the

individual's recognition of the problem of deciding on a future occupation. The solution must be sought in terms of probable future satisfactions rather than in terms of current satisfactions. During this period, the translation is still almost exclusively in terms of subjective factors: interests, capacities and values. During the realistic period, beginning at about age seventeen, the translation is so heavily weighted by reality considerations that a synthesis is difficult. The individual recognizes that he must work out a compromise between what he wants and the opportunities which are available to him.

The general theory they propose could be summarized as follows. First, occupational choice is a process which takes place over a minimum of six or seven years, and more typically, over ten years or more. Secondly, since each decision during adolescence is related to one's experience up to that point, and in turn has an influence on the future, the process of decision making is basically irreversible. Finally, since occupational choice involves the balancing of a series of subjective elements with the opportunities and limitations of reality, the crystallization of occupational choice inevitably has the quality of a compromise (Ginzberg et al. 1951:198).

b. Super's Theory

Another psychologically oriented approach has been the self-concept theory, of which **Super** is the chief proponent (Super, 1953 and 1963). In expanding Ginzberg's framework, Super changed the emphasis to the life span rather than limiting attention to the adolescent period. The key notion of this approach is that a person strives to implement his self-concept by choosing to enter the occupation he sees as most likely to permit him self expression.

Falk (1975:64) thinks that developmental theory is an interdisciplinary approach, but is characterized by stages of development (which are approximately consonant with the life-cycle and maturation) during which the individual increasingly tends to crystallize his eventual occupational choice, partially as a result of a series of compromises about decisions affecting choice of attainable occupation.

5. Roe's Personality Theory

Writing from the perspective of personality theorists, Roe (1957:212-218) took the position that career choice ultimately reflects the impact of personality and personality development. The most crucial period in personality development occurs in early childhood. She suggested that "the relationships between early experience, attitudes, abilities

and interests, and other personality factors ... affect the ultimate vocational selection of the individual." There are a series of parent child interactions, occurring in the context of various genetic differences, which influence the development of need hierarchies resulting in two basic interpersonal orientations, either toward or not toward people. These two basic orientations in turn lend themselves differently to careers. Those careers which grow out of an orientation toward people include those in the fields of service, business contact, organizations, arts and entertainment, and general cultural area. Those occupational fields which tend to be the result of orientations "not toward people" include scientific, technological, and outdoor careers.

6. Rogers theory

Rogers (1966:217-224) theory is very related to the present research. The question Rogers wants to answer would read: "What are the characteristics of the family process whereby the occupational (or career) role is developed in the child position of the family system?" The analysis of occupational role development might best be seen in terms of a "flow model."

Any specific occupational or career outcome has certain prerequisites which if incorporated into the role of the

actor, provide him with the capabilities for carrying on that occupation. These prerequisites might include talent, skills, training, sensitivities and orientation of particular kinds. If these prerequisites are not attained, the actor will be unable to respond with the appropriate role behavior as designated by the norms for that role. Therefore, certain "inputs" must be injected at points throughout the role sequence of the developing occupational role. An appropriate analogy might be that there are certain "valves" existing along the "pipe line" which either are opened, thus allowing inputs into the flow. The basic analysis then, involves the identification of these inputs and the timing of them along the flow line.

But there are some **limiting factors**. The first set of inputs may be viewed as the initial composition of the flow. These may be seen as primarily limiting factors in that they predispose certain valves along the flow line to be automatically closed. They would include the basic characteristics of the neonate actor such as physical capacities, mental capacities and sex. The failure to inject a key input at the appropriate time would automatically close subsequent valves, thus narrowing the possible occupational outcomes at the end of the flow. These inputs are viewed as providing, either directly or indirectly, the basis of a cumulative set of norms which ultimately will define the occupational role of the actor in the society.

The family contributions, that is the family inputs, to the continuing flow may be categorized into those having to do with the **structure** of the family, those having to do with the **process** and those having to do with certain **conditions**. Family structure could be varied like, nuclear, modified extended and extended family; husband dominant, wife dominant, autonomic and conflict, allied with family power, division of labor, sex stereotyped, cooperative, parallel. It is probable that the structural variables develop different occupational roles.

The first thing to examine in the family process is the emotional climate setting of the families in the same family cycle category. The areas of family orientation include traditions, values, beliefs, goals, intellectual environments, ambition, responsibility and the like; orientations to teachers, school, work setting etc. These factors define the "postures" of the family and provide both subtle implicit influence and those which are more explicit.

Family conditions the child grow up with are also important. The variations in work setting are of probable significance in the kind of view of work which will be presented to the child actor. This refers to the "facilitating mechanisms" such as presence of books or other such facilities, income, space facilities, travel and other such factors which would be significant in terms of providing the basis for certain occupational choices.

Another factor in this theory is the social inputs. The

flow line of the occupational development within the family move to the societal inputs and then returns to the flow. We notice here a mediating or "filtering effect which the family has in utilizing these extra-familial influences. These are **societal interaction** inputs. Family utilizes these contacts in order to instill certain attitudes toward desirable or undesirable work roles. By the same token, work experience might be used by the family in either negative or positive way. Societal **conditions** help to see how the fact of their relative status in that community is utilized in opening or closing certain values which contribute to the accumulating set of norms which define the occupational role.

7. Other Theories

Thomas (1956) relates occupational choice to labor market factors as they influence what occupations exist and what occupations will be available. Trait and factor theories are derived from a psychology of individual differences in which persons are "matched" with jobs (see Katz 1963, and Williamson, 1965). Need-drive theories conceptualize individual needs as a force from which "the individual's behavior ... directed toward satisfying his needs is typically envisioned as being goal-directed" (Zaccaria 1970:27). Holland (1959; 1966; 1973) postulated a theory that most people will be discovered to be working in fields congruent with their

personality orientation (Osipow 1975:12; Falk 1975:64).

The range of the above theories is varied and includes economic, psychological, vocational, and sociological perspectives. But as Falk (1975:63-64) remarks, these theories are somewhat narrowly conceived and evince their own determinism. Several researchers have done work using the developmental approach which is somewhat more macro in scope, with implicit recognition of processual-systemic linkages. Blau, et al., (1972) are notable for outlining a model which is really quite inclusive of elements thought to be related to occupational choice, and it is they who gave much emphasis to the role of compromise in making an occupational choice.

Some of the occupational choices are not deliberate decisions but are the natural outcome of the education and socio-economic background of the family. It is possible to observe the influence of certain abstract factors, such as values, attitudes, personality structure and images as they bear on the decision process. There are influences of the diverse aspects of his life, such as his status in the community, the rewards, especially money and power for the enjoyment of material goods and services.

PREDISPOSING CONDITIONS AND SITUATIONAL CONTINGENCIES

It seems appropriate to examine how the two categories - predisposing conditions and situational contingencies -

explained by Horrigan and Westhues (1971:229-237), fit those who choose priesthood. The predisposing conditions, according to them, are the basic characteristics of social background and personality which define a man as a potential candidate for priesthood. The situational contingencies are the more immediate circumstances which in some proportion help the potential candidate to choose priesthood as his occupation.

a. Predisposing Conditions

The propensity toward religion in India today is one such predisposing condition. Most of the people believe in God and perform some kinds of religious ceremonies and these may have a positive influence on the choice of the priesthood. Vallipalam (1989:102-103) puts it as follows:

Religion is considered to be an integral part of the life of the people of India. This country has given birth to and nurtured a number of religions and religio-metaphysical systems down the centuries. Ancient rishis, holy men of India, by their close contact and communication with God and by their austerity, simplicity of life and profound religious experience have handed down to this land a rich and unsurpassed spiritual heritage. ... Religious attitudes and practices have changed a lot in the West but this is not the case in India, at least not to any significant extent. Even Christianity, otherwise so much westernized, finds itself at home in this traditionally spiritual atmosphere of Indian Society.

On the other hand, the American Catholicism, according to Herberg, which was initially in North America an ethnic-

religious minority quite distinct from mainstream culture has now become a legitimate facet of "American religion," so that being a Catholic is today congruent with acceptance of basic North American values (Herberg 1955:86). This does not imply, of course, that the Catholic priesthood as a specialized occupation requiring celibacy is also wholly congruent. Williams (1951:chapter XI) argues that Americans seem generally agreed on the importance of three core ideas: equality, freedom and democracy. Catholicism warmly accepts and promotes these core ideas; but has difficulty in endorsing their practice as we see it today in the United States. For example, the Church is not a democracy and democratic practices are not seen in the Church. So too, freedom and equality are very little practiced in the Church.

According to Horrigan and Westhues, the predisposing conditions existing today in the United States adversely affect many young men's choice of the priesthood, because

some divergence from American values with respect to sexual behavior is expected in the prospective priest. ... Many researchers have pointed out the increasing emphasis on personalism and a "hang-loose ethic" among today's young people; this emphasis is in opposition to institutional and bureaucratic values. Because the Catholic priesthood is a bureaucracy, the contemporary youth culture is negative towards the choice of the priesthood as an occupation.

b. Situational Contingencies

Horrigan and Westhues (1971:232) define situational contingencies as the "factors concerning the contact with the Church itself." There is a more elaborate definition they give in the context of the choice of priesthood, namely, that situational contingencies are

the more immediate circumstances which result in some proportion of these potential seminarians actually making the choice of the priesthood as his occupation.

This expands the situational contingencies to home, parents, church, school, etc..

When the priests look back to the period before their decision to become priests, many of them seem to cherish vivid memories of the exemplary religious life of their parents and other members of the family; their continued encouragement for the participation in church related activities; the guidance, the training and inspiration they received from parents, priests, nuns, seminarians, good friends, neighbors and teachers; all of which have immensely influenced them to take the decision to become priests. Many of their parents also confirm it.

All the Indian priests and majority of the Irish American priests lived with their parents and siblings until they went to the seminary. Some American priests lived in dormitories or in apartments prior to their decision. In many Indian homes and in few American homes, there also lived other family members such as grandparents, aunts or uncles. Many of them

were very religious and devout persons who prayed daily, participated in church related activities, had contacts with priests and scrupulously observed all the rules and regulations of the Church.

Another common and important form is the Catholic school, which has been shown by Fichter (1961:41), to yield a higher proportion of seminary students than has the public school from its Catholic students. He says:

Youngster who attend Catholic high schools have a greater possibility of entering religious career than do those who attend non-Catholic and public high schools.

There has been a positive correlation between attendance at Catholic school and support for a priestly vocation for one's son. Greeley (1977:161-162) says that in 1974 this relationship became negative for Irish Catholics. If the change in sexual ethics had an especially deleterious effect on those Irish who had Catholic education, one would expect that those who had Catholic education would be significantly fewer in 1974 than the rest of the Irish if they were now in disagreement with the church's sexual ethic. Those Irish, who had turned against the Church's sexual morality, from Catholic education would have turned even more sharply against support for a priestly vocation than the typical Catholic respondent.

Greeley agrees that there has been a positive correlation between attendance at Catholic school and support for a priestly vocation for one's son, but he says that in 1974 this

relationship became negative for Irish Catholics because of their disagreement with the sexual ethics of the Catholic Church. Greeley writes:

Those Irish who had turned against the Church's sexual morality from Catholic education would have turned even more sharply against support for a priestly vocation than the typical Catholic respondent. In 1963, eighty-three percent of the parochial school-educated Irish were ready to say that they would be very pleased if their son would choose the priesthood - seventeen percentage points above the national average. By 1974 this percentage had fallen to forty-five - five percentage points below the national average. Almost all of the change was in that large group of Catholic-educated Irish who reject the church's sexual teaching. This shift of attitudes seems to have had a particularly harmful effect on attitudes toward the clerical vocation among those who were its strongest supporters - the Catholic-educated Irish.

Conclusion

There are many theories of occupational choice. But the psychologically oriented approaches of the self-concept theory of Super and Roe, that a person strives to implement his self-concept by choosing to enter the occupation he sees as most likely to permit him self expression, seems to be true in the choice of priesthood also. The most crucial period in personality development occurs in early childhood. Hence the relationships between early experiences, needs, attitudes, abilities and interests, and other personality factors affect the ultimate vocational selection by an individual.

The theory developed to some extent by Rogers also seems

to be more relevant to the present research. He explains how the parents go about presenting their children the world of occupations and work. This socialization process over time arises out of the fact that it is this process which instills in the child the concepts of acceptable roles and aspirations with regard to himself and with whom he interacts.

We also observed that the predisposing conditions in India and the acceptance of the values of today's youth culture will not pose much difficulty to young men to choose Catholic priesthood as a way of life. On the other hand, though being a Catholic is today congruent with acceptance of basic North American values, the Catholic priesthood as a specialized occupation requiring celibacy is not wholly congruent with the American values. But the situational contingencies were helpful for both the Indian and American priests, but more for the former, in their decision to become a priest.

We think that there are many influences on an individual's choice of the priesthood. We limit our research to those influences which a family exert on the individual in his choice of priesthood. My assumption is that the members of the Indian families have more positive influence on their sons' choice of the priesthood, compared to that of the members of the American families on their sons' decision to become priests.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHOICE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD: THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY IN THE INDIAN AND THE AMERICAN CONTEXTS, AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

A. THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The interviews with the priests, their mothers and fathers were all done individually. Their answers are analyzed, compared and contrasted in the following chapters to identify facts and to arrive at a clear picture of the family background of the priests and subsequently to learn the influence of their families on the young men's choice of priesthood. In the present chapter we examine the impact of socio-economic factors.

In order to understand the influence of parents on their son's choice of priesthood, it is necessary to probe into the various aspects of the parents' life, such as their thinking about social status, financial status, educational, and occupational conditions. (The works supporting the arguments, for example, Fichter, (1961); Peterson and Schoenherr, (1978); Blasi, (1975); Vallipalam, (1989); Nelsen, (1980); etc., are explained in different places in this dissertation.) We examine each of the points to learn what role these situations

might have played in the prospective priests' choice of the priesthood.

Status Consideration in India

As we have seen in the fourth chapter, until a few decades ago, candidates to priesthood in India generally came from respected families and the priests enjoyed great respect and high status in the society. On the other hand, it may not be wrong if we say that today the families get some higher status due to their priests. Many candidates, now a days, come from economically and socially lower class families and consequently the respect and status of priests in the society have also gone down compared to that in the past.

Yet, the Catholic priests are held in high esteem by their fellow believers and fellow citizens in India and tend to have more social power among them. They enjoy a relatively higher status in the society than people in many other profession. They are respected by people of other religions and are invited to and given prominent role in social and religious functions. Priesthood, as such, is very much respected in India. While his precise position is difficult to measure scientifically, the social status of clergymen is colored by two thousand years of Church history.

Maybe, partly due to this prominent position and the respect shown to priests, three quarters (fifteen out of

twenty) of the Indian priests in the sample said that respect shown to priests and their status in the society have influenced their choice of priesthood. Here are some priests' responses:

Whenever a priest visited our home we were all happy. My parents respected him very much and even cooked special food for him. This might have influenced me, because you see a man respected by others. Who on earth doesn't wish to be respected? The high social status of the priests also might be behind my decision to become a priest.

The respect, love and hospitality the priest got when he visited homes and the praise of the priest in family conversation were also very influential.

Status Consideration in America

Prospective priests and their family members in America held priests in high esteem. Some of the priests in the sample thought that

priests are the important figures in the community who come into people's life at important times such as wedding, funerals and who had tremendous amount of prestige among the people.

But surprisingly, only two American priests mention any status consideration in their choice of the priesthood. They thought that by becoming a priest they would have high status and would be treated with great respect. One of them said:

The status of priests really influenced me. I thought I had a low status and I wondered how could I become a priest. My sisters and brothers get angry with me now, because I enjoy a high status.

But, other priests do not feel that way. One such priests said:

We were taught that every one should be treated with respect. When the priests visited, our home was cleaner and we were told not to misbehave in front of them. The fact that priests were treated with high respect in no way influenced my decision to become a priest.

Most of the parents expressed the idea that every occupation is important. For them it is not the occupation that matters, but how a person fulfills the duties of his occupation. However, they think that priesthood was the best occupation for their priest-sons. One mother said:

To look into the nobility of an occupation we have to consider so many things. Priesthood is sublime if he has a calling to that. And it was best for Jimmy for he had that calling.

One father said:

While he was in grade school, Donald said he wanted to become a priest. He had his devotion and loyalty. He had the leadership qualities. He was active. He loved the children and promoted so many activities for them.

Some parents said that priesthood is a most noble vocation but they do not seem to attach any special status to

it nor do they think that their sons chose priesthood because of the status it carries. This is clear from the way the parents look at it. One mother said:

"Priesthood can be a great occupation. A parish is people oriented. It is also like business: there is power, position, advice and business, but in a smaller scale."

One father said:

"He decided to become a priest. If that makes him happy, that is his occupation. He must choose his occupation."

When analyzing what is discussed above, we see that some of the Indian priests came from families where priests were highly respected and their good qualities praised. In many homes the parents did not criticize priests nor did they allow any one dare do that in their presence. This, some of the priests said, had influenced them in choosing the priesthood and is in accordance with the finding of Blasi¹ (1975:70) that those who perceive priests positively evaluated tend to think of themselves becoming priests.

Quoting some previous studies, Blasi (1975:67) writes:

The general public rarely sees the priestly status being negotiated or tested, but it perceives a position which in every way possible, is set apart (Fichter, 1961:120; Johnstone, 1972:36), perhaps matched in occupational

¹The concern of Blasi study is with the meaning or consequence of a religious status upon minors' adopting or not adopting the Catholic priesthood perceived by eighth and ninth grade levels (thirteen to fifteen age bracket) attending parochial schools and non-academic or religion classes in a rural area in Missouri. The questionnaire method was used and received 471 usable responses.

mystique only by the medical doctor.

While fifteen of the twenty Indian priests were influenced by status consideration, only two priests (one-tenth) in the United States had any thought of social status of the priests as an influential factor behind their decision. The reason that an overwhelming majority of the American boys were not after status consideration might be that in modern American city where many of the laity are characterized by higher education, successful occupation, and even wealth, the gap between the status of priest and layman has disappeared. While perception of social status of priesthood was a great influential factor behind the decision of the Indian priests, it had only very little impact on the American priests in their decision to become priests.

b. Financial Situations

It seems that the economic conditions of the family and the occupational opportunities have some impact on the choice of any occupation. Let us look how they affect the choice of priesthood.

Financial Conditions and its Considerations in India

One would agree with Vallipalam that it is very difficult to determine the income of the Indian rural families because the income depends on the crops and the crops depend on the weather and the price of the product is not stable.

If we ask Indians about the financial condition of their family the answer might be as "we are ordinary" or "we are rich" or "we are poor." In other words, they mean "average," "above average" and "below average," respectively. What does each group have in mind when saying they belong to a particular income group? According to Vallipalam, those families who have their own houses with three or four rooms, sufficient land to cultivate, the ability to educate their children up to college level and sufficient money to spend on all the other basic needs, are said to be "average". The same could be applied to families that live in urban areas except that they may not own their own houses or land like those living in the rural areas. "Above average" financial position implies possession of a large house with many rooms, a television set, a dependable job and/or many acres of cultivable land. "Below average" would include those economic groups which do not have sufficient money for their basic needs (Vallipalam, 1989:110-11). This criterion is followed in the present study also.

According to their parents, economic hardship might have played some role in the case of two priests in their choosing the priesthood. For example, in one instance, the priest and both of his parents speak of their financial difficulty. But the priests categorically denied any financial problem behind their decision to become priests. One of them said:

"The financial problem was never a reason for my choice of priesthood. If that were the case, I would have chosen some other career."

But both of his parents think that the financial situation at home has played some influence in their son's choice of priesthood. His mother felt:

"We had a hard time in his childhood. I don't rule out that our financial situation might have motivated him to make a decision to become a priest."

His father said:

Compared to our other families and neighbors, I was in a very bad shape. I didn't try to solve the problems or to create a better atmosphere. Besides, I was an alcoholic. These might have created an inferiority complex in him and to escape this situation he might have decided to become a priest.

Table 2. Perception of Indian Seminarians of all rites according to Vallipalam (1989:110)) and that of the Syro-Malabar Priests in the present sample regarding their Family's Financial condition.

	Below Average	Average	Abov Average
All seminarians	10%	67%	23%
Priests	20%	70%	10%

The Vallipalam survey of the Indian seminarians shows that around twenty-three percent of the seminarians are from the above average income group; ten percent from below average and sixty-seven percent were from average income group. This holds good for the Churches of all the rites. (Vallipalam, 1989:110). The average income group families in the present sample, according to the Indian priests, is about the same as the larger survey results, but the above average and below average income groups differ slightly. The difference might be due to the fact that the financial condition of the Syro-Malabar families are different from that of the families of the other two rites.²

²For example, twenty-seven percent of the parents of the seminarians of the Latin rite hold either a good or very good financial position while only eighteen percent of the parents of the seminarians of the Syro-Malabar rite hold the same position. No parents of the seminarians of the Syro-Malankara rite are

Table 3. Perception of the Indian Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers about their Family's Financial condition in the present sample.

	Below-average	Average	Above-average
Priests	20%	70%	10%
Mothers	50%	50%	00%
Fathers	60%	30%	10%

In the present study, the perceptions of priests regarding the financial situations of their family vary somewhat from that of their parents. According to the priests, only ten percentage of the families belonged to the above-average income group. Twenty percentage of the families were below-average and seventy percentage of the families belonged to the average income group.

In contrast, fifty percentage of the mothers said that they were below-average and another fifty percentage of them said that they belonged to the average income group. The fathers had a slightly different view. Ten percentage of them said they belonged to above-average and thirty percentage of them said they belonged to the average income group. The rest, 60 percentage, thought they were below-average.

financially very good or very poor. (Vallipalam, 1989:110).

Only in five cases were there full agreements among the priests and their parents. In all other cases the priest or his mother or his father perceived it differently. In seventy percentage of instances there were agreements between two of them and more often it was between the father and the mother. The reason seems to be that both of them knew the realities of life and were facing them together. They not only knew the problems but also they shared them.

All the parents of priests were hard working people. Most of them had financial difficulties while the children were growing up. The majority of them said they "were of average means compared to their neighbors who had worse times." A very few parents think that their financial difficulty might have motivated their son's decision to become a priest. The sons anticipated the financial burden of their parents to give them a good education which is the basis of securing a good job and a bright future.

Compared to the parents, the sons perceived their families financially better, or at least, they said so. Why? It could be that they were not aware of the real problems of the family. Many of the parents confirm this when they said that they tried to satisfy their children's legitimate needs and that they did not want them to feel badly about the family's financial difficulties. Another reason for the sons' answer could be that they did not want other people to know that they were from a poor family. Or again, they wanted to

convince others that the financial situation in no way influenced their decision to become a priest.

Financial Conditions and its Considerations in America

In America not even a single priest reported any financial motive behind their choice of priesthood. Actually some lost a lot of money because they chose priesthood. The parents also are of the same opinion.

Almost all of the American priests had summer jobs while they were in school and/or in college. After their school/college studies six of them pursued other careers; a few had reached high positions and were earning high salary. One of them said he abandoned his job when he was about to be appointed to a high position with a salary of one hundred thousand dollars a year. Another tried to become a priest but after sometime left the seminary and went to school for further studies. Then he joined the labor force and later returned to become a priest. He says:

As soon as I left the Franciscans, I went to the college (four years) and finished it, I worked for a savings bank for two years and then a number of years for Chase Manhattan. Then I was recruited to the Westing House. But I felt my existence empty. At the end I decided to become a priest.

Table 4. Perception of the American priests, their Mothers and their Fathers about their Family's Financial condition.

	Below-average	Average	Above-average
Priests	35%	35%	30%
Mothers	30%	40%	30%
Fathers	30%	40%	30%

According to the priests, thirty-five percentage of families were of average, thirty-five percentage below-average and thirty percentage of families were above-average income group. One of the priests of the above-average income group families said, his family had difficulties because of the stinginess of his father. He said:

"My father was a surgeon and mother a successful business woman. She gave up the job when she had the first child. We had no financial problem, but my father behaved as if there was a lot of difficulty. He wouldn't even buy a new car."

Some said that all their needs couldn't be satisfied. One priest says:

Financially we were lower middle class. We ate well and led a simple life. We didn't have any luxury; we had only a small apartment and we shared lot of things, we even passed on our clothes one to the other.

Regarding the perception of their financial condition both parents have perfect agreement. Close to one-third (thirty percentage) of them said they were below-average; two-fifths of them (forty-percentage) consider themselves as average and less than one-third (thirty percentage) of them think they were above-average income group. Some of the mothers who said they were below-average, also mentioned that it was very tight for them. One mother said:

"Financially it was not an easy time, so many mouths to be fed, clothes to buy; there was no extra income; children worked as paper boys."

However, all the mothers think that there was absolutely no influence of financial consideration in their sons' choice of priesthood. One said:

"It won't be true to say there was any financial motive in his decision."

All the fathers also affirmed that their financial condition in no way affected their sons' decision to become priests. American parents generally agreed to their sons' perception of their financial condition.

When we look at the financial statements of the sample in both countries, we see some differences. We apparently notice a high level of agreement among the American priest, his mother and father. Compared to this, the agreement in this regard is less among the Indian priest, his mother and father.

Secondly, Indian and American priests and their parents speak of the financial condition based on the standard of their respective country. An average family in India and in the United States are substantially different. For example, as we have noted above, an average Indian family will not have a car, a television, a room for each individual, a dining room, running water, a refrigerator, a washer or dryer; but all of which are generally found in an average American family.

Only few parents in India wanted their sons to become doctors or engineers, though these occupations would give them a chance for a better life. The main reason for it seems to be the poor financial condition of the family. Parents needed a substantial amount of money to send their children to medical and engineering colleges and they did not have it. As we have seen very few Indian priests came from rich families. The majority of homes had more children than the parents could take care of. The parents and the priests were aware of the dim chance of furthering an education and a brighter future.

It is possible that some choose priesthood to satisfy their economic opportunities. A child from a poor or an ordinary family would find very difficult to achieve some financial security. Such a one has not much to lose in becoming a priest, but might gain a lot, for example, social status and better conveniences in life. This is in agreement with the finding of Ginzberg and others (1951) who sought to identify the factors which lead individuals to make choices at

variance with the typical pattern of decision-making in our society, in which the individual seeks to maximize his economic opportunities.³

From the interviews and from the economic circumstance, it seems true that the economic conditions of the family had some impact on the choice of the priesthood in India. Some of the Indian parents seem to say, though the priests categorically denied it, that the economic hardships might have played some role in the case of a few priests in their choosing the priesthood. On the same ground, it seems that in the United States, not a single priest had any financial motive behind his choice of priesthood.

c. Educational Background

Education is a very important variable in the choice of any occupation. We attempt here is to look into the educational level of the Indian and American priests and their parents to help us understand its impact on the choice of the priesthood.

³ The authors studied the development of individuals who were planning to enter the ministry. To their considerable surprise, they discovered that the significant factors in the occupational plans of future ministers, Protestant and Jewish, were not very different from those of other professional groups. From studying the background of the future ministers, they found that in most instances he comes from a family in moderate economic circumstances, but one that is frequently sensitive to considerations of prestige (Ginzberg, *ibid*,. 14-15).

Educational Background in India

In most cases the prospective priests had just passed the tenth grade at the time of their decision. "I decided to become a priest after passing the tenth grade and I was fifteen years old then," one priest said. Another recalls: "While in the tenth grade I had the plan to become a priest and contacted a recruiting priest. I told others about it only after passing the tenth grade." Just one had twelve years of schooling. It happened so because the bishop asked him to go for two years college before he joined the seminary. The average schooling is ten years. Nineteen out of twenty had only tenth grade, the bare minimum education in India to get into any minor seminary.

Eight of the priests went to Catholic schools and six others studied partly in Catholic and partly in public school. Two attended Hindu school and the rest went partly to Hindu and/or Christian schools and/or partly to public school. The grammar school was mostly chosen on the basis of closeness of the school to home. In the choice of high school, character formation and academic achievement of the school were also taken into consideration.

Many of the priests said that their parents would have sent them to college for further studies, had they not decided to go to seminary at that time. As to, "further their studies," some others said they "don't know" or they "didn't

think of that." A few answered negatively about their chances of further study. Though their sons did not agree, some of the parents denied any chance of sending them for any further education.

Though, most of the priests were positive about the chances of getting a good education while at home, the fact is that none of them tried it. This might be due to the parent's financial situation as well as to the limited job opportunities. Since they were bright students and of superb character, they sought the first opportunity, and that was to become priests.

Ginzberg and others (1951) think that considerable charitable funds are available to subsidize the education of the minister, and those who avail themselves of the opportunity frequently indicate that they want to use these educational advantages in order to rise in the social and economic structure. This observation might be right in many instances especially in India.

Table 5. School attended by the Indian Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers.

Only Catholic Partly Cath. Only non-Cath.

Priests	8	6	6
Mothers	16	3	1
Fathers	8	2	10

Table 6. The level of Education of the Indian Priests, their Mothers their Fathers.

Gr.sch. Some H.S. H.S. Some Col. Col + Aver.yrs.
(10 yrs) (12) 13-15 16 +

Priests	0	18	2	0	0	10
Mothers	18	2	0	0	0	5
Fathers	15	5	0	0	0	5.3

Most of the Indian mothers (sixteen) studied in Catholic schools. One went to Christian and the rest to public school. Their average education background of five years, ranged from second to tenth grade. Only one of them had passed the tenth grade and very few passed the seventh grade or more. The

schooling of the fathers also ranged from the second to the tenth grade, that is, while very few of them had ten years of schooling, a few others had only two years. Their average schooling is five and one-half years. Eight of them went to Catholic schools, nine went to public schools, one to Hindu school and two went partly to Catholic and partly to public schools. In seven homes all three - the priest and his parents had their whole schooling in Catholic school.

Educational Background in America

Table 7. School attended by the American Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers.

	Only Catholic	Partly Cath.	Only non-Cath.
Priests	15	5	0
Mothers	12	4	4
Fathers	15	4	1

Table 8. The level of Education of the American Priests, their Mothers and their Fathers.

Gr.sch. Some H.S. H.S. Some Col. Col + Aver.yrs.
(10 yrs) (12) 13-15 16 +

Priests	0	0	9	8	2	14
Mothers	4	1	4	6	5	12.2
Fathers	2	2	6	3	3	14

Nine of the American priests had High School (twelve years), one had one year college, eight had Bachelors degree (four years of college) and two had Masters degree (six years of college). The average education was fourteen years. Among them one studied in seminary high school and three others in college seminary. The majority of them went to Catholic schools and/or colleges and a few to non-Catholic schools and/or colleges all through their life. The rest went partly to Catholic schools or colleges and partly to non-Catholic schools.

Regarding the parents' education, on one end of the scale we see one-fourth of the mothers having a college degree and another quarter of them in the other end with just grammar school. The rest of the mothers graduated high school and half of them have a certificate in business, secretarial or in health care areas. Most of those who had only grammar school

education lived at that time in Ireland. High School was not accessible to some of them there. But the educational level of the Irish American priests' fathers, in general, was high. Two of them had doctorate - one in medicine and the other in law; two had Masters; three had Bachelors; three had some college or technical studies; six had High school; two had some high school and two had grammar school education.

Among the American parents, three-fifths of the mothers went to Catholic schools and colleges; one-fifth attended public schools and colleges and the last one-fifth went partly to Catholic and partly to public schools and colleges. But three-fourths of the fathers attended Catholic schools and colleges through out their studies; one attended public school only and the rest went partly to Catholic and partly to public schools and colleges.

Fichter, who compares the earlier surveys and also the latest one of priests, states that they show clearly that the parents of younger priests have considerably more formal education than the parents of older priests. He also remarks that the family background, and particularly the educational achievement of parents influences children in their future occupational activities (Fichter 1961:66-68).

The average education of the Indian priests is ten years (up to the tenth grade education is free), while that of their counterparts in the United States is fourteen years. While three-fourths (fifteen) of the American priests attended only

Catholic schools for their education, just half of that number (eight) of the Indian priests attended only Catholic schools. The number of priests who went partly to Catholic and partly to non-Catholic schools are about the same in India and in the United States. But while more than a quarter of the Indian priests attended only non-Catholic schools, none of the American priests went to only non-Catholic schools.⁴

The formal education of the Indian parents is also very low (five years of schooling for the mothers and five and one-half years for the fathers), compared to that of their American counterparts (twelve and one-fourth years of schooling for the mothers and fourteen years for the fathers). While over three-fourths of the Indian mothers attended only Catholic schools only, but only for a few years, three-fifths of the American mothers went to Catholic schools. On the other hand, while just two-fifths of the Indian fathers attended only Catholic schools, three-fourths of the American fathers

⁴In this connection a word about dating might be appropriate. Dating is a normal behavior pattern of the American teenage culture. Some American priests in the present sample said they had dated and a few of them dated on a regular basis. One of them had even fixed his date for marriage. It was very painful for two of them to part with their girl-friends. Fichter quotes Poage, a vocation expert, who says: "any teenager who is seriously thinking of becoming a priest or religious has no business dating the opposite sex."

Since female companionship is incompatible with the Catholic priesthood, one might doubt that dating prevents some American young men from choosing the priesthood. But no Indian priest dated because it is not a part of the Indian culture.

As to the impact of coeducation, Fichter says that the great majority of those who follow the ecclesiastical vocation agree that coeducation, that is proximity of boy and girl, had little or no effect on religious vocation.

did go to Catholic schools.

Though the formal schooling of Indian parents is very low, their influence on their sons in the choice of priesthood seems to be high. It might be that due to their lack of education, the parents were not exposed to other occupations or they thought that some of the occupations they were familiar with, were beyond the reach of their sons. At the same time, they were very familiar with the priesthood and encouraged their sons to choose it. The American parents, on the hand, were more educated and were exposed to a variety of occupations and the children became exposed to them.

d. Occupational Situations

It seems that opportunities have some impact on the choice of an occupation. How did they affect the choice of priesthood.

Occupational Situation in India

The majority of the fathers of the priests had more than one occupation. In most of these instances they had a small farm and a small business. Two had supervisory jobs, one in a factory and another in an estate. The former also had a part time job of a sacristan and the latter had a small farm. In all other cases the father had only a farm where most of the

work was done by himself and his family. They hired workers only at peak seasons of work. All the mothers of the priests were housewives. A few of them also helped their husbands in their farm.

But in India, none of the prospective candidates to priesthood, during or after their schooling, sought out a job or gave any serious consideration to any occupation other than priesthood. The reasons the priests gave for this phenomenon are varied. A majority of them expressed the view that it was not yet time to think along that line. One priest said:

"I was so young to think of any occupation."

Another said: "Priesthood is most sublime, rewarding and superior to other states of life."

"Priesthood is a treasure," still another said.

A fourth one remembers that he "loved to become a priest from the very early age."

These statements cannot be taken at their face value. Taken for granted, that it was not yet time to think of an occupation, why did they choose priesthood which is an occupation? They may not have any substantial answer to it. But why did they not go for further study which would have made them mature and equipped for a job? The difficulty both to get admission to a college and to meet the college expenses prevented them from it.

That the boys did not look for a job during their school days could be due to two reasons. First, it is not customary

for school children to work in India. This is to enable the children to concentrate on their studies. Secondly, the country as a whole has not enough jobs even for the graduates, forget the school children.

But, why did they not seek for a job after their high school/college studies? Excessive population and unemployment are very serious problems in India. Millions of people are unemployed while millions of others are under-employed. About unemployment in Kerala, Miller (1988:610) wrote: "In a work force of eight million people, unemployment is eighteen percent. One in three persons is underemployed."

The occupational choices are also limited in India and this has created a grave situation in India. Miller (1988:610) quotes former and the present Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. K. Karunakaran, as saying: "Our 228 colleges produce thousands of degree holders every year. But we don't have enough industry to accommodate them." This situation might influence some to choose priesthood which imparts some status and security to their life.

Parental domicile and their occupation play a significant role in the choice of priesthood in India. More boys from agricultural and small trade settings choose priesthood.⁵

⁵In his survey (1985) of Indian seminarians Vallipalam (1989) found that sixty-seven percent said that their fathers were farmers; a little over twenty-one percent said that their fathers were employed in different fields such as clerical work, police, military service, railway, mechanics, tailoring and postal service; six percent small traders; five and one-half percent teachers and a few had their parent dead or without any occupation. As to their

Kuriedath (1990:2) suggests that both the farmers and the retail business people live in villages where very often a peaceful and calm atmosphere prevails. They have a regular life; they depend more on God and pray regularly. Farmers are usually traditionalists. All these might help them to grow religiously and this in turn, could influence the attitude of the children.

The above description is true in the Indian context and that could be the reason for more vocations in India compared to the United States where life is mostly urban, very tense, fast and busy. People have no time to pray. They are exposed to all kinds of cultures, worldliness, worldly pleasures and they depend more on technology rather than on God (Kuriedath 1990:2). These factors are not likely to enhance choosing priesthood and even if some one chooses it, it is not easy for him to persevere in it. And consequently there are fewer vocations in the United States.

Here one might ask a legitimate question. Why do more vocations in India come from the rural areas while the same in the United States is from the urban areas? The answer is, as we have seen, in India more boys from agricultural and small trade settings choose priesthood because about eighty percentage of the people in India live in the rural areas. But

mothers, close to eight-two percent of them did household work; almost six percent were teachers and twelve and one-half percent of the mothers were also employed in different jobs like nursing and clerical work (Vallipalam, 1989:109).

in the United States most vocations come from average Catholic families and they are settled in urban areas. A survey shows that only thirteen percent of the vocations come from rural areas; the same survey also reveals that only less than twenty percent of Catholics live in rural areas (Fichter 1961:36).

Occupational Situation in America

We learn from the American priests that some of their fathers were employed in different companies and some others were practicing law or medicine. There were two lawyers, one surgeon, one supervising engineer, one union leader, one funeral home director, and one in an executive position. Three held low level managerial positions. The rest worked in the transit system, police or fire departments or in sales.

All the mothers, except one, who worked all through her life, were home makers while the children were growing up. One-fifth of the mothers said they were home makers all through their life. The rest said they worked before they had children. They were employed as secretaries, nurses, nurses' aides, program manager, waitresses, teacher and in agencies or companies. Some of them stopped working when they became pregnant and never went again to work. Others stayed home while children were growing up to take care of them and their home. About two thirds of those in the work force went back to work once the children were on their own. One mother said:

"I worked for eight years before marriage, then raised the kids and went back to work. I was at home when the children were growing up."

All the parents agreed to what their sons told about their occupation.

As seen above, many of the Indian fathers were farmers or small traders or both and only a couple of them had small paid jobs. None of them were professionals. In contrast, none of the American fathers were farmers or traders, but many of them were professionals and were well employed. Mothers of both countries, except one American, were full time home-makers when their children were growing up. Some American mothers worked before they had children or after the children are grown up. All Indian mothers always remained home-makers.

In India, none of the priests in the present sample, sought out a job or gave any serious consideration to any occupation other than priesthood. Not one of them had any job experience of any kind nor did anyone of them work in rectories. Again, in the present sample, there was not a single one who chose priesthood as a second career.

On the other hand, almost all of the priests in the United States had summer jobs while they were in school and/or in college. One quarter of them worked in rectories which gave them an opportunity to know the life and works of priests. One out of every three, after their studies, pursued other careers and chose priesthood as a second career.

A few (five) priests made several attempts before their final entry to the seminary which eventually led to their ordination to priesthood. The priests and their parents mentioned this. One priest said:

"When I was seventeen I decided to become a priest and went to college level seminary, but after a semester I left because of depression. Then again I went to the seminary and after a year I left the seminary because of the problems in the seminary. After my graduation I reapplied to the seminary but they said no. So I went to work. I produced and hosted a radio program in New York while doing my Masters in Theology. I was in the class of sacraments and I realized how good the Lord is and then I decided finally to become a priest and again I reapplied to the seminary. I was twenty-four then."

Another priest tried three times but his first two attempts were to become a religious Brother.

None of the Indian priests made such repeated attempts to become priests, mainly because in India if a person comes out of a seminary it is not easy to get in another one. A few of the American fathers also had tried religious life before they married, but none of their counterparts in India did so.

e. Family Size

The number of children in the family might favorably or unfavorably affect the choice of priesthood. What role did

family size play in the Indian and American contexts in the choice of priesthood?

Family size in India

There is no data as to the family size in India, comparable to Fichter's data in the United States. In the present sample the average number of children in the family is six and four-fifths, $(137/20)$ ranging from three to thirteen. Both priests and their parents claim that the family size did not influence them. One unique feature in the present sample is that none of the last born chose priesthood.

There are three families with four or fewer children; ten families with five to eight children; four families with eight or nine children; and three families with ten to thirteen children. Half of the priests come from families with five to eight children. While only three from families with four or less children chose priesthood, seventeen from families with five or more children did so. Large families also give their share to priesthood. In the family where there were thirteen children, three of them chose priesthood and two did so in another family of seven children.

To the hypothetical question, if there was only one son would the parents have allowed him to join the priesthood or would the son choose it, the answer also was hypothetical to a certain extent. The recollections of priests go as follows:

"I believe that I would decide to become a priest and my parents might have allowed me."

"My parents would have difficulty to allow me to become a priest."

"I never thought of it; but my parents might not have allowed me."

"If I insisted my parents might allow me."

However, in most such cases the parents would not happily allow their sons to choose priesthood.

Three-fourths of the mothers said that they would permit their sons to become priests even if they were only sons. A few mothers said in such a situation they "will not object if he insists." One mother said she "will not allow him." Some others said they "don't know what he would decide in such a situation."

Family size in America

The average number of children in the American family, as given by the priests, was five (101/20), ranging from one to eleven. Two families had just the priests. Eight families had three or four children; eight had five to seven children; one had nine and the last had eleven children in the family. The average number of children in the family was five (99/20) according to mothers and again five (97/20) according to the fathers, both ranging from one to eleven. Though we see a

little difference, there is no inconsistency in the number of children in the family since the sons included their deceased siblings also, some of whom each parent excluded.

Parents did not stand in the way of their sons' decision to become priests, because as they said, it was not their life and their decision but their sons'. They said, they would be happy if their sons were happy. Most of them thought that their sons would make the same decision even if they were the only sons. And that is exactly what we see in the case of two only sons in this study. A few of the parents said that they didn't know what their sons would have decided. The sons also thought that it was up to themselves to make the decision about their life and they would have made the same choice even if they were the only sons. They believed that their parents would respect and support their decision. Priests and their parents in both countries said that the family size did not influence their decision.

Table 9. Number of Children in the families of priests in India and in the United States.

	1	2-4	5-7	8 +	Average
India	0	3	10	7	6.8
U.S.A	2	8	8	2	5.0

An average priest's family in the United States has five children apiece. This means that, given the potential total of vocations in all these families, the smaller families (five children or fewer) are actually more productive of vocations than are the larger families. Half of them are from families with one to four children and the other half from families with five children or more. We also observe that at one end ten percent of priests come from families with only child and at the other end the same number comes from families with eight children or more.

In India more vocations come from families with five children and more. More than four-fifths of them come from such families and less than one-fifth come from families with four children and less. While there is no one who chose priesthood from the families of only child, about one third of priest came from families of eight children or more.

Why are the large families in the United States not the source of more vocations? Fichter (1961:36) provides two explanatory remarks. The first is that the large family is often the poor family, and families with below-average income are not the source of more vocations at the present time. The second explanation is that large families are typical of the rural areas, and rural Catholic families do not contribute their share of vocations in proportion with their percentage of the total American Catholic population.

Fichter's finding is: In the United States families with four children or fewer contribute about one third of their total to the service of God, while families with five or more children contribute only about one-fifth of their children. His conclusion that larger families do not contribute their proportionate share to the priesthood seems to be true both in India and in the United States even today. But in some cases we see families contributing their share. For example, from a family in India with thirteen children, three boys chose priesthood and three girls became nuns. In another family of seven, two boys chose priesthood and one girl became a nun.

However, contrary to the United States, we notice that more priests in India come from large families. The reason for this difference might be that while an average family of Indian priests has a little less than seven children, an average United States family has five children. The size of the Indian family is larger than that of the American family. However, the American vocation family itself was twice as large as the average American family.

An important difference between Indian and American culture and family system is also to be considered. The general societal sanction in India is that the children take care of their parents when they get old. Consequently there is less chance for an only son to become a priest in India because he might feel obligated to continue the line of his family and care for his parents. The parents also might want

him to stay with them. Hence, not only is there no direct parental encouragement in their only son's choosing the priesthood, there is discouragement in his choosing the priesthood in India. Vocation recruiters would also discourage the only son from choosing the priesthood. This in no way to disown that the only son in the family does not choose priesthood in India.

On the other hand, in the United States unlike in India, when the parents get old, they do not depend on their children. They take care of themselves or there are other agencies to do that. The parents in the United States do not stand on the way of their sons in their decision to become priest, because as the parents said, it was not their life and their decision but their son's. Consequently there is opportunity to discourage sons choosing priesthood. Studies (Fichter 1961:35) show that five per cent of the candidates for seminary and convent come from families in which they were the only child. There are, in the present sample ten per cent American priests who were only sons in the family.

f. The Age of the Priest at the Time of Decision

How old were the priests when they decided to become priests? Is it the same in India and in the United States?

The Age of the Priest at the Time of Decision in India

About one-half of the fathers and one-third of the mothers in India in the present sample thought at one time or other that their sons would become a priest. The time the parents thought so varies from pregnancy to just before the son's decision. This shows how eagerly the parents wished that their son would become a priest. A few parents, however, never thought that they would have a priest-son. Some had no answer to this question.

In almost all cases the Indian boys made their final decision to become priests during or after their tenth grade and immediately thereafter they joined the seminary. They were then fifteen or sixteen years old and all of them were living with their parents. In just two cases, one was eighteen and the other was twenty when they joined the seminary. But in both of these instances the decision was taken before. In the former case, the bishop asked him to go for two years college before he joined the seminary and in the latter case, the priest recalls that he "failed several times in the tenth grade and he had to pass it," to get an admission to a seminary.

The Age of the Priest at the Time of Decision in America

As to the American priests three of them decided to choose priesthood when they were seventeen and seven when they were eighteen; another seven decided so in their twenties and three in their thirties. Some of the prospective American priests were not living with the parents at the time they made their decision. Many of the American parents did not think that their sons would become priests before their sons' decision.

When we contrast the Indian and the American priests in age and related areas, we observe some differences. At the time of their decision to become a priest, the Indian priests were much younger than their counterparts in the United States. While the average age of the prospective Indian priests at the time of decision was sixteen years old, the age of their American counterpart was twenty-two and one-half years old.

What are the possible reasons for this age difference at the time of the choice of priesthood? One main reason is that in India one need only ten years to finish High School while it takes twelve years in the United States. Another reason, according to Fichter (1961:32-33), is the specialization of work in the American system has multiplied the potential of occupational choice so that American youth tend to delay their decision about their permanent life. It is true in every other

profession. The tendency is to delay specialized training for the life's work.

According to Rogoff (1957:122), the earlier the decision, the more influence the parents have on the decision; the later the decision, the lesser is the influence of the parents. His study of the factors involved in the decision to study medicine seems to reveal that "the younger the age at deciding to study medicine, the greater the importance in the decision attributed by students to their fathers." If, as Rogoff suggests, the father-son ties are generally closer in early adolescence than they are when the sons grow older, it is reasonable to expect that these family ties, and therefore family influence, would be even greater in the case of the Indian boys because they are younger (fifteen to sixteen years) than Rogoff's prospective medical students. Hence, the Indian priests will be more influenced by their parents than the American priests who took their decision when they were older.

Some of the American priests chose priesthood when they were living independently and there had not been much occasion for parents' encouragement or discouragement in their sons' choosing the priesthood. Hence, the parental influence on those children's decision was less. But those who had just High School when they decided to become priests stayed with their parents and had the occasion for encouragement from the parents. In contrast, all the prospective priests in India

stayed with their parents until they went to the seminary and consequently the parents and other important others had a greater say in an individual's decision.

While many of the Indian parents thought at one time or other that their son would become a priest, fewer American parents thought, while their sons were young, that their sons would become a priests.

Summary

We have discussed in this chapter the various socio-economic factors such as, status, finance, education, occupation and age that might affect the choice of priesthood. These variables seem to have some impact on certain Indian and American priests in their choice of priesthood.

Some of the priests were influenced by the considerations of status. But there is a great difference in proportion in both countries. While three quarters Indian priests said that respect shown to priests and their social status in the society have influenced their choice of priesthood, only one-tenth of the American priests think so.

It appears that the economic conditions of the family had some impact on the choice of the priesthood, according to the Indian priests and their parents. Economic hardships might have played some role in the case of very few priests in their

choosing the priesthood though the priests deny financial problem of any kind behind their decision to become priests. On the other hand, in the United States, there was hardly any financial motive behind their choice of priesthood. Actually some lost a lot of money because they chose priesthood.

In most cases the priests in India had just passed the tenth grade at the time of their decision. Nineteen out of twenty had only tenth grade, the bare minimum education in India to get into any minor seminary. The average education of the American priests is fourteen years. Compared to the Indian priests, more American priests attended Catholic schools.

The formal schooling of Indian parents also is very low compared to that of their American counterparts. More Indian mothers attended Catholic schools than the American mothers. But more American fathers, in contrast to the Indian fathers, attended Catholic school. But the influence of the Indian parents on their sons' choosing the priesthood seems to be greater than the American parents.

The Indian fathers were farmers or small traders or both and only a couple of them had small paid jobs. But none of the American fathers were farmers or traders, but most of them were employed and rather well employed. Mothers of both countries, except one American, were full time home-makers when their children were growing up. Some American mothers worked before they had children or after the children are grown up. All Indian mothers always remained home-makers.

Almost all of the priests in the United States had summer jobs while they were in school and/or in college. One quarter of them worked in rectories which gave them an opportunity to know the life and works of priests. One out of every three, after their studies, pursued other careers and chose priesthood as a second career. On the other hand, in India, none of the priests sought out a job or gave any serious consideration to any occupation other than priesthood. None of them had worked in rectories. Again, there was not a single Indian priest who chose priesthood as a second career.

Parental domicile and their occupation also play a significant role in the choice of priesthood. More boys from agricultural and small trade settings choose priesthood in India. But in the United States, more priests come from urban settings. Living close to a church was also helpful in both countries in choosing priesthood.

The average number of children in the Indian family is six and four-fifths and in the United States it is five. Both priests and their parents in India and United States said that the family size did not influence their decision. The size of Indian families was larger than that of the American families; but the American vocation family itself was twice as large as the average American family.

The younger the individual at the time of his decision the more the parental influence on his decision and the older the individual the less influence the parents have on the

person. At the time of their decision to become a priest, the Indian priests were much younger than their counterparts in the United States. Hence the Indian priests had more parental influence on their decision. While one third of the mothers and few the Indian fathers thought at one time or other that their son would become a priest, fewer American parents thought so while their sons were young.

All the prospective priests in India stayed with their parents until they went to the seminary. So too, in the United States, those who had just high school when they decided to become priests stayed with their parents. Both of them received encouragement from the parents. But in the United States, for those sons who lived away from their parents, there had not been much occasion for parents' influence in their sons' choosing the priesthood.

The important difference between Indian and American culture and family system in this regard are to be considered. The general societal sanction in India is that the children take care of their parents when they get old. Consequently there is less chance for an only son to become a priest in India. Parental encouragement in their son's choosing the priesthood in this instance also is nil. The parents have a great say in their children's decision.

In the United States, unlike India, elderly parents do not depend on their children. They take care of themselves or there are other agencies to do the service. Ten percent of the

candidates for seminary come from families in which they were the only child. Parents in the United States did not stand in the way of their children's decisions because as they said, it was not their life and their decision but their children's.

their parents, the financial, educational and occupational problems and decision at an younger age have all influenced the Indian priests in their choosing the priesthood while these influences were minimal or nil on their counterparts in the United States.

CHAPTER 7

THE CHOICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD: THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY IN THE INDIAN AND THE AMERICAN CONTEXTS, ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

B. THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL RELIGIOSITY

In the previous chapter we assessed the impact of the social and economic factors on the Indian and American priests on their choice of priesthood. In this section we examine the impact of parental religiosity on the sons's decision to become a priest.

Let us start by explaining what religiosity is. According to McGuire (1987:87) religiosity refers to the intensity of commitment to the belief system of a religion, as expressed in institutionally identifiable attitudes of behaviors, for example, receiving communion or agreeing with the group's moral condemnation of certain actions.

But could the religiousness of the parents become an influential factor in one's choosing the priesthood? As we have seen in the first chapter, it may be expected, says Fichter (1961:49) that pious youths come from pious families, and in some respects research surveys have shown this is true. About one quarter of seminarians in the U.S. come from homes

where the family rosary is recited regularly. Almost nine out of ten youths say that there were traditional religious symbols, like crucifixes and sacred pictures, displayed on the walls of their homes. Previous studies have shown, say Hemrick and Hoge (1986:22), that a typical seminarian's parents attended Mass regularly and are moderately involved in other Church activities.

The various studies show consistently that prospective candidates for the seminary are more than ordinarily faithful to religious practices. Catholic teenagers have better record in this regard than do Catholic adults, but the vocation prospect is even better than the average teenager. Four out of five future seminarians attend Mass more than once a week, with forty-six percent going daily. Seven out of ten receive Communion more frequently than once a week, with thirty-six percent being daily communicants. Two out of five went to confession every week. Fichter (1961:47-48) thinks that the statistics point to the conclusion that the more faithful an adolescent is to religious practices the more likely he is to be a genuine prospect for the full time service of God. But the piety itself is germinated as a result of parental guidance.

The parents interviewed think that they helped their sons to grow religiously and an overwhelming majority of Indian and American priests in the present sample, in their turn, also believe that their parents helped them to choose priesthood

mostly by their example of strong faith, good life, devotion to God, commitment to the Church and by their guidance. They saw their parents as role models of religiosity. Most priests say that before asking the children to do or to practice something, their parents first did it or practiced it.

The priests remember that their parents created and maintained a pious, peaceful, caring and loving atmosphere in the family. They also report that their parents went to church and they prayed; that they respected and loved priests; that they participated in church related activities; they respected and helped others. All of these are the external expressions of the religiosity of the parents and which, the priests say, helped them to choose the priesthood. Let us examine here how these variables worked favorably to their choosing the priesthood.

1. The Family Atmosphere

It seems necessary to define at the very outset what we mean by a helpful and an unhelpful family atmosphere. The family atmosphere is rated helpful, according to Manalel (1984:92), if the priests and parents report that the family members pray ... and that there is great concern for their children's religious upbringing. The family atmosphere is considered unhelpful if the priests and his parents report that the family embraces one or more of the following problems

between the husband and wife: divorce or impending divorce, separation, tension and constant quarreling, alcoholism, psychosis, neurosis, criminal behavior, difficulty in getting along with each other and lack of prayer life.

Family atmosphere in India

First of all, one could identify a religious atmosphere in Indian homes, whether they be Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Inside the homes, one could see a prayer room. There are also the Holy Bible, holy water and other pious articles. Outside and inside walls of most of the Indian homes are adorned with religious pictures, statues and other holy objects. Most Catholic homes in India have holy objects such as the crucifix, the statues and pictures of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. Hence the whole physical setup of the family tends to create some kind of religious thought or feeling. One priest remembers:

"Holy objects created in me awe, respect and a sense of security."

Some Indian priests reported that their parents were very careful to create a religious atmosphere at home. The priests recollect how their parents were role models for them. One Indian priest describes his parents as "people with deep faith in God, prayerful, loving and exemplary." Another said:

"I still remember that my father, even though he came late, he ate or went to bed only after his own prayer."

Three-fourths of the priests in the Indian sample report that they had a memories of a pleasant childhood. The parents did their best to create a good religious atmosphere in the family. Most of the priests remember their homes as happy, peaceful and prayerful one where everyone loved and cared for each other. The typical answers the priests gave about their home atmosphere are like the following:

"My family atmosphere was a very religious and very devout one."

"My parents created a religious atmosphere at home."

"My parents' ideal life and our family atmosphere did help me a lot to choose priesthood."

One finds negative models as well. One Indian priest said that the religious life of his father was not good when he was growing up. He says:

My father who was a 'don't care type,' became a very good person when he fell seriously ill. His religious life was not very good when I was a child. He went to Mass very rarely and most often he didn't participate in the family prayer. He came home very late. He turned to God and led a prayerful life only when he fell ill. My mother went for Sunday Mass and was very regular in the family prayer. My father's religious life was neither helpful nor unhelpful to me.

Table 10. The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and priests and their mothers and fathers.

	Beneficial	Not beneficial	Not mentioned
Priests	15	4	1
Mothers	11	2	7
Fathers	12	1	7

Many of the things the mothers and fathers recall in the interviews are more or less identical to those their priest-sons recollect. More than half of the mothers and about the same number of fathers of the present sample agree with their sons' perception of their family atmosphere. One mother said:

"The home atmosphere was very calm and quiet. There was no fight among anyone of us. The children obeyed us."

Another said: "Our family was very peaceful; there was no fight of any kind."

Here is a sample answer of a father: "The family atmosphere was loving, peaceful and conducive to good upbringing of the children."

In most of the families the atmosphere was good. One of the members (the priest or his mother or his father) or in some cases two of them and, in few instances, all of them said that the family atmosphere was good. In all the cases where the priests said their family atmosphere was good, except in

one instance, they were supported by both or at least one of the parents. There are two instances where both parents said that the family atmosphere was good but their sons did not mention it. It might be that the sons overlooked it. More than half of the mothers and half of the fathers also spoke of the good atmosphere of their family. However, it was the priests who, more than the parents, were conscious of the importance of good family atmosphere.

In three Indian homes there were alcoholic fathers. In one of these cases the priest said that his alcoholic father created few problems for the children since he came home after they went to bed. But the father said that his wife used to weep, telling him that he was squandering all the money in drinking. However, it did not create serious problems for the peaceful life of the children. This was a large family with eight children.

The atmosphere of the other two Indian families was very poor. Their alcoholic fathers gave real trouble to the family members and made their lives miserable and unhappy. In these instances the mothers did their best to compensate for the troubles by their intense love, care and instruction. The mother and the son complained that the father was squandering the money in drinking and did not take care of the family. The father isolated himself from other members of the family. The family atmosphere was tense. The father also spoke of his mistakes. The grandfather extended some help to this family.

In another case, the priest and mother described the situation in emotional terms. But the father said the family atmosphere was good. He did not want to admit to being "a bad person." Here let me quote the priest at some length:

My home atmosphere was not a happy one especially because my father was an alcoholic. He came home with a cruel face and fought with my mother. I was very much terrified and I kept a distance from my father. Returning home after drinking, my father still wanted to drink more and use to send me to buy alcoholic beverages for him. Out of fear I bought it for him. On such occasions I didn't eat my dinner. There grew in me a hatred and revengeful attitude towards my father. I didn't feel that he loved me or others. My mother cried on such occasions and I also cried with her, but she would console me. We daily prayed together for his conversion. My mother's love and prayer life helped me to overcome my father's lack of love and support.

In the other case, the priest, his mother and also his father, admit that the father created problems in the family.

Why did these young men wanted to be priests? They themselves give many reasons. All three of them wanted to get respect from the people and status in the society. One thought he could achieve it by becoming a good speaker, another by becoming a great leader and third by the very functions a priest performs. All of them thought that priesthood was the stepping stone to their goal. There were also additional reasons behind their decisions. The first one said his parents were very strict and he thought he could get more freedom by becoming a priest. His intention behind his decision was to escape from his parents. He also revealed that he had made a

vow to become a priest which he wanted to fulfill. The second priest said that his mother and grandmother very much wanted him to be a priest and also that he had an attraction to priesthood from the time he was six years old.

The third one wanted to be a spiritual leader to bring people to God and to help to solve the problems in families. He said that he decided to become a priest "to escape the family problems," "to help other families like my own," "to achieve a status in the society," and possibly to brighten his otherwise dim educational opportunities. His father also described the problems that were in the family, his lack of caring for the family, the financial difficulties, the consequent inferiority complex and the dim academic future of his son, all of which might have influenced his choosing the priesthood. The parents of the other priest denied any such possibility. It seems that these three priests chose priesthood to escape the unpleasant situation at home and/or to please their mothers.¹

One thing to be specially noticed here is that there were

¹Psychologists Barry and Bordin hypothesize that a son could identify in part with their mother, particularly when the real father is absent or inadequate. The mother becomes closer and more influential on the son. These authors have found some support for this hypothesis from a collection of biographical material on clergymen and from a review of empirical studies. There have been reported instances in which the candidate decided to enter priesthood or religious life because he wanted to please his mother. It can also happen that a candidate seeks admission to seminary because he wants to escape from some unpleasant situation at home. (Manalel, "Priestly Vocations and their Family background," *ibid.*, 91.)

only three families in the sample which had four or fewer children. Of these three small families, one had not apparently any problem nor was there any particular motive behind the son's choice of priesthood. The priests from the other two families said that their family atmosphere was not good and they had an unhappy life at home. In both of these cases the fathers were alcoholics and both priests had much in common. They were very close and attached to their mothers and had an aversion to their fathers; both prayed with their mothers (and one even cried with his mother) for the conversion of their fathers; neither of them ever wanted to inflict the least pain on their mothers, but they wanted to please them; both entered priesthood to a certain extent to please their mothers who very much influenced and wished that their sons become priests.

Of three small families in the sample, two were unhappy. On the other hand, out of seventeen large families, with five to thirteen children, there were only two families that were somewhat unhappy. This suggests that there exists some relationship between small families and unhappiness in India, but the small sample precludes such conclusion.

Some Indian parents and one son did not mention their family atmosphere. There is no special reason to point out why they did not do so. However, from the context of their responses it is clear that those families had an atmosphere beneficial to the positive upbringing of the children.

Lone Exception

One priest describes his family in which children were divided into father's and mother's groups. He reports that there was verbal abuse between his mother and father and some of the children supported the mother and the others sided with the father. Let me quote his words:

There was groupism in my family - father's group and mother's group. I belonged to the father's group. My father never directly encouraged this groupism but indirectly did. My elder brother was on mother's side; the sisters switched camps. I was mentally far away from my parents and even wanted to be away physically as well. In this situation I was more close to my young brother. My mother always accused my father of everything. He often questioned my sincerity and sometimes brutally punished me. I have told my parents that they are not my parents but aunt and uncle. Unfortunately, my siblings thought I was the favorite of my father. But it was not so. My parents were very strict and they never allowed me to even go to a movie nor gave me any freedom. Actually I hated them until my tenth grade.

This priest stands out in many ways. He said that he hated both of his parents and that there was groupism in his home. No other priest said things like that about their families. (Two other priests had serious problems with their fathers, but they were very close to their mothers,) He decided to become a priest, in his own words: "to get more freedom," and thus "to challenge the strictness of his parents" and to "fulfill a vow" that he would become a priest if he passed the tenth grade.

What could we possibly say about the above priest's statements? This is a single case in the whole sample. Perhaps, the priest who had a bitter experience in his childhood at home wanted to dissociate and distance himself from his family and consequently all their influences in his choice of priesthood.

Family atmosphere in America

Most Irish American homes are not any different from other homes in their neighborhood. One might not be able to identify from externals the religiosity of American homes as one might do of the Indian. While majority of the Indian homes had holy objects, only a quarter of the Irish American families, according to the priests, had holy objects, like crucifixes, statues and holy pictures. Only a few mothers mentioned having religious objects at home. They don't seem to have given much importance to such things.

One American priest recollects: "Mom and dad taught me to pray and also the philosophy of the cross and suffering. They were very religious."

Still, another American priest said:

My mother, of course is a religious person. She said her rosary every day. And she says it in her spare time and when we walk into her room, she is at the window and very often we knew that we were interrupting her rosary and realized that she was praying. You know she was a witness.

One American priest and his mother said that the father was not good example for the children because he developed a drinking habit. Another American priest, but not his parents, reported that his father stopped going to church for some time and so was not giving an encouraging example to the children. He remembers:

"My father was not a practicing Catholic when we were growing up and in that point he was not much in terms of a religious example to us."

Table 11. The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the American priests, their mothers and fathers.

	Beneficial	Not beneficial	Not mentioned
Priests	5	1	14
Mothers	9	4	7
Fathers	3	0	17

Only few Irish American priests and very few of their fathers mentioned their family atmosphere. But close to half of the mothers stressed that the family atmosphere was beneficial to the children while they were growing up. One mother recollects:

"The family atmosphere was calm and quiet. I created a spiritual atmosphere at home by playing religious music. I

talked about Jesus and helped them the way I know."

Though more than half of the mothers and a majority of priests and their fathers did not mention the family atmosphere, we have no reason to think that it was unhelpful. Perhaps, there was nothing special to be mentioned. However, from the interviews it was apparent that the family atmosphere was beneficial in most of the cases.

There are only four instances of family atmosphere, mentioned either by the priests or their mothers, which are not very conducive in choosing the priesthood. One priest and his mother reported that the alcoholic father created problems for the family and the priest dropped out from school in the eleventh grade. Two priests had some complaints about their mothers. One of them said that his mother was an alcoholic and she use to beat him a lot. The other said that his mother was a mess and she had more children than she was able to take care of. But these two mothers and fathers kept silent in these regards. Another priest mentioned that his father was not a practicing Catholic and in that sense he was not an example for the children.

From what we learn from the above four priests, at least four of the American parents did not help much to create a helpful family atmosphere. But none of the fathers said negative things about their family. Perhaps, the pride of the man might not allow him to say things detrimental to himself. So too, none of the mothers admit any fault of theirs. Neither

are there reasons to doubt the accuracy of the priest's account. There are only few cases of negative family atmosphere in both countries.

Table 12. The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American priests.

Priests	Beneficial	Not beneficial or not mentioned	Total
Indian Priests	15	5	20
American Priests	5	15	20
Total	20	20	40

The chi square is ten and there is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of the Indian and American priests regarding the family atmosphere. The significance level is .05. While the Indian priests think that the family atmosphere is beneficial to their choosing the priesthood, the American priests do not either mention or consider it so.

Table 13. The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American mothers.

Mothers	Beneficial	Not beneficial or not mentioned	Total
Indian Mothers	11	9	20
American Mothers	9	11	20
Total	20	20	40

In the case of Indian and American mothers there is no statistically significant relationship with regard to the perception of the family atmosphere. The chi square is .004. Mothers of both countries seems to think alike about the family atmosphere in relation to their choosing the priesthood.

Table 14. The atmosphere of the family as perceived by the Indian and American fathers.

Fathers	Beneficial	Not beneficial or not mentioned	Total
Indian Fathers	12	8	20
American Fathers	3	17	20
Total	20	20	40

Indian and American fathers do have statistically significant relationship with regard to the perception of the family atmosphere. The chi square is 8.72 and the level of difference is .05. American fathers, to a far greater extent, do not seem to mention or consider that the family atmosphere was beneficial for their son's choosing the priesthood. But the Indian fathers thought and many mentioned that the family atmosphere was beneficial to their son's choosing the priesthood.

Researchers show the importance of a supportive family atmosphere for the choice of priesthood. In one group of religious candidates that was studied by Weisgerber, Manalel (1984:92) reports, sixty-six percent of the men whose family life was poor, dropped out; in a larger group inclusive of the first and followed up somewhat later, the percentage was seventy one. Curcione (1973:271) concludes:

A much greater percentage of those who perceive their families as highly religious are committed to, or at least undecided about the priesthood, suggests, the religious home atmosphere is conducive to generating a desire to pursue the priesthood.

We found only four American priests in the present sample who said that their family atmosphere was unhelpful.

The finding is in agreement with the data of Ginzberg and others (1951:14-15). He has called attention to the "early determination" of choice. He says:

Almost without exception, the future minister was exposed from earliest childhood to religious experiences and institutions, and these were reinforced in puberty and early adolescence. As a first approximation, they could say that without the opportunity to live in - and respond to - a strongly religious environment, at home and at school, few would think seriously of the ministry as a lifework. Among Catholics, the specifically religious values appear to be more important in the decision-making process than the humanist values more commonly found among Protestants and Jews. And great importance must be ascribed to the emotional support and education that the young Catholic boy usually receives from a sympathetic and helpful priest.

Marjorie Fallows' (1979:97) findings are also similar.

She states:

Research evidence suggests that traits of an ethnic heritage are often unconsciously transmitted in the intimacy of family: role expectations for parents and children, religious values, goals to be sought and methods suitable for seeking them, a sense of self-identity, and a place in the scheme of things. Although every family is a unique mini-culture, seldom open to the scrutiny of outsiders and to some extent defying generalization, each such unit is also a conduit for the transmission of cultural values and, insofar as it is supported by an ethnic sub-society, a powerful carrier of ethnic tradition.²

About the same issue Vallipalam (1989:103) writes:

The family atmosphere has tremendous influence on the life and conduct of a child. Religion, once the family is

that ²One may however choose to support these findings called "The St. Thomas Christians" because they claim their spiritual ancestry and faith from St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. So too, the Irish are very proud of saying that they are Irish Catholics. Both cultures try to hand over their tradition to the coming generation. The existence of numerous Indian and Irish Christian organizations here in the United States prove this fact.

exposed to it over a period of time, becomes for the family a totality within which each member lives and moves and has his being.

Parents in this interview sample, attended Mass not only on Sundays but also on weekdays. (It is generally assumed that in India there are only very few Catholics who do not attend Sunday Mass. I did not come across any survey in this field, but I can testify to it with my own experience.) So too, though only about forty percent of the Americans claim church attendance once a week, all the American parents of priests, while their children were growing up, and later also, attended Sunday Mass regularly and also on some weekdays. There were no exception to this. But it appears that the Indian parents participated in Mass on weekdays more than the United States parents.

Parents' Attending Mass and Other Religious Services

Indian Parents

None of the mothers of the priests in India missed Mass on Sundays and days of obligation. A sample answer to this point is:

"I cannot go to church on weekdays, but I never omitted Mass on Sundays and days of obligation."

Half of the mothers attended Mass two days a week and made their confession once a month or more. Another one fourth

of them attended Mass daily. Here are the responses of few of such mothers: "I went to Mass every day. Usually in our home everyone goes to Mass everyday, needless to say during the Advent and the Lent."

"Despite my manifold house chores I never omitted daily Mass."

Mothers also participated in annual retreats or prayer meetings or seminars. All of them were very deeply committed to living their faith.

The fathers, including the alcoholics, did not miss Mass on Sunday or on days of obligation. (One priest, however, said that his alcoholic "father rarely went to Mass," but the father, though he said that he was not a pious man as now, claimed that he "went to Mass at least on all Sundays.") One of the fathers said:

"While the children were growing up I was more earnest in my religious life than today. Now I am physically weak."

Another said: "I was practicing my religion in the best way possible. I couldn't attend weekday Mass, but I never omitted Sunday Mass."

About a fifth of them went to Mass daily. Their typical answer was: "I attended Mass every day."

A third of the fathers attended Mass more than twice a week. One of them said:

"I never omitted Friday, Saturday and Sunday Masses."

Half of the fathers made their confessions and received

Holy Communion frequently and the other half made them twice or more a year.

"I made my confession at least once in two months and also prepared well for holy seasons especially for Christmas and Easter," said one.

About half of the fathers and about the same number of mothers regularly participated in annual retreats, adoration of the Blessed Sacraments, prayer meetings and other such practices which were arranged by their own or neighboring churches.

The parents and other members of the family insisted and expected that the children participate in Holy Mass on Sundays and days of obligation. Even if the parents could not go to church on weekdays, they encouraged and some time insisted that their children go to mass daily or at least a few days a week. Here are some sample answers of the priests:

"Parents asked everyone of us to go to church and would wake us up for it. There was no special insistence on me."

"I was very happy to participate in Holy Mass. Holy Eucharist is the center of our life, we were taught."

At least for one priest daily Mass was like an addiction. He said:

Rain or shine, I went daily to church and I was happy to do so. One day I did not go to church just for the sake of not going. And that was a very bad day for me. I had terrible feeling of having done something wrong. That was a day of vacuum. I felt myself as a square rat in a round hole.

For a few, attending morning Mass was a family activity. One priest said: "All the members of my family went to Mass daily. We also received Holy Communion whenever we participated at Mass."

Participation in Mass helped to develop a religious sense in the children. Many testify to this fact. One said:

Celebration of the Holy Mass, especially the consecration created some mysterious feelings in me. The bell and the prayers at that moment might have contributed to that experience.

Another said: "At that time (consecration), I thought I would become a priest."

Still another priest who was an altar server said:

I had a mysterious and awesome feeling about the celebration of the Mass, though the language - Syriac - which was the medium of liturgical celebration at that time was unknown to me.

Irish American Parents

All the priests, their mothers and fathers, except one father, went to Mass regularly on Sundays and days of obligation and received Holy Communion. The parents also insisted that their children go with them for Mass. Half of the mothers and one third of the fathers mentioned that they made frequent, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly confession. They also instructed their children to do the same. The one who

stopped going to church for some time did not tell about it but his wife and son revealed it. He was not providing a good example for the children, the priest said.

Though many wanted to, only three mothers and five fathers could attend daily Mass, but among them there was only one couple. They used to go to daily Mass before their marriage and continued their practice after their marriage. Another quarter of the mothers and two fathers went to Mass more than once a week. A quarter of the priests attended Mass daily. They went to church alone or with their parent. Some of them had to go because they were altar servers.

While they were children, some priests, both in India and in the United States, imitated priests and celebrated Mass at home. This could be a proof how parents' participation in Holy Mass and other religious services influenced them. One Indian priest recalls:

As a kid I used to imitate priests by celebrating the Mass. For vestments I used a small shawl; for bread and wine I used sugar water and broken hosts (his father was a sacristan); for the Missal I used the peoples' Mass book and I invited my younger brother and sister to attend the Mass.

An Irish American priest recollects:

And one thing I would say that when I was seven years I would play a priest. I would set up an altar and take a piece of bread. For several years every year I celebrated my own special Christmas Mass. My father, my brother and sometimes my mother, would participate. I would give them the readings and I would give them a homily and I would say the Mass. And I had plans to stay on. It was when I was seven, eight and nine years old.

Though the American parents also encouraged their children to Mass, it is the Indian parents who seem to be more insistent on this. It appears that the mothers in India and the fathers in the United States are more interested in the religious life of the children than their counterparts.

3. Observance of the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church

Indian Parents

The parents and other family members not only observed the Commandments of God they also claim to strictly observe all the rules and regulations of the Church, like fast, abstinence etc. One mother said:

"As good and law abiding Catholics we followed all the instructions of the Church."

One father answers: "We (members of the family) observed the customary fast and abstinence enjoined by the Church." In many families the parents and others went far beyond the requirements of the rules. They did not eat meat during the whole of Advent and Lent.

"We never ate meat on Fridays and during the Lent," said one mother.

Some other mothers did not even eat fish, egg or even any dairy product during these seasons and especially on Fridays

of Lent.

A few mothers had special fast or prayers and/or other mortifications. One recalls:

"I made the Stations of the Cross everyday."

But only very few fathers had such practices. The parents and other members of the family, indeed, report a strong religious life while the children were growing up. The children were not bound to follow these rules since they were minors. But they also observed them because as one mother puts it:

"They followed our example."

Irish American Parents

Most of the mothers and fathers of the American priests claimed that they observed fast and abstinence and obeyed all the rules and regulations of the Church. The Irish fathers were not behind their wives in the religious practices.

Many mothers and about one-third of the fathers mentioned how specially they celebrated Easter and Christmas.

"Advent and Lent were very big things. I went to Mass daily during Lent and put out an Advent Wreath during Christmas," said one mother.

One father said: "We always celebrated Easter and Christmas and tried to bring home to the children the meaning of those events."

Another father says: "Easter and Christmas were very important. We went for night Mass. And children came with us. We went to church on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday."

The parents of priests of both countries not only observed the Commandments of God they also strictly observed all the rules and regulations of the Church, like fast, abstinence etc. But the Indian parents report that they practiced them far beyond the demands of the Church and much more than the reported practice of the American parents.

4. Family Prayer

Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God. Some make it vocally and some others mentally. Some pray alone and some others in group. It is a practice especially in Christian homes that the members get together daily and spend some time in prayer. Let us examine how did this occur in the Indian and the Irish American homes.

Prayer in Indian Families

Daily family prayer is an integral part of family life in India. All members of the family got together in the evening at a fixed time and prayed. One mother said:

"Without fail we prayed in the evening and all were there

at home for it."

In few cases (three) the fathers were absent and in two instances it was due to their work; but they prayed in private and the children were aware of this. One priest said:

"My father very much insisted on family prayer. But on certain days he reached home late because he had to work late to earn bread for us. On those occasions he couldn't participate in the family prayer. But we knew that he loved prayer very much and that if he couldn't make it with us he always did it privately."

One father said: "Very often I was late returning home from work and I couldn't participate in the family prayer, but I prayed alone." Only one father didn't participate in family prayer and he offered no valid excuse for it. But even he made his little prayer at bed time.

In a few homes they prayed two or three times a day - morning, noon and evening. But at the morning and noon prayers not all members were present. The parents insisted that their children also join the family prayer in the evening. There was no insistence on any one child for any special religious activity. One priest recalls:

"Both parents insisted that all of us pray; there was no special insistence on me."

In some homes there was also teaching of prayer and catechism preceding the evening family prayer. Parents, grandparents, elder brothers or sisters helped the young

children to learn prayers and catechism. After this session others joined the evening prayer. In one home there were two sessions of evening prayer, one by the children at dusk and the other later by the adults. Usually in homes where there are children, it is they who lead the prayer. They take turns on a daily or weekly basis. This was part of their training in prayer.

Prayer in American Families

Prayer seems to be considered personal today, in the Irish American families in the United States. But many parents said that the practice was not so back in Ireland and in the United States a few decades ago when everyone in the family daily prayed together. In the United States there is no insistence at all for daily prayer from the part of the parents. One mother did not even discuss prayer with her children or others in the family. Some priests reported that when they were young, their parents or nuns taught them to pray. Only two families said rosary on a daily basis with everyone there. Half of the families said it either a few days a week, occasionally, or during the months of May and October, because they are the months dedicated to the devotion of the Blessed Virgin Mary. One mother said:

We said rosary with children in the months of May and October and not other times. There was no other family

prayer. All prayed privately before they went to bed. Christmas and Easter were big events. On those occasions we would go to church together and would bring out religion as much as possible.

A few priests, and a few parents said the rosary alone but they are not, in most cases, members of the same family. Some families substituted the grace before meals for family prayer. A majority of the priests, their mothers and fathers reported that they said the grace before and/or after meals. They also said bedtime and morning prayers.

The Indian parents attributed great importance to family prayer and they themselves set an example. They taught their children to pray from the time they were able to speak. Through their daily family prayer parents initiated the children into a life of prayer. But less prayer is reported in American families. Very few homes had the practice of daily family prayer. Prayer was a personal and solitary devotion for Americans.

The Indian parents' positive attitude to prayer, the amount of time they spent in prayer, the importance they gave to prayer, the manner they prayed, their insistence that the children pray and above all, the example of their own prayer life, all very much surpassed that of their counterparts in the United States who considered prayer as personal and left it to the responsibility and freedom of their children.

5. Devotions

Indian Parents

Most homes in India had holy objects such as the crucifixes, statues and pictures of saints, the Holy Bible, holy water etc. They handled these objects reverently. One priest recollects:

"Holy objects created in me awe, respect and a sense of security."

The holy pictures in the homes were mainly of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin Mary and certain saints whose intercession they sought and to whom many priests had great devotion. Another priest said:

"My grandmother and parents paid great respect to these pictures and statues. They lit candles before them."

The parents, especially the mothers, participated in Holy Hour, in First Friday devotion, made stations of the cross, novena prayers to Blessed Mary and to different saints, the rosary to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the rosary to the Divine Love, Vanakkamasam (a month long special devotion to Jesus, Mary, Joseph, souls in purgatory or to some saints).

Children learned from their parents to be devout and to grow strong in their faith. One priest said:

"My parents were very strong in their faith. This helped me to get strong convictions on matters of faith."

Another recollects:

I liked very much to lead the Stations of the Cross in the church and had great devotion to the Holy Eucharist. I loved to say the prayer, 'Most Blessed Sacrament be praised now and forever.' I knelt down even in the street when the Blessed Sacrament was taken to homes.

One of the priests who had a very special attachment to the Blessed Virgin Mary made a statue of her by himself and he says:

"I insisted for permission from my parents to make a special niche on the retaining compound wall to place the statue." He continues:

"I felt Blessed Virgin as my own mother and felt myself praying to her."

"I kept holy water at home because I thought it has some magical power," says another. They learned these practices from their parents.

American Parents

Some parents found time and showed interest in private devotions like novenas, stations of the cross, nocturnal adoration, First Friday devotion etc. Going for adoration, a few of them took along their sons when they were old enough. A few of the fathers (four) were members of the Nocturnal Adoration Society. Half of the mothers had some private devotions. One of them said: "I participated in Holy Hour

once a month - on First Fridays. For years I said the rosary and made stations of the cross every day in private."

Some of the mothers also took their children with them when they went to church for their private devotions. More than half of the priests had some such personal practices. One priest said:

"I remember going to church and participating in the old devotions like the novenas and the exposition of the Holy Eucharist which were popular then."

The parents' practice of and their initiation of the children to devotional practices is common in both countries. The difference between the Indian and American parents is that the former kept more holy objects in their homes while the latter tended to do their devotion in church.

Parents devotional practices have a great influence on their son's choosing the priesthood. This is supported by the researches of Fichter and Potvin and Suziedelis. Fichter (1961) says that the pre-seminary socialization process at home has a tremendous influence on the child. The study of Potvin and Suziedelis observed that the parents' frequent religious practices and devotions have great impact on the children. They found that the vast majority of the parents of the seminarians practiced religion on a level significantly and substantially higher than that which the parents of non-seminarians practiced. They write:

The commitment of the seminarians' parents to the institutionalized forms of religious practice is striking and its evidence of specific religious orientation within the house, which may be conducive to the child's choosing the priesthood as a vocation, a commitment to institutionalized religion (Potvin and Suziedelis:32).

6. Contact with Priests and Participation in Church related Activities

Parents as well as children had many occasions to have contact with the priests in the parish. This contact may take a number of forms, such as when they went to church or when the priests visited their homes, etc. If the priests know the family better, they might invite them to participate in church related activities, for example, to teach religion, to be a lector or a member of the choir, to work in church committees, councils or other associations, to be an altar server and so on. It can happen the other way too. When these people work in such capacities, they come in contact with the priest.

Indian Parents

The contact with priests was a great boost for an young man to choose priesthood. One of the priests shares his feelings and experience in this respect:

My home was at a distance from the parish church. I had to walk about four miles to the church. Since there was another church closer to home we went to that church for

our religious needs. Priests very rarely visited our home and neighboring home since we were living in a hilly place, far from the church. Most often the priests assigned to our parish were very old and they did not care much to come to our home. Once a priest visited and blessed our home. He was interested in us and that really impressed me. The priests of the church where we attended Mass did not visit our home since we did not belong to that parish.

This shows the positive and negative effects of the contact with priests. There was another home exactly in the same situation. But in this case, the priests of the neighboring parish visited them.

Priests in the family or priest friends might visit the homes and the family members might visit the priests. More than half of the Indian priests have another priest who is a very close relative, uncle, brother etc. and in some cases more than one priest. In one instance the family had forty-three priests (all now deceased), of which it had record. The priests mentioned as family members worked away from home and visited home only occasionally, so their visible influence was apparently minimal. But their parish priests encouraged them to choose priesthood. None of the Indian priests reported any kind of discouragement on the part of priests from choosing priesthood.

The respect, love and hospitality shown to priests when they visited homes and the praises of priests in family conversation was common. Parents did not allow anyone to criticize priests or say anything about them in front of the

children that would give them a bad impression about priests. When visiting homes, priests were treated as very important persons by serving their needs first, giving them the first seats and preparing special food for them. One priest said:

Whenever a priest visited our home we were all happy. Parents respected him very much. They even prepared special food for him. This might have influenced me, because you see a man respected by others.

This parental attitude toward priest might positively influence the boys to choose priesthood. Other data support our finding. Blasi (1975:70) found that those who perceive priests positively evaluated were more to think of themselves becoming priests than those who perceive priests negatively evaluated.

The majority of the Indian priests (sixteen) were altar servers and were also members of different associations. There were several associations for children. The main ones are, Holy Childhood, (for children in the grade school to help them to see Child Jesus as their model) Sodality, (a lay association chiefly to foster devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary and to encourage charitable works) and Cherupushpa Mission League (another lay association to inculcate the missionary spirit in the young minds and to help spreading the Gospel). With the except of two, all the priests were active in one or more than one of the associations at the same time.

The parents, grandmothers and, in a few cases, their elder sisters encouraged the priests to participate in church related activities. There was no special treatment or special insistence on any of the children in particular.

Though not all, some mothers and fathers were active in the parish organizations like St. Vincent de Paul Society (for men) or Mothers' Guild (for mothers). Even those who did not belong to any parish organization were involved in parish affairs whenever their services were needed. One father recalls:

"I was very much involved in church and church related activities. I taught catechism and I defended the teachings of the church and fought against communism."

American Parents

Contacts by priests by way of house visits were minimal in the United States. Only very few priests from the parish visited homes. Some priest-friends and very rarely some priests from the parish made visits. These visits did have a great impact on the children. One priest said:

"My parents were close to priests and they practiced their religion, especially my mom."

Most of the American priests (seventeen) were altar servers which shows the close contact these priests had with priests and Church from their early teens or even before.

About one-third of them were active in other church related activities, like Choir, Boy's Scouts, youth organizations, teaching religion and reading at Mass. Two-thirds of them were not involved in such activities.

Before their decision to become a priest, a quarter of the them worked in rectories as receptionists. This helped them both to know the life and works of priests and to create in themselves an attraction to the priesthood. The closeness of some of their homes to the church had some positive influence to grow religiously and to feel an attraction to the priesthood.

Over half of the mothers and about two-thirds of the fathers were active in church related associations and activities. Some of the mothers were members of one or more associations, like Mothers' Guild, Altar Rosary Society, Parish Council and Pre-Cana Movement. Some others taught Religion or raised funds for the church or participated in anti-abortion protests or some kind of voluntary services. One of the mothers recollects:

I was president of the Sacred Heart League for six years and its member for many years. I distributed the monthly leaflet of the intentions in the neighborhood and in the church. We had regular monthly meetings of the promoters. I was also in the Rosary Society.

The fathers also were members of one or more associations like, the Holy Name Society, the Nocturnal Adoration Society,

Knight of Columbus, Eucharistic Ministry, Parish Council etc. One father was active in five such associations.

Outside the home, for many of the priests while they were young, the most influential person was a priest. One of their role model usually was a priest who was very much respected and accepted by many in the neighborhood. The boys got to know the priests by direct contact with them and through church related activities. Almost all the priests testify that the most influential person in their choice of priesthood is another priest. Imagine then of a situation that a priest discouraging a young man from becoming a priest! At least two American priests reported their experience of such discouragement by priests.

In the American families there were not many priests, brothers or nuns. There were some, but they had no considerable influence on the boys in their choice of the priesthood. But many of the priests, and their parents were close to the priests in the parish and/or to the priests and the nuns in the school. Many of the priests and their parents agreed that the choice of priesthood might be more influenced by the priests than anyone else.

How are these contacts helpful to one in choosing the priesthood? High religiosity is closely related to the degree of contact with the clergy. The more religious a person is the greater the interaction he would foster with the clergy and vice versa. Curcione (1973:267-268) suggests that there exists

a reciprocal association between parental attitude concerning the possibility of their son's becoming a priest and the degree of interaction with the clergy.

Fichter (1961:232) notes that the contact with the clergy may take a number of forms. One common and important form is the Catholic school, which as we have noted, yields a higher proportion of seminary students than has the public school from its Catholic students. Parental involvement in the parish life and their maintenance of a Catholic atmosphere in the home represent for their children other forms of contact with the Church. If a young man knows a priest personally and feels at ease with him, he has still more contact with the Church. Finally individual prayer and explicitly religious behavior constitute perhaps the most crucial kind of contact, because they reinforce in an affective way commitment to values without which choice of the occupation of the priesthood is impossible.

As Curcione (1973:268) thinks, a reciprocal relationship also pertains between encouraging the child to pursue the priesthood and the interest and favorable perception he develops toward this role. The more the child is encouraged to pursue this career, the greater his interest. (If the parents are over-zealous in their encouragement the child may feel that he is being pushed.) In addition, when the child is encouraged by his parents, the clergy will, in turn, increase this encouragement.

Curcione continues his discussion. Parents were very supportive of their sons serving as altar boys and some even encouraged them. If the child's family and the local clergy are successful in generating an interest in the child to pursue the priesthood, he might become an altar boy. There could exist a reciprocal relationship between his altar boy experiences and his interest in and conception of the priesthood. There develops an altar boy peer group and consequent interaction with other altar boys and a reduction in the amount of interaction with non-altar boys. Since many altar boys are defined as good prospects for priesthood, the clergy would be more interested in them and that might create in them a favorable orientation to the priesthood.

Looking at the data one notes that the number of altar servers in Indian and in the United States are about the same. Serving at Mass is a role-taking directed toward the priestly status and it takes on some salience to occupational selection when the role-taking is that of a non-cleric who can conceivably become a cleric. Altar servers, who, for example, have been able to observe priests in priestly role performances and as persons "back stage," behind the scenes, have more probability to choose priesthood than one who is not an altar server. The "fantasy" role-taking associated with their early age (celebrating Mass) is not without consequence.

But the Indian priests' involvement in other church related activities by far surpasses that of the priests in the

United States. Only a quarter of the American priests worked in rectories and it helped them to get to know priests and their life and not a single Indian priest had that experience since such a custom does not exist in India.

There were many priests and religious, both living and dead, running through in both Indian and American families but, in the present sample, Indian families have more of them than the American sample. The presence and stories of priests and other religious would help one to consider priesthood. Also, the priests encouraged young men to choose priesthood. Only very few priests, but hardly any priest from India, discouraged young men from becoming priests.

More American parents were involved in church activities than their counterparts in India. The reason might be that many of the Indian parents had to struggle more to meet the needs of the family than the American parents. It would be correct to say that while the Indian priests visited homes to contact people, the people in the United States went to the rectories to see their priests.

The investigation of Ginzberg and others (1951) also called their attention to the "early determination" of choice. Almost without exception, the future minister was exposed from earliest childhood to religious experiences and institutions, and these were reinforced in puberty and early adolescence. And this seems to be the case in the choice of Catholic priesthood also.

7. Concern for the Upbringing of their Children

Indian Parents

Indian parents consider children as their greatest wealth and they very much wanted to inculcate in them all the useful qualities that would enhance their religious upbringing.

The priests cherish the joyful remembrance of their First Holy Communion which was most impressive. Spiritually speaking, their memories of the event ran like these:

"That was a special day for me; Jesus came into my heart." "God was coming to my soul." "It was a moving experience." "Spiritually I felt that Jesus is coming to my heart and that it is a great event in my life."

"I remember it especially because of the pious atmosphere and great celebration."

"It was a very solemn moment in my life."

"I was five years old when my elder sister, brother and I received First Holy Communion together. Our mother prepared us for it. Our elder brothers helped us to learn the prayers."

"Above all I had an excellent preparation for it with a devout and loving confession."

By various ways the parents tried to make the religious events in their children's life memorable. They bought new dresses for the children, arranged big parties at home and hired professional photographers to take pictures on such

occasions. The basis of these external expressions is the parental concern that their children grow religiously. The parents of Indian priests, especially mothers, were very helpful in the religious upbringing of their children. They took them for Holy Mass, prayed with them, taught them prayer and insisted that they pray. One priest recollects:

My parents and grandparents insisted that I go to church, read the Bible and have only good friends.... My grandmother and my sister taught me to pray. My father bought me books....

With the exception of only two, all fathers helped the children to grow religiously. One of the above two exceptions did not at all care about his family and the other was often out of the home for business.

Parents helped the formation of their children's character by giving instructions, such as, being obedient, courteous and respectful; apologizing for mistakes; telling them not to say bad words; teaching them to pray; inquiring about their children to teachers and neighbors; punishing them for their faults and above all, by setting marvelous example of word and deed. One priest said:

"They taught me to love others, to be compassionate to the poor, to practice patience etc."

Another recalls: "I was taught the importance of honesty, sincerity and hard work."

One mother describes how she helped the children: "I

corrected by asking them to apologize or making them realize their mistakes by some other appropriate way."

Another mother observes: "I used to go to school to inquire of the teachers about my children."

One father said: "I wanted to be good model to my kids and tried my best."

Close to half (nine) of the Indian families in the sample had grandparents living with their children and grandchildren. The grandparents seem to have a great influence on their grandson's choice of the priesthood because more boys seem to choose priesthood from the homes where grandparents live with them. Why? While in some nuclear families both parents are immersed in work and have less time to spend with the children, to instill values in them and to bring them up in the best way, the grandparents fill in an important role in the family. They live a retired life, have enough time to take care of the children and exert great influence on them. They consider it their responsibility to bring up the grandchildren. Parents also confirmed that they were helped by their own mothers or by their mothers-in-law or by their elder children to raise the younger children.

The parents wanted their children to be endowed with all useful qualities. But the most important quality three-fourths of the Indian mothers wanted to see in their children is obedience. They think that obedience is most important and the basis of everything else. One mother said:

"I give most importance to obedience and I told my children that obedience is better than sacrifice."

Only a few mothers spoke of helping others and still fewer of working hard or of thinking for oneself. The majority of the Indian fathers wanted their children to grow in obedience and the others wanted their children to help others.

The Indian parents were very protective of their children and were very careful to avoid all occasions that might be harmful to their children. There is a general belief that movies adversely affect children's character. Therefore, most of the fathers and one-third of the mothers would not allow their sons or daughters alone or with friends to go to a movie. However, half of the mothers and few of the fathers would give the children permission if it was a religious movie or if it was played under the auspices of a church or a school.

If the children persisted in their request to go to a movie in the theatre, either of the parents or both of them might go with them. One of the Indian fathers said:

"When there was a good movie, the whole family might go to watch it."

A few Indian parents reported to have had some preferential treatment that would allow their sons to go to a good movie with their friends and would deny the same privilege to their daughters. One father said:

"I will never allow my daughter alone or with her friends

to a movie, but might allow my son to go to it with his friends."

American Parents

The American parents wanted their children to grow religiously. They helped their children primarily by giving a Catholic education, instilling values in them, telling them what to do and what not to do, taking them to church, making sure that they receive the sacraments in time and teaching them to pray.

Though the American family is mostly nuclear, a little over one-fourth (six) of them had grandparents living with their children and grandchildren and they had great influence on the children.

Some priests said that religion was part of the Irish cultural identity; some others said that religion was part of their parents' life; still others think that their homes were parish centered. Let me quote some of them. One said:

"My family was centered on the parish and our whole life and activities - social, athletic, cultural and religious - were centered on the parish."

Another said:

My parents were greatly influenced by the Catholic cultural identity. They are not overly religious but religion has an extremely important role in their life. The family atmosphere was positive. Basically it was a supportive environment to grow up.

"Religion was a part of our life. That was a positive beginning. In grammar school, I learned about religion and practiced it at home," recollects still another priest.

The sons reported that their parents wanted obedience, honesty, truthfulness, hard work, patriotism, helping others and all the traditional values to develop in them. The parents confirmed this. One priest remembers:

When I was in the second grade I stole cheese and crackers from a shop. My mom sent me back to the shop to return the same. There was punishment if I told lies. They taught us what is right and wrong and they wanted us to be obedient.

American parents think that they have to trust their children. Half of the mothers and many of the fathers would allow their daughters and sons to attend an evening movie with their boyfriends or girlfriends but not alone. However, they would like to know the person they are going with, when they would return, what movie they are going to see, etc. Some other parents would prefer to send them with some parent because teenagers shouldn't be sent unattended for an evening movie. However, there was no preferential treatment between boys and girls.

Parents both in India and in the United States wanted their children to develop all positive qualities. But we notice a difference in the attitude of Indian and American parents. While the former wanted their children be obedient, honest, hard working, courteous and respectful, the latter

wanted their children to be obedient, honest, truthful, hard working, patriotic, social, athletic and helpful.

Patriotism, athletics and the social qualities are not mentioned by the Indian parents while they are very important for the American parents. The fact that the American Catholics were accused of being anti-patriotic, might have necessitated them to counteract it by being more patriotic. Indian Catholics had no need to do that. So too, the Irish American parents give more importance to athletics and many Irish schools in America are famous for it. Giving such great importance to athletics is also not very common among the Indian Catholics.

The parents in both countries helped to instill positive qualities in the boys and avoid harmful occasions. A very large majority of the Indian parents think that movies will do harm to the proper upbringing of the children and so they would not allow it. Indian mothers more than the Indian fathers, were considerate of their children's desires, like going to a movie or a game etc.

The number of the Indian and the American mothers in favor of allowing their teenagers to go to a movie are about the same. Many of the American fathers favored the idea, but on some conditions. However, half of the American mothers and few of the fathers did not think it a good idea to send children alone or with teenage friends to a movie.

While Indian parents discriminated between girls and

boys, we hardly see any such thing among the American parents. The Indian parents seem to be over protective while the American parents were more free and liberal in their dealings with their children. In India, while the mothers played a greater role in the religious upbringing of their children, in the United States, it seems that the fathers played that role.

The Indian and the American parents were role models for the children. This greatly influenced the children to grow religiously which, in turn, became an indirect influence on their sons in their choice of priesthood. But it seems that the indirect influence of the Indian parents was stronger and more impressive than that of the parents in the United States.

One-half of the Indian families and one-fourth of the American families had grandparent(s) living with them. Many priests acknowledge the help and inspiration they received from them. In certain cases there were also aunts and/or uncles and/or others who were also helpful to the children's upbringing.

We will continue the discussion of parental religiosity in the next chapter.

Summary

We have discussed different variables of parental religiosity, namely, 1) family atmosphere, 2) attending Mass and other religious services, 3) frequency of prayer, 4)

devotions, 5) practice of the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, 6) contact with the clergy and belonging to parish organizations and finally 7) the concern for the good upbringing of their children.

The atmosphere in most of the Indian and American homes was happy, peaceful and prayerful. In this regard we do not notice much difference between the families of Indian and Irish American priests. Both the Indian and the American parents practiced their religion faithfully and fervently. They were very earnest in attending religious services and insisted their children also go, if possible, daily or frequently, and to assist at Mass. Indian parents attended Mass on weekdays and insisted their children go more than their American counterparts. The parents of both countries observed the Commandments of God and all the rules and regulations of the Church. But we notice that the Indian parents practiced them far beyond the demands of the Church and much more than the American parents.

In most Indian homes every family member spends some time in prayer, individually or collectively. But in America, prayer is considered personal and it is seen seldom as a family activity. Some had tried it but found it unsuccessful and abandoned it. But most of the family members prayed as individuals. Though the parents very much wanted their children to pray, they left it to their freedom. This is a big difference between the Indian and the American parents. Many

parents in both countries showed great interest in private devotions. The Indian parents expressed their devotion externally also by keeping and honoring holy objects. The parents instructed and insisted their children make use of the means to grow religiously. It seems that the mothers in India and the fathers in the United States are more interested in the religious life of the children than their respective counterparts.

Parents and the priests participated in church related activities. Indian boys and American parents were involved in these activities more than their respective counterparts. Indian families had more priests who were close relatives than the families in the United States, and priests in India visited homes more often than the American priests did.

Parents in both countries wanted to see their children develop all positive qualities, helped to instill them in the children, and tried to avoid everything that was harmful to their proper upbringing. A very large majority of parents thought that movies would do harm to the children, so they did not allow it. It was more true with the Indian parents. But most of them would allow it if the movie was sponsored by the church or school.

The Indian parents wanted their children be obedient, honest, hard working, courteous and respectful. The American parents in addition to the above values, also insisted that their children be patriotic, social, athletic and helpful.

Life in India is generally centered on religion and the religiosity is reflected in the family atmosphere. The religious life of parents and their concern for their children's religious life might have helped towards an effective socialization of children to a religious life and this in turn, helped them to choose priesthood.

CHAPTER 8

THE CHOICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD:

THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY IN THE INDIAN AND THE AMERICAN CONTEXTS, ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

C. THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL RELIGIOSITY (contd.)

8. The Parents' Encouragement to the Priesthood

In the last chapter we have discussed seven of the eight items of the index we have set to measure the religiosity of the parents to investigate the influence it had on their sons' choice of the priesthood. While the other seven items in the index served as indirect influence, the encouragement of the parents is more of a direct influence. According to Thomas (1951) (quoted in Curcione 1973:267-268) it is natural that highly religious parents encourage their sons to the extent of creating a positive attitude in them to consider priesthood, because encouraging one's children to pursue a religious vocation is a part of the value system of Catholicism. We discuss here the parents' perception of priesthood, how they encouraged their sons to it and how was it perceived by the priests.

a. The Parents' Perception of the Priesthood

In the context of parental encouragement to the priesthood, it is appropriate to ask how much the parents, both the Indian and the American, knew about the Catholic priesthood.

The Indian Parents' Perception of the Priesthood

A large number of Indian parents wished and even prayed that at least one of their sons become a priest. However, they did not have the doctrinal information, such as, the nature and obligations of the priesthood. Their ideas about priests and their life were from their own experience and contact with priests. The case was not different for the priests either.

Describing the Catholic priesthood, mothers gave one of the following answers: "a Catholic priest is a representative of Christ," or "another Christ" or "a visible God." "A Catholic priest is one who dedicates his life to God and His people." More than half of the fathers said that "a Catholic priest is a representative of Christ," "a visible God," "a disciple of Christ." etc. Another said: "He is one who holds an unequally sublime position" and again, "One who is totally dedicated to the care of the faithful entrusted to him" or again, "he is a leader empowered with the Holy Spirit." A few said that they "do not know to give a definition of the

Catholic priesthood." Many of the parents did say that priesthood is the most sublime profession.

It seems that the mothers and fathers expect that the priest, must be god-like. He must be "holy," "good," "just," "sincere," "pious," "forgiving," "selfless," "loving God and His people," "living up to his call," "helping and caring for the poor," "working hard," "living above all accusations," "imbibing the spirit of Christ," "devotional in the celebration of the Liturgy and other sacraments," "good teacher," "good orator," "chaste," etc. Only one mother said that "priests are also human beings and they carry the traits of their families."

Though the parents knew priests and how they must live, only-half of the mothers and one-half of the fathers knew of Catholic priests' problems. Three-fourths of them mentioned the problems connected with the parishioners' criticisms of the priest. They also said that people are more demanding of the priests. Some parents mentioned the problem of celibacy, the busy life of priests and the demands of pastoral work.

"As a man he could be attracted to a woman," one mother noted.

Another said:

There would be different opinions in the parish and the priest cannot agree to or support all of them. If the priest does not side with certain person or group, that person or group might bring allegations against the priest or create problems for him.

One father puts it: "They have to face criticisms, rush to the sick at the middle of the night and perform pastoral work."

"I knew that priests have difficulties and one of the areas is celibacy," said one father.

Another father feels that "celibacy and loneliness are difficult."

Even from among those parents who knew the problems of priests, only a very few mothers and fathers shared the information with their sons while they were making the decision to become a priest.

One mother said: "There are a lot of problems for priests.... I never told my son about them."

"Priests have many problems. Practically they have no mother, no father, no siblings to help them. Nobody knows their problems. Some make allegations that priests break their vow of celibacy. When occasional conflicts take place in the parish, the priests often find themselves caught in the middle. But I didn't tell anything of these to my son."

"I knew there are many problems for the priests. But I didn't give any instruction about them," said a father.

This might be because, one might assume, the parents thought that there are hardships in every walk of life. A few mothers and fathers, however, shared their information about priesthood with their sons. A few of them did not do so because of the parents' earnest desire to see their son choose

priesthood.

The American Parents' Perception of the Priesthood

The American parents, in general, have a very high opinion of the Catholic priesthood. Some mothers said that priesthood is a most noble vocation.

"I think that is the ultimate vocation. All vocations are sublime and each has its duties, but priesthood is special." said one mother.

"A Catholic priest is held in high esteem and he is on a pedestal," said one father.

Another said: "Priesthood is definitely a most noble occupation. A priest must be a holy and loving person." "It is a marvelous, marvelous vocation. I would like if another son also went for it. If all six of my children chose religious life I won't turn them back, but would rejoice in it," said still another.

One mother compared priesthood with other occupations. She said:

"Priesthood can be a great occupation. Parish is people oriented. It is also like business: there is power, position, advice and business but on a smaller scale."

Considered as an occupation, some do not see it as superior to others. Most of the mothers were of opinion that all professions are noble and it depends on how they suit each

individual or how they perform the duties of that profession.

Some other parents also said that the priesthood was the best occupation for their son. One mother puts it in this way:

To look into the nobility of an occupation we have to consider so many things. Priesthood is sublime if he has a calling to it. And it was best for Jimmy for he had a calling to that.

Most of the mothers had only a vague notion about what the Catholic priesthood is. Their answer was always associated with Catholic priests and again with the sacraments the priests administer. One mother says:

"A Catholic priest represents Christ. He hears confession, offers Mass and brings Christ to the people and people to Christ. In one word, he does God's work on earth."

Compared to the mothers, the fathers seem to have a better understanding of the Catholic priesthood. Here are some of their answers that reveal it:

Catholic priesthood is a calling; it is a great vocation. The priest must be dedicated, must have deep-rooted convictions and must have great zeal. One should not take priesthood casually and leave it when and as he wants to do something else. It is a commitment for life. It is great. It is a calling from God.

As to the qualities of priests, some responses of the mothers follow:

A priest must be an intelligent, well spoken, holy, interesting and understanding man. He should have qualities of good oratory, reaching out to all people and

taking no sides.

A Catholic priest must be compassionate, must have a sense of humor; be humble, thoughtful, kind, selfless; in short, there should be something extraordinary in him.

They must be celibate, sympathetic, loving, patient compassionate, and must set good example to others.

They help the people, the children and the community. They must be good example to others, must be happy and must help others.

Fathers also want to see every good quality in a priest.

One of them said:

A priest, above all, must be a priest in the real sense, serving the people of God, have the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit when dealing with the people.

Another father said: "A priest must be like my son, friendly and helpful to people."

The American parents had a better grasp of the problems a priest has to face. Most of them agreed that loneliness and celibacy were real problems for priests. According to two mothers, there are temptations and tempters (girls) for priests. One of the mothers said:

Priests are lonely. I knew it from my brother-in-law. Though he was very busy he came home often and talked about loneliness. The second problem is sexual attractions. Some girls run after priests.

Another mother says:

The Church is singled out today for its stand on certain issues, for example, abortion and Catholic school. It has to put up with this hostile environment. Television says that priesthood is irrelevant and today it is under attack. It also had to meet the needs of all the people entrusted to it.

Some of the fathers' answers are as follow:

Priests have no family. They are at work at all times.

Dedication is the most important thing the priests need. There are many things that divert them from their role. Material things and the modern world will draw you away. So you must have an understanding of your role and the path you have to go. Celibacy and loneliness are other problems.

A priest can have sexual or drinking problem. Some violate the commandments of the Church and their own vows. They miss a family. Joe had already dropped out of seminary after a year. So he probably knew the problems.

Except in very few cases the parents did not tell their sons about the difficulties they anticipated.

"I don't remember that I had talked about it; he had dated for long time and he knew what he was giving up and about his commitment," said one mother.

A few mothers said that they had discussed the matter with their sons. Most of them thought that their sons had sufficient knowledge about the problems of priests, because some of them worked in rectories and knew them first hand. It is true that some of the priests knew them from their discussions with priests or nuns and from their reading or other experience. Besides, many of the priests decided to

become priests when they were old enough to know the problems of priests themselves.

Looking closely at the Indian and American parents, we observe some important differences. Compared to the Americans the Indian parents had little grasp of the nature of priesthood. The Indian parents' expectations of priests were very high - a priest must become god-like. The majority of the them considered priesthood more respectable than any other profession. They believed that to have a priest in the family is a source of blessing for the family. Half of the parents did not know the problems the priests have to face. Even those who knew of the problems of priests did not tell their sons about them. It might be that the mothers did not want to discourage their sons.

On the other hand, the majority of American parents had better understanding of the nature of the priesthood and the problems adherent to it. They were well aware that priests were human. While some parents think that the priesthood is a most noble occupation, some other parents think that every profession is honorable and it is considered respectable if it suits a person and if he fulfills the responsibilities that follow it. They also did not share much with their sons the information they had about the problems of priesthood. Parents of both countries believed that their priest-sons would know them from other sources.

Indian and American parents respected priests very much

and did not allow anyone to criticize priests in the presence of children. The parents knew from their experience that sons who see priests being positively evaluated are far more likely to choose priesthood than those who saw priests negatively evaluated. They felt that love and respect shown to priests and the way the parents treated them was strong enough to generate in their sons an attraction to the priesthood.

b. Encouragement by the Mothers

It was held for a long time that the greatest influence on a persons choice of priesthood was his mother. We examine here the encouragement the mothers gave to their sons in choosing the priesthood.

Encouragement by the Indian Mothers

The majority of the Indian mothers think they have encouraged their son by way of their talk, prayer etc. and believe that they might have influenced their sons to choose priesthood. Fourteen mothers said that they hoped and prayed that their son would become a priest. Some mothers told their son that they wanted to see him as a priest. Here are some responses of the mothers:

"I prayed God that George be called to priesthood."

"Because of my prayer he became a priest."

"I told him, to become a priest is the greatest honor and is highly appreciated."

Another mother said: "I encouraged him a lot."

Here are some other answers:

"While a child I asked Johnny what he wanted to become. He answered that he would like to become a priest.... I thought then, he might become one."

One mother "wanted her son to become nothing but a priest" and so she "would not send him to college fearing he would change his mind."

It would help us better understand the encouragement when we knew about the time the mothers thought that their son would become a priest. One third of the mothers said that they thought so at one time or other, before their son's final decision. They thought of priesthood for their son from pregnancy to the time just before the decision. One mother recalls:

"During my pregnancy I wanted union with God and thought of spiritual things only. This might have influenced him most."

Still others thought that their sons would become priests when they were six, thirteen or fifteen years old. Another says:

"When he was six, I thought he would become a priest, because then he offered a Mass at home imitating a priest."

Some other responses of the mothers are quoted below:

"When he was thirteen years old I thought he would become a priest."

"When he was fifteen and in the tenth grade I thought he would become a priest."

Two mothers said that they did not encourage their sons to become a priest, but other comments contradicts that assertion. One mother said:

"I never wished or prayed that my son become a priest."

But she also said that she told her son that "he could become a priest if he studied well." Some other mothers stated that they had no definite plans about their children other than that they become honest and great persons. She said:

"I had no special plan for any child, but prayed God that my children be "good" and one of them become a priest."

But later in the interview she said that she "wished and prayed that one or more of their sons become priests, daughters become nuns, or a son a doctor."

Another mother who said she had no plan about her sons wanted "one son become a priest and another a doctor." Often the wishes and plans of mothers were transferred to their sons by way of prayer and talk and the sons knew of it.

Though some of the mothers said that "it was not at all time for their sons to think of any profession," and that "they were just children," yet they gladly allowed them to make the decision in favor of priesthood in their mid-teens. This can be considered a kind of encouragement in favor of

priesthood.

Though one-fourth of the mothers deny any influence outside of home, and still fewer mothers deny any influence either from home or from outside, others spoke about the encouragement of their son's fathers, grandparents, siblings as well as that of priests, nuns etc. One mother said:

"My husband and my eldest daughter encouraged him very much; she really wanted him to be a priest."

Another mother says: "He loved his father, grandmother and me and we encouraged him."

Encouragement by the American Mothers

Six mothers were more than pleased that their sons choose priesthood. One-fourth of the mothers said that they wished and/or prayed that their sons become priests; never positively encouraged, but think their life might have helped them to take the decision. One mothersaid:

"We prayed for Jim and wished that he become a priest but never in any way did we encourage or talk to him about it."

Another said: "Yes, I wished that some one would become a priest. I remember that one day I told the priest that I had three boys and I wished that one of them would become a priest! The priest said: No Mary, don't. What the priest meant is that it was God's will."

The American children were free to make any decision for

their future. They would be happy if their sons were happy in their decision.

However, the mothers seem to believe that they indirectly encouraged their sons by leading an exemplary life and taking pains to give personal attention and care to train their children religiously. One said:

"I helped the children by my example. I went to Mass daily; I had the First Friday devotion, I did not eat meat on Friday." Another said: "I think it is by our good example that he was brought up well."

Still another said: "I wanted to give good religious training to my kids and tried to have them grow in the presence of God and made them aware of God's power and gift."

Mothers also believe that their active involvement in church related activities, and the importance they gave to religion and religious practices might have been encouragement to the children. One mother recollects:

"Both of us were involved in church related activities especially in the Pre-Cana Movement. I prayed for my kids that they would grow well and live up to what they were created for."

"I always made sure that children received the sacraments in due time and went to church, said another mother."

The following table will show at a glance how much the Indian and American mothers wished, prayed and/or encouraged their sons to choose priesthood.

Table 15. Mothers' (Indian and American) prayer and encouragement that their son choose priesthood, according to their sons husbands and themselves.

	Priest-sons	Husbands	Themselves
Indian Mothers	19	9	19
American Mothers	2	1	4

Almost all the Indian mothers wished very much, prayed hard and/or enthusiastically encouraged that at least one of their sons become a priest. Though they did not compel anyone, some of them asked their sons to consider priesthood. Their priest-sons and half of the husbands also testify to the assertion.

But except for four, the American mothers did not wish or pray or encourage their sons to choose priesthood before the latter made up their mind for it. Only one husband and two priest-sons seem to agree on the assertion. But there is no reason to doubt what the mothers said.

The difference between the Indian and the American mothers is not only in the number but also in the time and manner they wished or prayed and/or encouraged their sons to become priests. While the American mothers encouraged and supported their sons only after the decision, the Indian parents did it even before their sons' decision.

c. Encouragement by the Fathers

Like the mothers, some of the fathers also encouraged their sons' choice of priesthood. But was it the same degree as that of the mothers or was it alike among the Indian and American fathers?

Encouragement by the Indian Fathers

Some of the Indian fathers really wanted their son to become a priest and a few of them do claim that it was solely due to their encouragement that their sons chose the priesthood. One bluntly talked to his son of becoming a priest. He also told him of his own unfulfilled desire of becoming a priest and of the honor that a priest would bring to the family. He did not want any profession for his son other than priesthood. He said:

I myself had the desire to become a priest. Unfortunately my circumstance was quite different. My parents did not give me the necessary education to join a seminary. Hence my desire was to make my son a priest and I prayed for it soon after my marriage. ... After my son's examination in the tenth grade, I told him that it might be difficult to send him to college but he could become a priest if he wanted to.

A few other Indian fathers, though they very much hoped and prayed for their son to be a priest, never mentioned it to their sons.

Some other fathers did not "think that their son would become a priest." A very few did not want their son to become a priest. Still others did not care what their sons became. Some wanted their sons to have a profession. Only one wanted his son to stay home and help him in the small business. Many of the Indian fathers said that they "never thought of any occupation for their children," and that it "was not yet time to think of any occupation."

Again, much before their son's decision, a few of the Indian fathers thought that their sons would become priests. The age of the sons at the time of the perception of the fathers in this regard varies from five to sixteen.

"From the time my son was five," one of the fathers said, "I thought that he would become a priest."

Two others recall: "When he was thirteen or so I thought he would become a priest."

"His character was good and so long before his decision I thought he would become a priest."

Most of the fathers of the Indian priests identified one or more influences on their son's decision to become a priest. Almost half of the fathers believe that their wives deserve credit for their son's becoming a priest. The typical answer was:

"His mother might have influenced him."

A few other fathers also think that the grandmothers played a very significant role.

"His grandmother is the one who influenced him most."
another said.

The fathers of the priests mention the encouragement of other family members as well as of the priests and nuns on their sons' choice of priesthood.

Among the Indian parents, one mother and two fathers desired to enter religion. However, it was the mothers, more than the fathers, who wished and prayed that their son(s) become a priest. There were few mothers who did not mention about their desire, but not a single one opposed their son's becoming a priest. There was, however, one father who did not want his son choose priesthood.

Husbands give credit to their wives much more than the wives give credit to their husbands in their son's becoming a priest. Also, it appears that the mothers encouragement was more visible than the fathers'.

Encouragement by the American Fathers

The fathers' encouragement was also in the form of helping their children by their own good example and guidance. One of them said that he helped the children "by good example, being close to church, sending my children to Catholic schools and colleges, taking them with us to church on Sundays and days of obligations and so on."

Another said: "I helped them by taking them to Mass,

praying with them and reminding them of the life with God."

"He was always a pretty good boy. I did not encourage or discourage him."

Most of the fathers said, they did nothing to influence their sons to choose priesthood.

I don't think that I have done anything directly but I might have unconsciously done something. I never prayed for any one to become a priest. I did not see any development in him that would lead to his becoming a priest. I never thought that he would become a priest, said one.

I haven't wished or prayed that any of my sons become a priest. It was an Irish tradition to have a priest in a family. Some time it was a disaster. Some of our sons started off with an idea of becoming priests. They went on their own and returned on their own. When I heard about his decision it was a complete surprise for me. I never anticipated that at all. I told him that we would keep it secret until he comes up with his final decision after college.

But six other fathers did pray that their son choose priesthood. One father said:

I always said that it is nice to have a religious in the family. I have great feelings about his decision. My wife is very close to God and I think her prayers led him to it.

Similar to Indian fathers, in some cases it seems that the American fathers wanted to transfer to their sons, their own unfulfilled desire of becoming a priest or the desire of their parents or teachers that they become a priest. Four of the fathers had attempted to become priests. One of them said

that his mother wanted him to become a priest.

Another said that when he was growing up the Irish Christian Brothers wanted him to become a brother and the pastor wanted him a priest.

Still another gave some insight when he said:

In former times frustrated fathers would send one son to military, another to be a priest and a third to be farmer. There was a desire that a family have a priest, a doctor and a mortician. Since I myself wanted to become a priest, I might have unconsciously influenced him. I probably might have brought priests into my conversation and have told stories about priests and held them in high esteem."¹

Contrary to what we found in India, both the mothers and the fathers in the United States, were not apparently praying and/or encouraging their sons to choose priesthood. Also, while it is the mothers who more encouraged their sons in India, in th United States it is the fathers, more than the mothers, who encouraged their sons to choose priesthood. Maybe, that the fathers, more than the mothers, had wished for themselves to lead a religious life.

While a few Indian fathers bluntly talked to their sons of becoming priests, some others though they very much hoped and prayed, never talked about it to their sons that they

¹ The desire of a family to have a mortician was new information for me. So I asked him for some explanation. He told me that the priests take care of your spiritual needs and the doctor your physical health while you are alive. The mortician takes care of the needs when you die.

become a priest. Some of the American fathers did hope that their son choose priesthood. A few fathers had attempted to become priests and they wanted their sons to fulfill their dream and others' dream for them of becoming a priest. They encouraged their children by their own example.

Almost half of the Indian fathers believe that their wives deserve more credit than they did for their son's becoming a priest. A few think that the grandparents also played a very significant role. A few American fathers also agree that the mothers and grandparents had some influence on their choice of the priesthood. One Indian father did not at all want his son to become a priest. Though no American father showed that attitude, many of them were indifferent until their sons made their decision.

The table below reveals the differences between the Indian and the American fathers in their prayer and/or encouragement for their sons' becoming priests.

Table 16. Fathers' (Indian and American) prayer and encouragement that their son choose priesthood, according to their sons wives and themselves.

	Priest-sons	Wives	Themselves
Indian Fathers	12	2	15
American Fathers	3	1	6

The majority of the Indian fathers enthusiastically encouraged one of their sons to become a priest even before their sons' decision. While many priest-sons (twelve) agree to this statement, only two wives mention it.

In contrast, American fathers had very minimal encouragement that their sons choose priesthood. The American fathers did not encourage their sons before the latter made up their mind for it, but they did encourage and support once the sons reached a decision. The difference between the Indian and the American parents is not only in the quantity and quality of the support and encouragement but also in the time when they did so.

Another conspicuous difference among the Indian and the American parents is in the encouragement of priesthood as a vocation. While the Indian parents warmly encouraged their sons to become priest, their counterparts, the American parents, seem not to have encouraged their children to become priests or to choose any profession. Most of the American parents, including those parents who hoped their sons be priests did not encourage them.

Why is it that we see less positive encouragement from the part of the American parents? I suggest: 1) The parents feared that their sons might drop out from the seminary or leave the priesthood, and 2) the parents respected the individual's freedom to make decision about his own life. This is evident from the statement of one of the fathers. He said:

When he went to the seminary, I said, "Do your best." I was broken hearted when he returned and told me that he was not going back. But I was very joyful when later he told me that he was going back to the seminary. I thought he would become a priest, because of the nature of the boy.

Encouraging one's son to priesthood indicates higher parental religiosity. But in the American context, the lack of encouragement to their son's choosing priesthood does not seem to indicate the lack of parental religiosity but their concern over the freedom of their children in their decision. In addition, the American boys were older and better educated that they could make decision for their future.

The American parents also did not want their sons to feel pushed into a profession, especially one like the priesthood. The parents' thinking seems to reflect that encouraging a particular profession would be interfering with the children's freedom to make the most important decision of their life. All of them had observed some boys return from seminary and some leaving the priesthood and were not happy with such situations. The American parents feel that the choice of any profession is personal and so each individual has to make his/her own decision. Once the decision is made the parents wholeheartedly endorse and encourage them.

d. The Priests' Perception of the Priesthood

Before they made their final decision to become a priest, did the priest know about the lifelong occupation which they were going to choose and the problems associated with it? Our discussion below will be on this.

The Indian Priests' Perception of the Priesthood

Priests generally had some idea about a Catholic priest from their experience and contact with priests. But none of them, according to their own recollection, had any clear biblical or theological understanding about priesthood before their decision to become priests. They chose a life long commitment at a young age (fifteen and sixteen) without even knowing the nature of their future life. A few did not know much about priesthood. One admits:

"I had no idea about priesthood except that I was familiar with priests. I knew that they can't marry."

Another said: "I didn't have many ideas about priesthood." Still another said: "I know that priesthood is a holy profession."

Though they did not know what priesthood is, the respondents knew priests. Like some parents, no priest said that a priest must be god-like, though some came close to that. Here are some of their answers:

"A priest is a man of God; he talks to God, is near to God and leads the people to God."

"A priest is not like us, he has special access to God."

"He is an instrument of God and is a holy man who deals with divine things in a divine realm and he saves souls."

"A priest is a man of prayer"

"He is a great man; he has high social status among Catholics and non-Catholics."

"A priest is one who celebrates Mass, preaches the word of God and administers the various sacraments. He helps to solve problems and devotes himself fully for others especially, the poor."

All of them knew that a Catholic priest cannot marry.

Many of the priests knew the functions of priests. For example, they knew that priests offer Mass and some role-played it. They learned the functions of priests from the life and works of priests themselves. But their knowledge in this respect was different either due to the roles of the priests they met or due to the angle from which each one of them were looking at priests. This is evident from what they said:

"The priests are set apart as great persons and put on pedestals as beacons for the community."

"He administers sacraments, offers Mass and preaches."

"He has a high status in the society and for me he is a super being."

At the time of their decision, most of the priests did

not have much knowledge about the problems associated with priesthood. They did not know or think of celibacy, loneliness or other such difficulties. They did not see these issues as problems because as one priest puts it:

"Other priests are managing with it and I also could get along with it."

Some of the priests knew of the problem of celibacy. They knew it from persons like, their parents, aunts, siblings, priests or nuns. But none of them were specifically instructed about the great cost of celibacy, that is, the sacrifice involved in the vow of celibacy. However, some priests, nuns and parents seem to imply this idea when they told them that "priestly life is very difficult one" or "it is not an easy one." The boys were very young to understand their implications. The parents gladly allowed them to make a life long commitment at that early age.

The American Priests' Perception of the Priesthood

In their childhood the priests wanted to be everything they admired, from a garbage man to a cardinal. They wanted to be mailman, bus driver, truck driver, train conductor, military man, policeman, fireman, baseball player, coach, cowboy, singer, actor, business man, rich man, lawyer, mayor, politician, astronaut, priest etc. Many of them wanted several of the above. One priest said:

I wanted to be a policeman, a garbage man, a fireman, a bus driver and a train conductor. These are the normal things we see and every kid wanted to be such at one time or other. When I was a little kid, I wanted to be a priest. Every kid in the neighborhood at some point said that he would become a priest. It was a normal thought every kid in the neighborhood had."

As we have seen before some of the priests even role-played priest while they were young. One priest recollects:

"I played Mass with other children and distributed Cheerios as holy communion. I was four or five years old then."

Another priest used to reenact the whole Mass.

Still another priest said:

I wanted to be a priest, while I was pretty young. I think I had the vocation to be a Cardinal. My parents had a book, I think it was interesting, about the Pope's visit to the United States. He came to the World's Fair to Queens. The book had pictures of the Consistory and the Cardinals and it was wonderful. At that time I wanted to be a Cardinal, not a priest. The Cardinals were needed to choose a Pope. Though four or five years old I can remember that because I took the book and drew pictures in it.

What ideas of the priesthood did the young boys have? When they were children some of them thought that the priesthood was 'sacramental' meaning that the priests administer the sacraments. One priest remarked:

A priest is somebody who will be there for Mass and who will administer the sacrament of confession and will bring closer to God especially those who have avoided God.

Some others put it as:

Priests are important figures in the community who come into people's life at important times such as wedding, funerals and who have tremendous amount of prestige among the people.

Many had no adequate grasp of the Catholic priesthood.

One priest said:

"I did not have much idea about priesthood."

Some others had the idea of priesthood associated with the parish priest who either taught in a school or were busy with different ministries.

Many of the prospective priests were friendly with priests. More than half of them said that priests visited their homes and they felt that priests were quite human. About one-fourth of the priests worked in rectories during their school years. This helped them to get an idea of the works and life of a priest.

A little over half of the families had someone, like uncles, aunts or cousins, but not a sibling, in the religious life. Only four of these families had another priest and another four had a nun and three had a brother in the family. Five families had either a priest and a nun or a brother and a nun. More than one-fourth had more than one religious person in their family. This also helped them to learn about the nature of priesthood.

Many of the Indian priests had only one ambition, namely, to become a priest. While many of the American priests had

several ambitions, the priesthood was one among them. Nonetheless, both Indian and American priests had their first thought of becoming a priest when they were pretty young. What the Indian and American priests knew about the life and activities of priests was based on their own experience and contact with priests. Except for a few American priests who took their decision late, none of the priests, Indian or American, had any clear biblical or theological understanding about priesthood before their decision to become priests. Almost all of the Indian priests took a life long commitment at a young age without even knowing the nature of their future life.

The Indian priests, like their parents, had very high expectations of priests, that is, a priest is a man of God; he talks to God, is near to God and leads the people to God. But the American priests felt that the priests were quite human. They had seen priests going out with families, swimming with them in the pool, taking a drink with other people, watching a game with others. When they worked in the rectories the young men saw conflicts among the priests. So in various ways they saw first hand the human side of priests. Since some of the American priests took the decision at a later time they knew well the problems of celibacy, loneliness and the desire for a family.

In contrast, many of the Indian priests did not have much knowledge about the problems associated with priesthood. They

did not know or think of celibacy, loneliness or other difficulties. They had not many occasion to see the human side of priests. The young boys met priests in church and homes where they were looked at like another Christ. There was no occasion for the young Indian men to learn the human side of priests.

e. Priests' Perception of Parental Encouragement

Encouragement is very closely related to the choice of priesthood. We noticed that the parents did encourage their sons to choose of priesthood. But were the priests aware of it? How did they see the encouragement of their parents in this regard?

The Indian Priests' Perception of Parental Encouragement

From the information gathered, we know that their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, elder brothers and sisters, priests, nuns and teachers encouraged and influenced them to choose the priesthood. Their parents asked them to be nice boys or to be earnest in their studies and to go to Mass and religion class and to participate in church related activities.

The priests knew of the desire and encouragement of their parents and others either by their own perception or by way of

conversation with their parents. The responses of the priests show this fact:

From my early childhood I wanted to become a priest and my parents encouraged me.

My mother influenced me most. She prayed that one of her sons become a priest.

My father asked me whether I would like to become a priest. He was encouraging me to take such a decision and told me that there were forty-three priests in our family. My parents had prayed for me that I become a priest. They never compelled me. My uncle also told me that I could become a priest if I wished. These really influenced me and I decided to become a priest.

My grandmother influenced me more than my mother.

My maternal grandmother influenced me. ... She advised me to become a priest.

My parents and especially my grandmother who lived with us influenced me a lot.

The priests and their parents think that the ideal religious lives of the family, the efforts of the parents to form the children's character, their prayer and encouragement helped the young boys to choose priesthood. They also asked their children to go to Mass frequently or even daily and to participate in church related activities. However, some priests had some complaints about their parents, more about their fathers than about their mothers.

The American Priests' Perception of Parental Encouragement

All the priests are unanimous in saying that their

parents never directly encouraged them to choose priesthood. But they report of their parents' indirect encouragement:

The devotion of my parents to Mass and gentle guidance helped me to make the decision to become a priest. Their faithfulness to church, God, prayer and to their call inspired me. My mother told me that she would not push because of what my uncle did. (He left priesthood.) But they would support me, would be behind me and would pray for me. Whatever my decision, it was fine with them. Definitely they wished and prayed that I become a priest.

One priest does not feel even any indirect encouragement of his parents. He says:

My mother was an alcoholic and my father had a very bad temper and I was beaten up a lot. Going through these the Lord drew me to Himself.

About the faith of his father and the religious atmosphere of the home he grew up in, one priest speaks eloquently:

My parents go to Mass several times a week and every day during Advent and Lent. They were very much involved in the different societies of the parish and never omitted Sunday Mass. My father is very devout. He was a prisoner of War during the Second World War and the prisoners used to risk their lives to go to Mass in the concentration camp. He said, that is why he came through it. I also had a cousin much older than I who was also involved in World War II and he even saw action. But he became an atheist as a result. And the contrast between my father who was a believer and suffered very much and my cousin who was lukewarm but went to war and was debilitated by the whole idea of war is, his loss of faith and my father's growth in faith. This contrast shows me the strength of Christ.

About his own early religious experience this priest

said:

"It was like a fish in the water that did not know that it was in the water." He meant that his family atmosphere was so spiritual and encouraging that it helped him a lot to choose priesthood.

Three priests said that they assume that their parents wanted and prayed that they become a priest. None of the parents pushed them. Other priests think that their parents did not desire that they become priests. The parents wanted their sons to make the decision themselves. A few of them attempted to delay their son's decision by sending them to regular school and/or college. However, once the decision was made, the parents supported and encouraged them whole heartedly. They were very happy that their son chose priesthood.

Many priests consider their parents' faithfulness to their vocation and their religious life as encouraging them to decide for priesthood. Here I quote some of them:

I think a large part had to do with the religious upbringing I had.

My parents are from Ireland. ... I have to say that in Irish family there are more unspoken feelings which we do not say. My dad is a religious man and he has been an inspiration to me.

Both of my parents are born in Ireland. ... The deep respect and tremendous devotion my parents had to priesthood influenced me.

The Christian life was strong in my family and the practice was there. As you might know in many Irish

families parents expect one of their sons to become a priest.

For the Irish as we have seen before, their cultural, social, athletic and religious life was centered on church.

Most of the Indian priests said that not only their mothers and fathers but their grandmothers, elder brothers and sisters; priests, nuns and teachers also encouraged and influenced them to choose the priesthood. While half of the Indian priests recall the encouragement of their grandparents only a quarter of the American priests do so.

As we saw in the first chapter the prospective candidates for the seminary are more than ordinarily faithful to religious practices. Catholic teenagers have better record in this regard than do Catholic adults, but the vocation prospect is even better than the average teenager. Four out of five future seminarians attend Mass more than once a week, with forty-six percent going daily. Seven out of ten receive Communion more frequently than once a week, with thirty-six percent being daily communicants. Two out of five went to confession every week. Fichter (1961:47-48) thinks that the statistics point to the conclusion that the more faithful an adolescent is to religious practices the more likely he is to be a genuine prospect for the full time service of God. But the piety itself is germinated as a result of parental guidance and the priests do say it.

The Indian priests affirm that their parents' influence was not direct, but indirect, that is, helping them by their ideal religious lives, forming their character and by wishing as well as by praying for them. All the American priests said that their parents never directly encouraged them to choose priesthood. But at the same time they report the indirect encouragement by their parents:

"Their help was primarily giving me a Catholic education and instilling in me the moral values, telling me what to do and what not to do."

Many of the Indian priests believe that their parents wished and prayed that their sons become priests. Only few American priests said that they assume that their parents wished and/or prayed that they become a priest; none of the parents pushed them to priesthood. Though few Indian parents openly asked them to choose priesthood, yet the decision was always the priests'. A large majority of the American priests think that their parents did not hope that they become priests. The American parents wanted their sons to make the decision for themselves.

Summary

Looking closely at the Indian and American priests and their parents, we observe some important differences. Compared to the Indian priests and their parents, their counterparts in

the United States had a better grasp of the nature of priesthood, the human side of priests and their lives and the problems the priests face. What the Indian and American priests knew about the life and activities of priests was based on their own experience and contact with priests.

Indian parents' expectations of priests were very high, to the extent that he must be god-like. But the priests themselves did not think so. For the parents priesthood is more respectable than any other profession and they believed that to have a priest is a source of blessing and honor for the family.

In contrast, the American parents think that priests are human and so do their priest-sons also. The American parents consider every profession respectable if that suits a person and if he fulfills its responsibilities. Parents of both countries did not care much to share with their sons the information they had about the priesthood.

The majority of the Indian mothers and many of the Indian fathers wished very much, prayed hard and enthusiastically encouraged that at least one of their sons become a priest. Unlike the Indian parents, the American parents, except a few, did not wish or pray or encourage that their sons choose priesthood before the latter made up their mind for it. In India, while it is the mothers who apparently encouraged, wished and prayed more than the fathers that their sons choose priesthood, in the United States, it is the fathers, more than

the mothers, who wished, prayed and encouraged that their sons become priests.

Many of the Indian fathers believe that their wives deserve more credit for their son's becoming a priest. Some think that the grandparents also played a very significant role. Similarly, a few American fathers also agree that their wives mothers and parents had some influence of their sons' choosing the priesthood.

Many of the Indian priests had only one ambition, namely, to become a priest. While many of the American priests had several ambitions and priesthood was one among them. Both the Indian and the American priests had their first thought of becoming a priest when they were pretty young. The Indian and American priests report that their parents' influence on them was not direct, but mostly indirect, that is, helping them by their ideal religious lives, forming their character and by praying for them.

The parents and the other family members, succeeded to generate religiousness in the sons by their exemplary life, the training they imparted to them and by their encouragement which eventually became very influential on the young men's choosing the priesthood. One might conclude that the religiosity of the parents seems to have very powerful effect on their sons' choosing the priesthood which is confirmed by the findings of previous studies, some of which we have referred above.

CHAPTER 9

THE IMPACT OF FAMILY ON THE CHOICE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD IN INDIA AND IN THE UNITED STATES: CONCLUSIONS

Home is the place children develop religious, moral and civic virtues. Home also socializes its children to occupations that help attain their goals through suitable methods. In order to identify and understand the behavior of the Indian and the American priests in their choice of priesthood, we have to understand the predisposing conditions and the situational contingencies of both countries. They include the social, economic, religious and ethnic environment. We examined them in detail in the previous chapters and the following are the conclusions drawn from our discussion.

The Impact of the Predisposing Conditions and the Situational Contingencies.

Religion is an integral part of the Indian life. Family, socio-economic environment and vocational orientation are all influenced by the religious ethos. Since the acceptance of the basic Indian religious values, such as prayer, meditation,

renunciation, celibacy etc., are compatible with the Catholic priesthood, young men in India might not have much difficulty seeing the priesthood as a way of life that would further those values.

So too, the Indian tradition and mentality help the individual live up to his decision despite difficulties. An Indian will think, there is no state of life without its inherent difficulties. (According to the Hindu thought, whatever befalls a person is his 'karma' (fate) and he has to face it. Even some Catholics, but not the Indian Catholic Church, might believe so). Hence, to flee from a chosen state of life, especially from priesthood, is considered shameful both to the individual and to his family.

In contrast, in the United States, though being a Catholic is today congruent with the acceptance of basic North American values, the Catholic priesthood as a specialized occupation requiring celibacy is not wholly congruent, because some divergence from the American values with respect to sexual behavior is expected in the prospective priest. The increasing emphasis on independence, individualism, success and a "hang-loose ethic" among today's young people are also in opposition to the institutional and bureaucratic values the Catholic Church holds to.

Another feature of the Indian society is that it urges the children to take care of their parents, especially, when the parents get old. Consequently, there is less chance in

India for an only son becoming a priest. He has also to continue the line of his family. Usually, parents in India will not encourage their only sons to choose priesthood. It is not common that an only son in an Indian family choose priesthood.

Unlike India, in the United States, parents, when they get old, do not depend on their children. They take care of themselves or seek the help of other agencies. Hence, the only sons in the United States are not restraint from choosing the priesthood.

Again, in India, the prospective priests stay with their parents until they go to the seminary and so there are plenty of occasions for parental encouragement. Also, parents and significant others have a great say in an individual's decision. But in the United States, there is not much chance for parental encouragement or discouragement in their sons' choosing the priesthood since the parents and grown-up children live on their own. Many of the American priests decided to become priests while living on their own. Only those who decided to become priests just after their high school were staying with their parents. Parents in the United States do not stand in the way of their children's decision, because they think that it is not their life and their decision but their children's.

Home is not situated in a vacuum but in a cultural environment where the individual lives, moves and reacts.

Culture is like the air we inhale, we are not aware of it. Parents, the primary agents of socialization, transmit the culture of the society to the children. The cultural elements, that is, the predisposing conditions play a vital role in the growing-up and in the occupational choice of an individual and they serve as latent influences. Hence, while the predisposing conditions existing today in India are helpful for boys, except for an only son, to choose priesthood, the same conditions existing today in the United States are not favorable to many young men there to choose priesthood. There will be, therefore, comparatively more boys in India than in the United States who choose the priesthood.

The occupational choices are greatly influenced by the situational contingencies as well. As primary agents of socialization the parents play a crucial role in their children's choice of the priestly or religious vocation. Theories of vocational development emphasize that parental influence is the most important and determining factor in their children's decisions. Let us examine first the impact of socio-economic factors and then the impact of parental religiosity in the choice of the priesthood.

Impact of the Socio-Economic Factors

The various socio-economic factors such as, status, finance, occupation, education and age affect the choice of

the priesthood. They do have some impact on many Indian priests but very little on the American priests.

Everyone has ambition to earn respect and status in the society and most of the Indian boys hoped for them. But they had very little chance for achieving them, because higher education, a basic requirement for securing a job, making money and for earning social status and respect, was not within their reach. They knew that their dreams could not be fulfilled, both because their parents' financial situation was not helpful and because the parents had also other children to take care of. As part of the family they realized how hard their parents struggle daily to meet their needs. All this made the sons think what is in store for them - work harder than their parents. The best way to get out of the situation, they thought, would be to become a priest. Becoming a priest would help get an education, high status and great respect in the society.

At the time of their decision, the young Indian boys had no higher education or a job and had just passed the tenth grade, the bare minimum education needed in India to get into a minor seminary. So too, none of the priests sought out a job nor did they seriously consider any occupation other than priesthood. It was not easy to get a job in India, as unemployment even for well educated people is very high. We also do not see a single Indian priest who chose the priesthood as a second career. Hence, it won't be wrong to

conclude that the socio-economic factors influenced, to a certain extent, the boys in India to choose the priesthood.

The above conclusion is supported by the Indian parents. They thought that the chances of an higher education and a job would be a dream for their sons. So, the parents suppose that the above factors played some influential role, in their sons' choosing the priesthood. Studies also have shown, as we have noted before, that the younger a son at the time of his decision, the more will be the influence of his parents on his decision. The Indian priests at the time of their decision were very young, sixteen years on an average and so, there is more chance for parental influence. All these strengthen our argument that the socio-economic conditions of the families of the Indian priests have some impact on the sons' decision to become priests.

In contrast, the priests in the United States hardly had any financial motive behind their choice of priesthood. Most of them had not only chances for, but in fact, already had better education. So too, they had opportunities for jobs and some of them did have one, all of which were very helpful for a bright future. Some priests, after their studies, pursued other careers and abandoned them to choose the priesthood as a second career. Family size had nothing to do with the American priests in their choice of the priesthood.

Working in rectories positively helped the American priests to get an opportunity to know closely the life and

works of priests. But none of the Indian boys had job experience of any kind nor did anyone of them work in rectories.

Some of the American priests had made one or more attempts, before their final entry to the seminary, which eventually led them to their priestly ordination. But none of the Indian priests attempted more than once, because in India it is difficult to get admission to a seminary a second time if he has left or been dismissed from a seminary before.

A few of the American parents also had tried religious life before they married, but though some wished, none of their counterparts in India, tried it.

Parental domicile and occupation also play a significant role in the choice of priesthood. More boys from agricultural and small trade settings choose priesthood in India. The reason behind this might be that a large majority of the Catholics in India, as also the majority of the Indian population, live in rural areas. On the other hand, in the United States, more priests come from urban settings because majority of the Catholics in America live in cities. Living close to a church is very helpful in choosing the priesthood.

Both the Indian and the American boys wanted to become priests, but it seems their motives were different. While the Indian priests chose the priesthood, to some extent, out of socio-economic motives, their counterparts in the United States chose it purely for its merits.

Parental Religiosity

The family atmosphere is the reflection of the religiosity of the parents and other family members. A peaceful family atmosphere combined with the religiosity of the parents would serve as a context of effective socialization of children to a religious life and this, in turn, would enhance the sons' choosing the priesthood.

Most of the Indian and the American parents practiced their religion faithfully and passionately. They prayed, attended the religious services, kept the Commandments of God and scrupulously observed all the rules and regulations of the Church. Some parents in both countries showed great interest in private devotions. Many parents and priests kept up a positive relationship with priests and participated in church related activities.

Religiosity of the parents helped the sons to become priests. From the reports of the priests and their parents, one comes to learn that there are a variety of parental influences behind a son's choice of priesthood. There is a general consensus about this, among the parents and their sons, both in India and in the United States. This parental influence was in most cases indirect. How does it work?

Some specific occupations need certain pre-requisites which are to be incorporated into the role of the actor to provide him with the capabilities for carrying on that

occupation. Unlike many other occupations, the very nature of priesthood demands certain prerequisites in one who embraces priesthood. These pre-requisites are a superb character and a sense of religiosity. If they are not attained, a priest would be unable to respond to the appropriate role behavior designated by the norms of that role. They are developed in the candidate during his training in the seminary. But prior to that they need the basic orientation to acquire them. Parents, by their concerted effort and by their example, are the principal agents responsible for forming their sons' character and instilling religiosity in them from their younger age.

The process of forming of character and instilling religiosity in their sons could be compared to a "flow" along the "pipe line" allowing inputs into the flow. There are inputs from the part of the parents, such as, their concerted effort to create a religious family atmosphere; their insistence that their children practice religion to the best of their ability; their encouragement to go to Holy Mass, if possible, daily or frequently and to assist at Mass; their daily prayer; and their participation in church related activities.

Parents in both countries also wanted to see their children develop all positive qualities and helped them towards it. They instilled religious values and instructed them to make use of the means to grow religiously. They

carefully avoided everything that would do harm to the moral development of their children, for example, a large majority of parents thought that movies would do harm to the positive upbringing of the children, and so they did not allow it. Some fathers told their sons of their own unfulfilled desire of becoming priests. Most of the priests were very much impressed by their parents who helped them grow as useful boys. All these inputs, while strengthening the character and religiosity of the sons, also in turn, served as crucial positive inputs to strengthen the 'flow,' that enhanced the sons choosing the priesthood.

In fact, the religiosity of the Indian and the American parents are very high according to the index we have set. Nevertheless, the religiosity of the Indian parents is higher than that of their American counterparts and naturally the influence of the Indian parents on their sons would be more than that of the American parents on their sons.

Parental Influence: Different Stages and Steps

Looking from a different perspective (Lofland 1966, 1977; Danzger 1989) one could observe some stages and steps, like, picking-up, hooking, encapsulating, loving and committing in the process of parental influence in their son's choosing the priesthood. However, these processes are not the same in India and in the United States. Let us construct a model of this

process.

Picking-up

One should know that the '**picking-up**' is not an externally observable activity, but rather a mental speculation of the parent, by which she/he chooses a son for priesthood.

The starting point of this process is picking-up. How does a parent pick-up his son for priesthood? We know that every parent would very much love to see their children happy and secure. The Indian Catholic parents would be all the more happy if one of their sons chose the priesthood. They prayed to God that their son become a priest. The underlying reason behind it seems that the Indian parents believed that one must pray to be 'called,' and they very much wanted that their son be 'called.'

Some of them wanted, by all means, that at least one of their sons become a priest and they picked-up one or more of their sons for priesthood. In many cases the good nature of a son and/or his interest in priestly and church related activities has helped the parents to pick-up him as a potential candidate for priesthood.

The time of this pick-up varies from parent to parent. Some of them have picked-up their son for priesthood even before he was born. Apparently, many parents thought, at one time or other, even before their son's decision, that he would

become a priest.

It is common in India that the parents push the children to some occupation that they think is best for the children and both the children and the parents do not consider it as an encroachment to the children's freedom. Maybe, that being less educated, they did not know that they should respect the individual's freedom.

In contrast, this picking-up was not evident among the American parents in general. Nevertheless, among the Irish, among other things, there is a desire to have a priest in the family. The Irish know it and speak it at home, but the parents never tell directly to their sons to become a priest. This is because the parents did not want to make a decision for their son and so they left it to his freedom. Better education and respect for individual's freedom to make decisions for one's future seem to be the reasons behind it.

Yet, one could observe certain instances where the American parents, like the Indian parents, pick-up their sons for priesthood. They also wished and prayed that their son become a priest and few of them also thought, before the son made his decision, that he would become a priest.

Hooking

Hooking is that by which the parent relates to the son that she/he has picked-up him for priesthood. The parent could

do it at any time and once related, the son is hooked. Hooking is reinforced in various ways and the sons usually have no escape from it.

The Indian parents through their conversations conveyed to their son how greatly they wished to see him become a priest. In few cases the parents talked directly to their sons favoring their choice of priesthood. Parents alone, and the family together prayed for vocations. The parents' wish and the expression of the same, in different ways and times, resounded in the son's ears which seems to have hooked the sons to priesthood. The parents also encouraged their sons to be altar servers which helped to reinforce the hooking by getting closer to priests and the sons' anticipated ministry.

Most Indian parents considered priesthood as a highly honored occupation and priests as wonderful persons enjoying a higher status in the society. The Indian parents praised the priests and never criticized them nor did they allow anyone to do so in the presence of their children. In addition, in India, the poor economic condition of the family, the large number of children in the family, their young age and a dim future of educational opportunities, were also factors powerful enough to **hook** the sons to the priesthood.

Once the children knew that their parents had hooked them to become priests, they did not want to break away from it because they knew that it would cause displeasure to their beloved parents. This vulnerable situation of the sons also

helped the parents to hook the sons to priesthood.

Again, ambition to earn respect and status in the society was in every one of the Indian boys, but they had very little chance for achieving them, because, higher education, a basic requirement for securing a job, making money and for earning social status and respect, was beyond their reach. The sons knew that their dreams could not be fulfilled, both because their parents' financial situation was not helpful and because the parents also had other children to take care of. As part of the family they realized how hard their parents struggle daily to meet their needs.

All these made the sons think what was in store for them - work harder than the parents. It was not at all easy to get a job in India as unemployment even for well educated people is very high. The best way for the sons to get out of the situation, was to choose the priesthood. Becoming priests would help them get an education, high status and great respect in the society.

In contrast, the above factors played only an insignificant role in the United States to hook the sons to priesthood. Of course, the religiosity and exemplary life of the parents; their participation and encouragement of their sons to church related activities; their devotion to priesthood and the religious upbringing of their sons indirectly influenced the American priests. The American parents prayed, and practiced devotions; they expected their

children to imitate them, but left these up to their children.

The socio-economic factors of the American families had not much to do with the choice of the priesthood. The parents could give better education to their sons and hardly had any financial or status consideration that needed to hook their sons to priesthood. Family size also did not play any role in the choice of the priesthood in the United States.

Besides, in the United States, there were opportunities for jobs and some of them did have one, which was very helpful for their bright future. Some of the priests, after their studies, pursued other careers and later abandoned them to choose the priesthood as a second career. So too, most of the parents had a positive attitude to occupations that all occupations are honorable so long as one fulfills their obligations. Our conclusion is that the parents could not and did not need to hook their sons to priesthood on the basis of any of the above factors.

Studies have confirmed the above conclusions. Fichter and Potvin and Suziedelis found that the source of vocations is no longer the lower class, financially and occupationally disadvantaged, poorly educated segment of the American Catholic population. In addition, research data of Hemrick and Hoge show that vocations came from families of all sizes.

One important factor that influenced the Americans to choose the priesthood is the Irish tradition of giving one son to the country (service) another to the Church (religious

ministry) and a third to the farm (home). One father said: "In former times frustrated fathers would send one son to military, another to be a priest and a third to a farmer. ... This might have unconsciously influenced him." The desire of having a son in the priesthood or in the religious life had gone deep in the Irish family tradition. As another priest recalls, "in an Irish family there are more unspoken feelings which we do not say." He meant that even if the parents do not speak directly to them to choose priesthood, they have always it in their mind. This might have influenced them to choose the priesthood.

Another way the American parents hooked their children to priesthood was for its merits. That is why they themselves had tried religious life before they married. Some fathers told their sons of their own unfulfilled desire of becoming priests.

Also, by allowing their sons to be altar servers and to work in rectories, the American parents succeeded in hooking the sons. The sons got an opportunity to work in rectories which helped the young men to get a first hand knowledge of priests' life and works.

Encapsulating

Encapsulating is the creation of a setting that would help to attain the necessary inputs that would facilitate the

choice of the priesthood.

The family atmosphere is the reflection of the religiosity of the parents and other family members. A peaceful family atmosphere combined with the religiosity of the parents would serve as a context of effective encapsulating of children to a religious life and this, in turn, would enhance the sons' committing to priesthood.

The parental encapsulating, in most cases, worked indirectly. They successfully created a home atmosphere favorable to priestly vocation. One could easily identify the religiosity of Indian homes even in their physical settings, for example, by keeping and honoring holy objects. This shows that religiosity was very much important to the Indian parents. One might not be able to see this in the American homes. Most Irish American homes are not any different from other homes in their neighborhood.

The religiosity was high in both countries. Prayer (more in India) and participation in religious services in the church was given great importance in both countries. The ideal life of the parents, more than anything else, helped to encapsulate the sons. Many sons mentioned that the positive example set by their parents helped them most to choose priesthood. One son said that he felt like a fish in the water. He meant that he was in a very good religious atmosphere.

Some specific occupations need certain pre-requisites which are to be incorporated into the role of the actor to provide him with the capabilities for carrying on that occupation. Unlike many other occupations, the very nature of priesthood demands certain pre-requisites in one who embraces the priesthood. These pre-requisites are an excellent character and a sense of religiosity. If they are not attained, a priest would be unable to respond to the appropriate role behavior designated by the norms of that role. These pre-requisites are developed in the candidate during his training in the seminary. But prior to that, they need the basic orientation to acquire them. Parents, by their concerted effort and by their example, are the principal agents responsible for forming their sons' character and instilling religiosity in them from their earlier years.

Parents in both countries also wanted to see their children develop all positive qualities like honesty, obedience, respect for others, helping others, concern for the poor, hard work etc., and helped them to attain them. They instilled religious values and instructed them to make use of the means to grow religiously. They carefully avoided every occasion that would do harm to the moral development of their children, for example, a large majority of the Indian parents thought that movies would do harm to the positive upbringing of the children, and so they allowed their children to go only for those movies which were played in the auspices of the

church or school.

The American parents generally allowed their children to go to a movie but they wanted to know what movie they go to, whom they go with and the time they would return.

Most of the priests, both in India and in the United States were very much impressed by their parents who helped them grow as useful boys. All these inputs strengthened the character and religiosity of the sons which, in turn, served to encapsulate the sons to the priesthood.

Loving

The next phase of the process is **loving**. Loving helps the son to feel he would be in a friendly atmosphere, that he would be loved and respected and that though he has no family, his needs would be taken care of by the dear and near ones.

There exists strong family ties in India. Each one of the family loves the other very much. This also has indirectly helped a lot in the sons' choice of the priesthood. Generally, in India the parents live for their children and readily sacrifice a great deal for them. The children, on their part, understand that their parents love them so dearly and do everything for their well-being and so they do not want to displease their beloved parents.

Indian parents conveyed to their sons that they will get the emotional support from the family even after becoming a

priest. This was evident from the way the parents regarded priests. They considered them as god-like and gave them great prominence in their conversation with their children. The sons in India have also seen their mothers preparing special food for priests and treating them as very important persons. They have also observed the Catholic priests playing prominent roles in the Indian society. People listened to them and highly regarded them. When there was a problem in the society or in the homes, people went to a priest for help.

In contrast, the American parents considered the priest as humans and honorable as any other person who faithfully fulfilled his obligations. But they loved and respected him. In the United States, more priests came from urban settings because majority of the Catholics in America live in cities.

Parental domicile and occupation played some role in the case of Indian priests in this process. More boys from agricultural and small trade settings chose the priesthood in India. The village atmosphere was calm, peaceful and loving. People appreciated and loved priests and this was even extended to the altar servers.

Living close to a church was also helpful both to the Indian and the American priests in choosing the priesthood because the priests had more contact with the neighborhood. The children observed the great respect and love their parents and people shower on priests.

Committing

The final step of this process is the **committing** which is the giving of one's life over to the service of God and his people by choosing to become a priest.

The parents succeeded in creating an atmosphere favorable to priestly commitment. Most of the Indian and the American parents practiced their religion faithfully and passionately. They prayed, attended the religious services, kept the Commandments of God and scrupulously observed all the rules and regulations of the Church. Some parents in both countries showed great interest in private devotions. Many parents kept up a positive relationship with priests and participated in church related activities.

The church is very much the center of life for Catholics in India. It is a center of their religious, social, cultural and athletic needs. Besides the regular religious services, there were social, cultural and athletic events connected with the church. Parents and children participated in many of these events which, if organized elsewhere, they might not go to.

A church centered life was true of the Irish American Catholics also. All their religious, social, athletic and cultural activities were centered on the church. A number of them I talked to, told me that many Irish American Catholics, especially in New York, would identify themselves with the parish they belong to. For example, if you ask an Irish

American, where are you from, he/she would answer, "I am from Saint Helena's." The life of the Irish American Catholics is so much identified with their religion.

Both in India and in the United States, boys were encouraged by their parents to be part of the church. The boys served at Holy Mass, helped to clean the church, to decorate it and to raise funds for it. They were also participants in the performance of entertainments and played games in the churchyard. Priests, brothers or sisters guided them in all the events. Close observance of the life and works of priests, had a higher probability of helping to make a commitment to the priesthood. In fact, parents, both in India and in the United States, were religious role models to their sons. They themselves involved very much in church related activities. Thus they succeeded in leading their sons to a commitment to the priesthood.

We surveyed several studies in the first chapter showing that the parental encouragement, especially of the mother, was of some significant factor in considering the priesthood, and that is going down in the United States. Researchers found that along with parents, priests were an important source of recruitment. The present research did not explore this area as it was not in the scope of the current study.

Through the processes of picking-up, hooking, encapsulating, loving and committing, the parents - the Indian parents more than the American parents - succeeded to

influence their son to make a decision in favor of choosing the priesthood.

The predisposing conditions existing in India today, are more favorable for the Indian boys to choose priesthood than that existing in the United States for the American boys. Considerations of the social status of the priest, the financial condition of the family, family size and the prospect of more educational opportunities also had some influence on the Indian priests' choice of the priesthood. But these considerations did not play a significant role in the American priests' choice of the priesthood.

By their words and life the parents in India and in the United States succeeded in generating religiosity and a virtuous character in their children. As the priests and their parents perceive it, the parents' influence was enormous, but generally indirect. The parents helped their sons by their ideal religious lives, by forming their character and by praying for them. One might conclude that the high religiosity of the parents seems to have a very powerful impact on their sons and that too helped them to choose priesthood. This is confirmed also by the findings of previous studies. However, the most important factor, influential for the American priests in the choice of the priesthood, was another priest.

Hence, the hypothesis that 'the impact the family members had on Indian boys in their choice of priesthood, is different from that which family members had on the American boys in their choice of priesthood,' is sustained.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Indian priests and their parents were interviewed in January and February of 1990 and the American priests and their parents were interviewed during the last quarter of 1991 and the first quarter of 1992. In both countries the priests were interviewed first and then the parents.

Each interview lasted about 45 minutes to an hour. All interviews were taped and later transcribed. A questionnaire was used to guide the interview, but there was some flexibility in explaining each of the questions. This is indicated by the questions followed by the main questions. Questions were not asked in the order of the interview guide. Lead questions were followed by exploratory ones for more information. All interviewees were assured of anonymity.

The sampling and the related problems are discussed on page eighteen.

2. THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Interview with the priests.

N. B. All the questions below refer to the time before you joined the seminary to become a priest.

1. What is your earliest recollection of religious experience?

What thoughts did the holy objects bring in your mind?

What are the first holy celebration that you remember?

Is there any reason to remember it? Did any other touch you? How were you praying in your childhood? Alone? With others?

Did Holy Mass and other services in the Church help you for some kind of religious experience? How?

What kind of feelings did you have when you saw the priest celebrating Holy Mass or administering the Sacraments?

2. How did your parents help you in your religious experience?

How was your family atmosphere? Were you taught to pray?

Can you please tell me how and when your family was praying?

What were the usual prayers your family was saying?

Was your mother insisting you/other children in religious activities such as prayer, attending Holy Mass and other Church related activities? And if yes why she insisted?

Did she insist you more than other siblings? If yes, why did she do so in your case?

Was your father also insisting you/other children on these matters as your mother was? If yes, why did he do so?

And in your case, was there any special insistence on these matters from the part of your father? Why did he do so?

What do you think about the religious life of your parents? Was it helpful or unhelpful in your choice of priesthood?

3. What were the religious ideas you had in your younger age?

How did you get them? From Catechism? Homily? Talk with others? (with whom?) Reading? Church related associations? (Which?) How did these help you?

What are the religious conversations you had or the exhortation you remember that your parents gave you?

4. What did you want to be? Why? Did you tell your parents about it? What are the qualities your parents wanted to inculcate in you?. What were they doing for that?

5. Will you kindly share with me your idea of priesthood?

How old were you when you felt an attraction to priesthood?

Please tell me as much as you can about the incident or occasion or however it happened, associated with that attraction? How did the attraction grow in you as the years passed by? Do you now notice different developmental stages

in your desire to become a priest?

6. Looking back who do you think influenced you most in your decision to become a priest?

a. **Who in your home influenced you most to become a priest?**

How? How did he/she encourage you to become a priest?

What conversation do you remember that you had with your parents about what you would do in the future?

Did anyone ask you to think about priesthood? How old were you then? Did that have any impact on your becoming a priest?

Did your parents wish, talk about or encourage you to choose this state of life?

If yes please say how they did so? Any example?

Did your parents pray that one of their sons become a priest? How did your parents and others at home treat priests when they visited your home?

What did your parents tell you when you told them about your decision to become a priest?

b. **In what ways were you impressed by other priests, Brothers or Sisters? Is any one of them related to you? Is there a priest, brother or sister in your family? Did you ever think of the prestige or social status that a priest enjoys? What thoughts did you have when priests visited your home? Did any of your friends inspire you to become a priest? How?**

7. Did you consider any other occupation? Why?/Why not?

Is priesthood or other occupations more rewarding? Why?

Did your parents think of giving you a better education and getting you a job?

8. What are the problems that you thought of associated with priesthood?

What do you think about the teachings of the Church?

Did you agree or disagree with them?

What did you know about priestly celibacy?

How did you get that knowledge?

Did you think that it was a problem for priest?

Did your parents tell you about celibacy? Which parent?

9. At what age did you actually decide to become a priest?

How old were you when you entered the seminary?

10. How far had you gone into schooling? High School []

Some college [] College Grad [] other []

11. What is the occupation of your father? of your mother?

How well off was your family was compared with others you know in your area?

12. How many children did your parents have? Did all survive?

Where are you among your siblings in the order of birth?

Did the family size affect your decision to become a priest?

If your parents had only one or two sons, do you think that you would have taken this decision? Why? And that your parents would have happily allowed you to abide by your decision? Why?

B. Interview with the parents.

**N. B. All the questions below refer to the time before
your son's decision to become a priest.**

1. Tell me about your religious life when your children were growing up?

How often were you attending Holy Mass?

How did you observe the holidays? (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter etc.)

How were your children observing them?

How was the family prayer?

Did you have any special spiritual practice? (eg. Retreat?) If yes please tell me about it.

2. How did you help your children grow religiously?

How was your family atmosphere? Did you teach your kids to pray? What was your attitude to your children's participation in religious activities? (Holy Mass, prayer and other church related activities?)

Did you encourage them in such activities? Please explain how? Did you want that your priest-son participate in these more than your other children? Why?

Was he doing so on his own accord or out of compulsion?

3. While a child, what religious ideas did he have?

How did he get those ideas?

Was he behaving based on those ideas?

Did you help him to grow in religious ideas? How?

Did any other agency, Church, School, Church related associations help him for these ideas? How?

4. What were your children like when they were growing up?

What were the important differences in them?

What did you think that each of your children would be?

And did they achieve it? How did you help them to achieve it? Did he cooperate with you to achieve it?

What are the qualities you desired to grow in your children?

If you had to choose which thing from the following you will pick as the most important for your child to learn?

a) obedience []	b) well liked by others []
c) think for himself []	d) work hard []
e) help others in need []	

Would you have allowed if your 15 year old son asked you permission to go for an evening movie show?

- 1) alone? Yes [] No []
- 2) with his friend? Yes [] No []

3) If it is with his girl friend? Yes [] No []. Why?

If your 15 year old daughter asked you the same?

1) alone? Yes [] No [].

2) with her friend? Yes [] No []

3) with her boy friend? Yes [] No []. Why?

5. Will you please share with me your idea of Catholic priesthood?

What are the qualities you would like to see in a priest?

Did you ever wish, pray or think that your son would become a priest? Why?

Did you encourage him in some way to become a priest? How?

Could you notice any gradual change or development in him connected with his choice of priesthood?

How did you come to know about your son's decision to become a priest? What were your feelings then?

As you see it, what led him to become a priest?

What did he think (his ideas) about priesthood?

6. Who you think did influence him most? You?

Anyone else at home? An outsider? How did he influence him?

7. Did you wish that your son choose another occupation? Why?

Did you try for one? What was that?

Did you plan to give him a better education? Why/Why not?

Did you consider priesthood a better occupation for your son?

Did he try for any other job? Why?

If he had a job, why did he change that to the priesthood?

8. What were the problems you thought a priest has to face?

Did you talk to him about loneliness, priestly celibacy and other problems a priest may encounter?

What was his reaction?

Did he ever consider these problems before his decision?

Did he ever talk to you about them?

9. How old was your son when you thought that he would become a priest? When did he actually think of becoming a priest? And when did he finally decide to become a priest?

10. How much schooling did you have?

What school did you go to? Cath. [] Public [] other []

What school did your son attend? Catholic [] Public []

And your other children? Catholic [] Public []

11. What is your occupation?

How was your family's financial situation compared with other people in the locality when your children were growing up?

Did this affect your son's choice of priesthood?

12. How many children did you have? Did all survive?

What did your son think about your family size?

If you had only one or two sons would you have encouraged or discouraged him? Why? Or would he have taken this decision?

REFERENCES

1. Abbott, Walter M. ed. 1966. The Documents of Vatican II. trans. Very Rev. Joseph Gallagher. New York: Guild Press.
2. Aerthayil, James CMI. 1982. The Spiritual Heritage of the Thomas Christians. Bangalore, India: Dharmaram Publications.
3. Allen, Philip J. 1955. Childhood backgrounds of success in profession. American Sociological Review, XX, No. 2, (April):186-90.
4. Appassery, George and Arukalil, Thomas J. ed. 1986. Catholic Directory of Kerala-1986. Angamaly South, Kerala, India: P. V. Varkey and Baby Jose.
5. Banks, Arthur S. 1981. Vivian Carlip, Peter DeWitt, Jr., William Overstreet. Economic Handbook of the World. New York: McGraw Hill Books Co.
6. Bellah, Robert N. 1967. Civil religion in America. Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. (Winter):1-21.
7. ----- . 1985. Habits of the Heart. Berkeley, C.A.: University of California Press.
8. Berger, Peter. 1969. The Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co.
9. Blasi, Anthony. 1975. Vocations and perceptions. Sociological Analysis, Vol.36, No.1, (Spring):67-72.
10. Blau, Peter M. and Otis Dudley Duncan. 1972. The American occupational structure: patterns of movement. In Paul Blumberg, The Impact of Social Class: Selected Readings. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
11. Blumberg, Paul. ed. 1972. The Impact of Social Class: Selected Readings. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.
12. Boswell, John. 1980. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

13. Caplow, Theodore. 1978. The Sociology of Work. Westport, C.T.: Greenwood Press Pub.
14. Chacko, Chevalier K.C. 1983. Sister Alphonsa, 5th ed. Bharananganam, India: The Vice Postulator, Cause of Sister Alphonsa.
15. Cogley, John. 1973. Catholic America. New York: The Dial Press.
16. Crossette, Barbara. 1990. A hindu militant is seized in India. New York Times. (October 29), sec. a:6.
17. Curcione, Nicholas R. 1973. Family influence on commitment to the priesthood: a study of altar boys. Sociological Analysis. Vol.34, No.4, (Winter):265-280.
18. De la Gueriviere, Paul. Caste and Christianity. 1981. Jeevadhara. India. 11:157-171.
19. Dhavamony, Marasusai. 1982. A report from India: The caste system. Concilium. 18:49-53.
20. Durkheim, Emile. 1915. Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. tr. Joseph Ward Swain. New York: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. First Free Press Paperback edition.
21. ----- . The Division of Labor in Society, tras. by George Simpson. First Free Press Paperback edition. 1964. London: Collier-MacMillan Limited.
22. Elkin, Frederick and Handel, Gerald. 1960. The Child and Society: The Process of Socialization, 4th ed. New York: Random House.
23. Examiner, The. 1982. Caste and the Christian. (Editorial), The Examiner. Bombay, India: 133:97-98.
24. Fallows, Marjorie R. 1979. Irish American. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc.
25. Fichter, Joseph, S.J. 1954. Social Relations in the Urban Parish. New York & London: The University of Chicago Press.
26. ----- . 1961. Religion as an Occupation: A Study in the Sociology of Profession. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
27. ----- . 1968. America's Forgotten Priests - What They are Saying. New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, Pub.

28. Filteau, Jerry. 1988. Seminararians. Catholic New York. (November 17):8.
29. Furman, D. 1984. Religion and Social Conflicts in U.S.A. Mosco: Progress Publishers, English translation of the revised Russian text.
30. Gallup, George Jr. and Jim Castelli. 1989. The People's Religion: American Faith in the 90's. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.
31. Gargan, Edward. 1993. Trust is torn: police role in Bombay Riots. The New York Times. (February 4) sec. a:1 & 8.
32. Gilbert Denis & Joseph A. Kahl. 1982. The American Class Structure: A New Synthesis, 3d ed. Chicago: The Dorsey Press.
33. Gilbert, James. 1958. What makes boys seminararians? The Priest. XIV, No 12, (December):1035.
34. Ginzberg, Eli, Sol W. Ginsburg, Sidney Axelard and John L. Herma. 1951. Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory. New York: Columbia University Press.
35. Glazer, Nathan and Moynihan, Patrick Daniel. 1970. Beyond the Melting Pot, 2d ed. Cambridge: The M.I.T Press.
36. Goldman, Ari L. 1990. Portrait of religion in U.S. holds dozens of surprises. New York Times, (April, 10), sec. a:1 & 18.
37. Goldstein, Bernard and Oldham Jack. 1979. Children and Work: A Study of Socialization. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
38. Greeley, Andrew M. 1969. Religion in the Year 2000. New York: Sheed and Ward.
39. ----- . 1972. Priests in the United States: Reflections on a Survey. New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc.
40. ----- . 1977. The American Catholic - A Social Portrait. New York: Basic Book Inc.
41. ----- . 1985. American Catholics since the Council: An Unauthorized Report. Chicago: The Thomas More Press.
42. ----- . 1990. The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics. New York: Scribner's sons.

43. Grove, Ernest R. 1940. The Family and its Social Functions. Chicago, Philadelphia, New York: J.B. Lippincott Company.
44. Gross, Edward. 1958. Work and Society. N.Y.: Crowell.
45. Hall, Douglas T. and Benjamin Schneider. 1973. Organizational Climates and Careers: The Work Lives of Priests. New York and London: Seminar Press.
46. Hall, Richard H. 1975. Occupations and Social Structure, 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc.
47. Handlin, Oscar. 1951. The Uprooted: The Epic History of the Immigration that Made the American People. Little, Brown.
48. Hargrove, Barbara. 1945. The Sociology of Religion, Classical and Contemporary Approaches. Arlington Heights, Ill.: AHM Pub. Corp.
49. Hazarika, Sanjoy. 1990. India sends troops to stop hindu march. The New York Times. (October 26), sec. a:3.
50. Hemrick, Eugene. The Church in the United States. 1985. Seminaries in Dialogue, 12, (November):10-27.
51. Hemrick, Eugene F. and Hoge R. Dean. 1986. Seminarians in Theology: A National Profile. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc.
- 52.----- . 1987. Seminary Life and Visions of the Priesthood: A National Survey of Seminarians. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association for Seminaries.
53. Herberg, Will. 1960. Protestant-Catholic-Jew. new rev.ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co. Inc.
54. Hess, Robert D. and Handel Gerald. 1959. Family Worlds. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
55. Hodge, Robert; Siegel, Paul and Rossi, Peter. 1964. Occupational prestige in the United States, 1925-1963. American Journal of Sociology, 70, (November): 290-292.
56. Hoge, Dean R., Raymond H. Potvin and Kathaleen M. Ferry. 1984. Research on Men's Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference.

57. Holland, John L. 1959. A theory of vocational choice. Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 6, No. 1: 35-45.
58. Horrigan, J. P., S. J. and Kenneth Westhues. 1971. A model for the study of occupational choice for the Roman Catholic priesthood. Sociological Analysis. Vol. 32, No. 4, (Winter):229-237.
59. Johnstone, Ronald L. 1975. Religion and Society in Interaction: The Sociology of Religion. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc.
60. Kakutani, Michiko. 1990. Religion in America: fact and perception. Review of Under God: Religion and American Politics. by Garry Wills. New York Times, (October 23), sec. c: 17.
- 61.----- . Looking inward and finding a national religion. The New York Times, (May 5), sec. c:17.
62. Koilparampil, George. 1982. Caste in the Catholic in the Community in Kerala. Cochin, India: Department of Sociology, St. Theresa's College.
63. Kurian, George. 1975. Structural changes in the family in Kerala, India, in Thomas R. Williams. Socialization and Communication in Primary Groups. The Hague - Paris: Mouton Publishers.
64. Kuriedath, Jose CMI. 1989. Authority in the Catholic Community in Kerala. Bangalore, India: Dharmaram Publications.
65. ----- . The social context of vocation. 1990. Satyadeepam, (Weekly in Malayalam Language). Ernakulam, India: Vol. 63, No. 37, (May 2): 2 & 12.
66. Lea, Charles Henry. 1966. History of the Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church. New York: University Books, Inc.
67. Lipset, Seymour Martin and Reinhard Bendix. 1959. Social Mobility in Industrial Society. Berkley and Los Angeles: The Regents of University of California, University of California Press.
68. Lofland, John. 1966. Doomsday Cult. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
69. ----- . 1977. Becoming a world saver revisited. American Behavioral Scientist. Vol. 20, No. 6:805-818.

70. Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. The Invisible Religion. New York: Macmillan.
71. Lynd, Robert S. 1967. Knowledge for What? Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
72. Manalel, George, V.C. 1984. Priestly vocations and their family background. The Living Word, Vol. 90:90-99.
73. Maynard, Theodore. 1941. The Story of American Catholicism. New York: The MacMillan Co.
74. Mathew K.M. ed. 1987. Manorama Year Book 1987. Kottayam, India: Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd.
75. ----- . 1990. Manorama Year Book 1990. Kottayam, India: Mammen Mathew for the Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd.
76. McAvoy, Thomas T. C.S.C. 1969. The History of the Catholic Church in the United States. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame.
77. McCaffrey, J. 1976. The Irish Diaspora in America. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
78. McGuire, Meredith. 1987. Religion: The Social Context. 2d. ed. Belmont, C.A.: Wadsworth Pub. Co.
79. M. Danzger, Herbert. 1989. Returning to Tradition. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
80. Menon, Sreedhara A. 1984. A Survey of Kerala History, rev. ed. Chetput, Madras, India: S. Viswanathan (Printers & Publishers), Pvt., Ltd., first ed. 1967.
81. Merton, K. Robert. 1968. Social Theory and Social Structure. 1968 enl. ed. New York: The Free Press.
82. Miller, Peter. 1988. Kerala: jewel of India's Malabar coast. National Geographic Magazine. Vol.173, NO. 5. (May):592-617.
83. Molidor, Sister Christian, R.S.M. 1991. From India, with love. Catholic Near East, Vol. 17, No. 3, (July): 17-23.
84. Mundadan, Mathias A. 1970. Traditions of the St. Thomas Christians. Bangalore, India: Dharmaram College.
85. ----- . 1984. History of Christianity in India. (vol.1), Bangalore, India: Theological Publications of India.

86. National Opinion Research Center (NORC). 1972. The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference.
87. Nelsen, Hart M. 1980. Religious transmission versus religious formation: preadolescent-parent interaction. Sociological Quarterly, 21, (Spring): 207-208.
88. Osipow, Samuel H. 1975. The relevance of theories of career development to special groups: problems, needed data, and implications. in J. Steven Picou & Robert E. Campbell, eds. Career Behavior of Special Groups: Theory, Research, and Practice. Columbus, O.H.: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., A Bell & Howell Company.
89. Pilarczyk, Daniel E. (Archbishop). 1987. The vocation questions. The Catholic New York, (September 24):22.
90. Picou, Steven J. & Robert E. Campbell, eds. 1975. Career Behavior of Special Groups: Theory, Research, and Practice. Columbus, O.H.: Charles E. Merrill Pub.Co., A Bell & Howell Co.
91. Pius XII (Pope). 1951. (Menti Nostrae), in The Catholic Mind, XLIX, No. 1057, (January):53.
92. Podipara, Placid J. 1970. The Thomas Christians. Bombay, India: Darton, For Longman & Todd Ltd.; London: by St. Paul Publications.
93. ----- . 1973. Hindu in culture, Christian in religion, oriental in worship, in St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India, Vol. 2, ed. George Menachery. Trichur, India:107-111.
94. ----- . 1976. The Hierarchy of the Syro- Malabar Church. Alleppey, Kerala: Prakasam Publications.
95. ----- . 1986. The Latin Rite Christians of Malabar. Kottayam, India: Denha Services.
96. Potvin, Raymond and Suziedelis Antanas. 1969. Seminarians of the Sixties. Washington, D.C.: CARA.
97. Potvin, Raymond H. Seminarians of the Eighties: A National Survey. 1985. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association.

98. Puthiakunnel, Thomas V.C. 1964. Syro-Malabar Clergy and their General Obligations. Ernakulam, India: Vincentian Publishing Bureau.
99. Puts, Louis J. C.S.L. ed. 1956. The Catholic Church, U.S.A. Chicago: Fides Pub. Association.
100. Radhakrishnan S. 1940. Eastern Religions and Western Thought. 2d. ed. London: Oxford University Press.
101. Ralenkotter. 1954. Winning parents. Bulletin of the NCEA (August):190-195.
102. Roe, Anne. 1956. The Psychology of Occupations. New York: John Wiley & Sons; London: Chapman & Hall Ltd.
103. ----- . 1957. Early determinants of vocational choice. Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 4. No. 3: 212-218.
104. Rose, Peter I., Myron Glazer and Penina Migdal Glazer. 1982. Sociology: Inquiring into Society, 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.
105. Rosenberg, Morris. 1957. Occupations and Values. Glencoe, IL.: The Free Press.
106. Rodgers, Roy H. 1966. The occupational role of the child: a research frontier in the developmental conceptual framework. Social Forces, Vol. 45, No. 2, (December):217-224.
107. Rubin, Robert. 1958. The World of Work. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
108. Scheets, K. Francis (Rev.). NCEA seminary update: what does the future holds? Seminaries in Dialogue, 12, (November): 2-9.
109. Shepard, Jon M. 1987. Sociology. St. Paul, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco: West Publishing Company.
110. Siegel, Irving E. ed. 1985. Parental Belief System, the Psychological Consequences for Children. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Pub.
111. Smith, Houston. 1968. The Religion of Man. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
112. Stark, Rodney and Bainbridge, William Sims. 1985. The Future of Religion. Berkeley, C.A.: University Press California.

113. Steinfelds, Peter. 1989. Shortage of entrants to the clergy causing alarm for U.S. religions. The New York Times. (July 9), sec. a:1 & 22.
114. Super, Donald E. 1953. A theory of vocational development. The American Psychologist, Vol. 8, (May):185-190.
115. ----- . 1963. Career development: self-concept theory; essays in vocational development. New York: College Board Examination Board.
116. Swift, Arthur L. 1959. Religious values, in The family: its function and destiny, ed. Ruth Nabda Anshen. New York: Harper & Row, Pub.
117. Vallipalam, Mathew M. o.f.m. Cap. 1989. Priestly Formation in the Changing Society of India. Bandra-Bombay, India: St. Paul Publications.
118. Vithayathil, Varkey J., C.Ss.R. 1980. The Origin and Progress of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy. Kottayam, India: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, India.
119. Wakeman, Frederic E. Jr. 1988. Transitional and comparative research. Items, Social Science Research, 4, (December):85-89.
120. Weber, Max. 1958. The Religion of India, trans. and ed. Hans K. Gerth and Don Martindale. New York: the Free Press, London: Collier-Mac Millan Ltd.
121. Williams, Robin Jr. 1951. American Society: A Sociological Interpretation. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
122. Woelfel, Joseph. 1975. A theory fo occupational choice. Career Behavior of Special Groups: Theory, Research, and Practice. Columbus, O.H.: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co., A Bell & Howell Company.
123. Woodcock, George. 1967. Kerala a Portrait of Malabar Coast. London: Faber and Faber.
124. Yinger, Milton J. 1969. A structural examination of religion. Journal of Scientfic Study of Religion, 8, (Spring):88-99.
125. ----- . 1970. The Scientific Study of Religion: New York: Macmillan.