

Mary GAUTIER, Paul PERL and Stephen FICHTER. *Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012. [Data from 2009 survey of priests] pp. 230. \$24.95 pb. ISBN 978-0-8146-3429-5. Reviewed by Paul SULLINS, Catholic University, Washington, DC 20064 (sullins@cua.edu)

This book reports the results of a 2009 survey of Catholic priests, the fourth in a series designed to replicate Greeley and Schoenherr's 1970 survey administered by the National Opinion Research Center. Prior follow-up surveys were administered in 1985, 1993, and 2001. The 2009 survey was administered by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and, like the 1993 and 2001 surveys, was sponsored by the National Federation of Priests' Councils.

Like the prior studies in this series, the survey findings assess the views of Catholic priests on a wide range of issues, challenges, and satisfactions, providing a wealth of unique trend data that now spans almost four decades. The main findings have few surprises and are easily stated. Priests as a group continue to grow older and more ethnically diverse; they continue long-term trends toward greater satisfaction and security in the priesthood; they are persisting more, struggling less with celibacy and the Church hierarchy, and much more likely to consent to hierarchical teaching and direction than in past decades. The recurring challenge among priests, reflected in the title of the book, is managing the relationship and tension between aging progressive priests and a distinctly different cohort of young priests who are much more traditional. A great strength of the book, as of the prior 2003 volume in the series, is the inclusion of reflections from four thoughtful Catholic leaders and the extensive use of quoted interview material to flesh out the survey findings. CARA's practical focus comes to the fore in a final chapter providing concrete advice for encouraging new vocations to the priesthood.

There is more than a little tinge of aging 1960s progressivism to the book itself. Just as the survey design looks back to 1970, its interpretation looks back to the mid-1960s Vatican Council II, as the subtitle of the book makes explicit. The relevance of these reference points is far weaker today, 40 years after the initial survey and almost 50 years after Vatican II, than when the first follow-up survey was administered 25 years ago. At points the authors question whether recent ordination classes, who tend to have more orthodox beliefs, represent a return to a pre-Vatican II Church (they say no) or may have greater certitude, like fundamentalists (they are not sure). Cardinal Bernardin, active in the 1970s, is cited several times, but Pope Benedict is not. The pontificate of John Paul II, whose deep impact on younger priests is widely documented, is not mentioned in this book.

The authors retain and extend from the prior volume in the series (in 2003, reporting on the 2001 survey) somewhat confusing analytic categories that attribute to younger more orthodox priests a more "cultic" orientation—seeing a strong distinction between priests and laypersons—as opposed to older less orthodox priests, who are more "servant leaders," that is, seeing priests as ones who minister from among the laity. But this difference is just a further expression of orthodoxy, since these views precisely reflect the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant understanding of the ministry. One could more accurately express the inelegant "cultic/servant leader" distinction by saying that more orthodox priests affirm the Catholic or sacramental understanding of the priesthood while less orthodox priests adopt a

Protestant or functional ministerial model. In fact, the cultic/servant leader distinction is used throughout the book as a proxy for a more or less orthodox disposition toward Church teaching and practice, with the most and least cultic priests respectively labeled “ideologically traditionalist” and “ideologically progressive.”

The 2009 survey was also sufficiently different methodologically from the predecessor surveys, with somewhat lower data quality, to justify appropriate caution about both the reliability and validity of the findings. Greeley and Schoenherr’s original survey attained a response rate of 71% on a very large sample, yielding 5,115 cases of active priests. Dean Hoge’s first follow-up survey in 1985 achieved a response rate of 87%, yielding 1062 cases. The response rate dropped back to 68% (only 849 cases) and 70% (1279 cases) for Hoge’s 1993 and 2001 surveys. Hoge’s surveys replicated not only the questions but also the multi-stage sampling scheme initiated by Greeley and Schoenherr.

For the 2009 survey Greeley’s sampling procedure was abandoned in favor of using CARA’s pre-existing lists of priest addresses. The rate of response plummeted to just 30%, yielding only 960 cases. There cannot be a high degree of confidence that this low response represents the sample without significant bias, and that the sample in turn represents the same national distribution of priests as the prior surveys in the series. The authors point out that their results are no worse than that of most national-sample priest surveys administered by news organizations. This is certainly true, but it concedes the fact that, until now, this particular survey series had attained far better data quality and aspired to a scholarly rather than a journalistic standard. Hoge declined to publish a book based on the relatively disappointing 1993 results, which are the most similar to, and in some respects better than, the results of the 2009 survey.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is found in a remarkable chapter that presents, with little editorial, the extended personal accounts of nine priests who were touched in some way by the sexual abuse scandals that have roiled the Catholic Church since 2003. This is the first volume in the series to address the sex abuse scandals, which broke in the middle of preparing the prior volume in the series in 2003. These stories put a human face to the complicated and wrenching struggles faced by Catholic priests, documenting a context of unthinkable abuse, false accusations, public scorn, betrayal of trust and a self-protective hierarchy that has, in many cases, rocked their priestly identity to the core.

Taken for what it is, and without placing too much weight on its unique findings, this book offers a wealth of suggestive insight and verbatim accounts of Catholic priests. It can be hoped that the next study in this series in 2017, if it occurs, will consider a more forward-looking rather than retrospective frame for understanding its findings, and will reassert the high standards of data quality that have generally characterized this valuable longitudinal survey series in the past.