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Priests: A Calling in Crisis, by **Andrew M. Greeley**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 156 pp. \$19.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-226-30644-5.

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Everything you thought you knew about Catholic priests is wrong. Such is the summary import of this book, which reports on a *Los Angeles Times* survey of priests during the scandal-plagued summer of 2002. Priests, we learn, are not yearning to marry, secretly dissatisfied, or even particularly deprived of intimacy; in fact, they develop more intimate relations and report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with life than comparable married men or other professionals, including Protestant clergy. Almost all (> 90%) of them report that they are satisfied as a priest, would choose the priesthood over again, and would advise a young man today to seek the priesthood. Personality inventories, Greeley reminds us, have long shown priests to be about as well adjusted as most Americans of comparable education.

Celibacy is not the reason men leave the priesthood. Only 2 percent of priests list celibacy as their most important struggle, and eight in ten of those who left the priesthood to marry were dissatisfied with their life as a priest before they fell in love with a woman. Contrary to sociological orthodoxy regarding secularization, today's youngest and newest priests (age 45 and under) are much more traditional in belief and supportive of the church hierarchy than the cohort preceding them. Far fewer priests are pedophiles (only .15% by the strictest measure), yet far more are homosexual (16%), than is commonly perceived or is found in the general population.

Nor have priests become dissenters or moral relativists. Although many priests dissent from the Catholic Church's prohibition on birth control and masturbation, a majority continues to support an unconditional prohibition on abortion, premarital sex, suicide, euthanasia, and among the younger priests, homosexual sex. Virtually all of them affirm the Church's teaching on core doctrinal issues of the faith.

Why, then, the common perception of low morale, widespread dissent, and struggling celibates in the Catholic priesthood? The answer, argues Greeley, is a form of pluralistic ignorance, in which the majority of happy priests are intimidated into silence by a small vocal minority of dissatisfied and resigned priests. Priests, moreover, do not recruit young men into the profession because they hope, by initiating a shortage, to force the Vatican to enact policy changes. The most serious problems the Catholic priesthood faces, concludes Greeley, are "the inadequacies of priestly service and negativity of clergy reaction to their laity" (p. 124), crystallized in poor sermons and liturgies. He advocates better homiletical training in seminaries, the establishment of a Priests Corps in which young men can serve temporarily as priests, and most important, that "clergy at all levels from the pope down to the lowliest parish curate must be quiet and listen" (p. 131).

Greeley writes as a self-described Catholic sociologist, but the focus of his discussion is clearly on internal Catholic issues rather than sociological scholarship. The primary survey data, with a response rate of 37 percent, are at best weak by the usual standards of social science research (which Greeley acknowledges). The discussion pursues no general theory and assumes no knowledge of inferential statistics. Most of Greeley's arguments have appeared elsewhere, and most of the findings have been previously reported in the *Los Angeles Times*. The book is written with an acknowledged passion that sometimes results in a lack of critical distance. Those who see a link between celibacy and sex abuse, for example, are derided as "defamatory," engaging in "angry ideology and anti-Catholic bigotry" (p. 115). One prominent scholar's research on homosexuality and celibacy, we are warned, is not only "garbage" and "wrong-headed," but also "very dangerous" (p. 28). Younger clergy (but not older ones) who gave more orthodox survey responses are described by the septuagenarian author as "narrow and inflexible" (p. 116) and possibly "arrogant, pompous, and rigid" (p. 82).

A more serious problem for this book is that the uniquely affirmative view of priests it presents, a valuable contribution in itself, undercuts the premise of its major argument. If priests are happy, fulfilled, and faithful,

and growing more so, one may be permitted to wonder why the priesthood is "a calling in crisis." The book's conclusion that the priesthood's most serious challenges are poor homilies and lack of understanding the laity, rather than rampant sexual abuse, seems much less like a crisis than if it had been the other way around. How these pastoral problems relate to the sex abuse scandals that formed the occasion for the book is never made clear. This book provides a lively and challenging, albeit not authoritative or essential, discussion of a subject that will be of particular interest to Catholics.

The Politics of Aesthetic Judgment, by **Barbara R. Walters**. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003. 150 pp. \$26.00 paper. ISBN: 0-7618-2723-4.

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This short book has an interesting and subtle theory about the relationship between Jewish religious affiliation, politics, and interest in Impressionist art. First, the author shows that from 1890 to 1912, European Jews purchased 26 percent of the Impressionist art sold by the Durand-Ruel gallery, which was the main gallery selling Impressionist work, at least until 1900. The two largest other purchasing groups were non-Jewish French, and Americans, who purchased 26 percent and 36 percent of the works respectively. Walters argues that the involvement of European Jews in the purchase of Impressionist art was striking, given that for example Jews constituted only 1–3 percent of the population of France. We are not told what proportion of the population of Europe was Jewish, but we are told that Europeans who were neither Jewish nor French purchased only 2 percent of the Impressionist art.

Using the data on American purchasers, the author then shows that being Jewish alone does not explain interest in Impressionism. Thus, of the Americans who purchased Impressionist art from the Durand-Ruel gallery, only the Guggenheims were Jewish; and they only bought two pictures. (The author's original research for this book

is based on the private archives of the Durand-Ruel Gallery in Paris.)

Walters then proposes that it was the Dreyfus affair in France that turned European Jews into fans of the Impressionists. Alfred Dreyfus was court-martialed for treason on October 15, 1894. He was charged with intending to sell documents to the German Military Attaché, Colonel von Schwartzkoppen. The affair, suffused with anti-Semitism against Dreyfus and pitting the honor of the French army and power of the Catholic Church against the secular Third Republic, dragged on until September 1899 when, a few days after he had been again convicted in a second court martial, Dreyfus was pardoned by Prime Minister Waldeck-Rousseau. Finally in 1906, 12 years after his first arrest, Dreyfus was vindicated in civil court.

The Impressionists too, the author argues, were pitted against many of the same forces as the supporters of Dreyfus. The Impressionists were battling the established artistic style of the French Academy, which placed its imprimatur on artists in the Neo-Classical style and which functioned as the emblem of a moral and sociopolitical order. Under the Second Empire in particular this official artistic establishment disseminated the classic Christian tradition in the arts and humanities. Thus the challenge of the Impressionists was not just artistic but at least implicitly political. As the author puts it,

The correspondence between the Impressionistic movement in art and the Dreyfusist cause in *fin de siècle* France stemmed from their mutual affinity toward secular, pluralistic, and urbane ideals, in the abstract, and their shared material dependence on the fate of the Third Republic, concretely. (p. 121)

Thus the growing affinity between European Jews and Impressionism was linked to, and triggered by, the Dreyfus affair. This might also partly explain, though the author does not take this step, why during the same time, Americans, steeped in Republicanism, were also drawn to Impressionism.

This stimulating book has taken a long time to be published and I am glad it has finally emerged. It was completed as a doc-